Stakeholder expectations of the educational experience in higher education property disciplines in Australia

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration by author

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Kathryn Robson
31st January 2019
Abstract

An investigation of property higher education in Australia involves lengthy discussion with the three major stakeholders: students, industry and the universities. This research used a mixed methods methodology, combined with the use of a critical incident technique, to ensure the results obtained from two major stakeholders, students and industry, were tested in a triangulated manner. The mixed methods analysis consisted of focus groups, group interviews and questionnaires. The critical incident technique was used to identify specific incidents critical to the stakeholders’ experiences. Details were obtained by personal interview and questionnaire.

The higher education experience for Australian students is constantly changing. Higher education institutions have always commanded respect and go to enormous lengths to maintain their reputations. There are now 37 public universities in Australia and undergraduate property degrees are provided by 10 of these. Millions of students have been awarded degrees since the days of the early universities, including thousands of property education degrees, with more than 750 new graduates in this field every year.

The increased numbers of higher education students come at a price, which has a twofold aspect. The first is the student/staff ratio, which is now in the vicinity of 50:1 at many Australian universities; and second, the large increase in students attending universities has placed undue stress on many inadequate facilities. Many things have changed about a higher education experience, such as finding information, which is now easier; but applying this information may now be more difficult. Most students today complete higher education studies as a necessary step in a career choice, and the increasing and changing use of new technologies opens up these workplaces to new experiences. It is difficult nowadays for students to leave university knowing all that they need to be successful in their careers.

When asked if they were satisfied with their property higher education experience, students replied they felt they were not being properly prepared for the workplace. They also spoke of poor teaching practices, unreliable IT facilities, inappropriate and unreliable course materials and assessment, and poor feedback on these assessments. They also stated that many lecturers were hard to understand and/or boring, used outdated and inaccurate materials, were generally uninspiring and lacked a passion for teaching. They also said they would like more
practical components in their property subjects, with greater use of case studies, industry speakers, formal work experience and site visits. In these desires they were also joined by recent graduates and industry leaders.

The dilemma in property higher education appears to be fourfold:

- First, like many other higher education programs, property degrees are not making sufficient use of innovative practices, and many academics teaching in the programs lack motivation.

- Second, and specific to property higher education, the material taught has become very theoretical. This focus is regarded as misguided by both students and industry, who believe that a more practical application would prepare them more for the property industry workplace. The reason given for this shift of emphasis to the theoretical is that the large cohorts of students make it extremely difficult to organise site visits and formal work experience. Cohorts of 100+ would be difficult to place in industry and are too large a group to visit sites.

- Third, property shares a close relationship with industry through professional accrediting bodies – the Australian Property Institute and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. This is similar to many other professions, such as accounting, medicine and law. Property professionals are heavily regulated in their behaviour, especially with regard to valuation. This relationship and control makes it very difficult for universities to be flexible with curricula.

- Finally, the large increase in student enrolment has opened the door for many more students than usual. However, this may end up being a problem when these large cohorts of students begin graduating at the end of 2016 and are seeking employment. It is possible this boutique industry of only around 10,000 professionals may not be able to find positions for all the available graduates. Until 2013, property graduate employment was between 90 and 100 per cent in Australia.

Perfect stakeholder satisfaction might be difficult to achieve; however, stakeholders need to work together, and talk and listen to one another, so that stakeholder satisfaction can be improved. There have been large shifts in stakeholder satisfaction over the last five years with regard to listening to students and moving toward better learning and teaching outcomes.
Although nothing may be done in the short term about program delivery and course content, it is possible that even these can change, given time. When customer (student) satisfaction levels are examined and gaps are found in their experiences, the individual problems may be addressed – and even rectified or the client compensated. Rarely, though, does the intrinsic process change, and the errors in service delivery (the negative critical incidents) continue. The same problems keep being raised as successive groups of students are questioned. Over a three- or four-year time period, and at 10 different universities, much the same problems recur.

Higher education is more than just services marketing; it is relationship marketing. Although there are classrooms, online materials, textbooks and so on, the predominant experience is between the students, their administrators and lecturers. Like all interaction between humans, some is positive and some negative. Students may relate well to one lecturer and not another. Lecturers may have an excellent group of students to work with one semester and not the next. It is possible that we have reached the limits of how student satisfaction can be managed and improved without intrinsic changes to the way the programs are delivered. It may be time to evaluate the process and accept that despite the best efforts of well-intentioned university personnel, this is as good as it is going to get. However, there are strategies that can be put in place in higher education property programs to both improve stakeholder satisfaction and to improve the level of training that students receive. There are many excellent simulations available in the property area that can be used to make exercises more realistic. If academic staff lack industry experience, then guest lecturers could be engaged to run interactive seminars, or create YouTube excerpts to illustrate important industry knowledge. Although field trips are difficult and expensive to organise, it is important that they continue to be offered to students, especially in the area of valuation. Finally, it is important that universities work closely with the two accrediting bodies as they represent the opinions of industry leaders and have many suggestions to offer to improve the quality of property education.
Acknowledgements

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Higher Education (HE)

Property Higher Education

Student satisfaction

Stakeholder satisfaction

CEQ/AGS

Australian Property Institute

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Papers written for conferences on PhD topic area

Paper One: Juggling the needs of students and employers in the workplace arena: A discussion of the future direction of the Work Experience program within Property/Valuation education at RMIT University, Melbourne.


Paper Two: How useful is your degree? An industry analysis of the Property and Valuation degrees at RMIT University, Australia.

Delivered at European Real Estate Conference (ERES), in Krakow, June 2008.

Paper Three: Satisfied Students, ‘I’d like to see that’: A discussion of strategies introduced in the classroom with the aim of improving student satisfaction.

Delivered to COBRA Conference, in Cape Town, September 2009.

Paper Four: Moving towards an understanding of the factors that contribute to student satisfaction in Higher Education.


Paper Six: Chasing the elusive customer satisfaction component in the delivery of Higher Education.

Delivered at the ERES Conference, in Delft, Netherlands, June 2017.
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGS</td>
<td>Australian Graduate Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTC</td>
<td>Australian Learning and Teaching Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>Australian Property Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSSE</td>
<td>Australian Survey of Student Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>best aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ</td>
<td>Course Experience Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>course experience surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIT</td>
<td>critical incident technique</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>continuing professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPP</td>
<td>Future Professional Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTU</td>
<td>facilities, transformation and usage</td>
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<tr>
<td>FYE</td>
<td>first-year experience</td>
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<td>GDS</td>
<td>Graduate Destination Survey</td>
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<td>GRSLS</td>
<td>Grasha-Riechmann Student Learning Styles Scale</td>
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<td>GTS</td>
<td>good teaching scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HECS</td>
<td>Higher Education Contribution Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEdPE</td>
<td>Higher Education PERFormance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHIP</td>
<td>intangibility, heterogeneity, inseperability and perishability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>information technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCW</td>
<td>negative critical wave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>need of improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Student Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PCA</td>
<td>Property Council of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUT</td>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>RICS</td>
<td>Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVP</td>
<td>Questionnaire for extended Service Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERF</td>
<td>Questionnaire for extended Service Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>SERVQ</td>
<td>Original Service Quality Questionnaire</td>
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**UAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>student:staff ratios</td>
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<tr>
<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UniSA</td>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UQ</td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td>University of the Sunshine Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS</td>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWS</td>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<td>YPP</td>
<td>young property professional</td>
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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Research Plan

Chapter 1 of this thesis is the Introduction. It examines the research problem, the research gap, and sets the research questions, the context and background for this research. Chapter 2 is the Literature Review. It examines the past and present situation of Higher Education (HE) property programs in Australian public universities and the stakeholders affected by them. The research design forms the final sector of the chapter. Chapter 3, Methodology, discusses the methodology and the research methods adopted in the research for the collection of data. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the findings from the different data sources. Chapter 5 covers the resulting discussion of these results. Chapter 6 draws conclusions from this research.

This research is presented across six chapters as described in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Summary of chapters in the thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>This chapter introduces the research ideas, concepts and questions. ‘Stakeholder expectations of Australian property higher education’ is the title of this research and this chapter defines and explains who these stakeholders are: students, industry and the universities. There is also initial discussion of the background to higher education in Australia, in particular, property higher education. The concepts introduced here are expanded upon in Chapter 2, the Literature Review.</td>
</tr>
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<th>Chapter 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 provides the background information for this research and discusses further many of the issues and situations introduced in Chapter 1. This chapter provides the theoretical basis for this research and discusses the concepts, the past and current situation within property higher education in Australia, and opens discussion as to the possible need for change. The chapter also introduces the marketing literature relevant to higher education and explores the relevant literature on the overall topic. It also examines exactly how and to what level, current stakeholders are being engaged.</td>
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<th>Chapter 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This chapter reviews the literature on methodology, methods and data collection, and applies this theory to establish the most appropriate methodology for this thesis. The chapter also sets out the manner in which the various data have been collected, and the timeline for this research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Research problem

The property industry in Australia has developed over the last 50 years into a broad, multi-disciplinary sector. It is taken to include residential, commercial, industrial, rural and specialist property, and includes the disciplines of valuation, property finance, property management, and sales, leasing and general consulting. This research examines property university programs in Australia. It tracks the student/graduate from the beginning of the university experience to that of the early-career professional, and examines expectations of other stakeholders, concentrating on property programs offered by Australian public universities. The basis of the research is a perceived gap in the literature and practice relating to stakeholder expectations of these programs and what may reasonably be done to improve satisfaction. The current offerings have evolved from highly applied, practical valuation-centric programs in the 1970s to broader, more academic programs in the current era. In recent years there has been a significant difference between the student-surveyed results for property programs and those designed for comparable or allied disciplines, with property often performing well below the broader discipline programs.
The property and construction industries form a very large sector of the Australian economy and entry into this profession is more likely with a specific construction or property qualification. Training for a property career requires specific knowledge, and although basic business skills are related to this discipline, it is widely accepted that training in specific property subjects such as valuation, property investment and development are an essential component of any property professional training. The property industry is a unique and important industry, and the value of a nation’s real estate is one of its most important assets. The property industry contributed $1.82 billion to the economy in 2014 (Bleby, 2015). Now that property also plays such a large part in superannuation and other investment portfolios, the industry needs appropriately trained professionals to manage this type of investment. While the professions are largely represented by the Australian Property Institute (API) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), firms including investors are represented by the Property Council of Australia, which is less prescriptive in terms of its involvement in university education.

Property degrees are the entry point to careers that appear to be rewarding and well-paid, and for many years the vast majority of graduates have been readily employed, with most entering property-related professions. There is, therefore, an apparent disconnect between feedback received from students and career outcomes. On the one hand, graduates rate their satisfaction with their program very low, and yet they usually achieve rewarding industry positions. It is considered worthy of investigation to establish whether property programs are offering what is required in the emerging world, whether students are being properly prepared for their university experience, or if it is indeed the university experience itself that is failing student expectations and those of other stakeholders.

The outcomes of this research may inform the further development of existing programs, the approaches to design and implementation of future programs, how marketing might be targeted, and how student induction is informed. Stakeholder interests are uncovered which incorporate the design and implementation of programs within the university sector, as well as the development and implementation of graduate induction programs in the workplace and professional bodies.

The stakeholders for HE in the property discipline are students, industry and the universities that provide these programs. The Australian national, or federal, government is a secondary stakeholder through its partial funding of these programs, as is the wider community who
may deal on a daily basis with graduates from these programs. This is a diverse group, and their expectations of a HE experience are also very different. Satisfying the majority of the principal stakeholders is a difficult but worthwhile goal.

HE is no longer only available to a privileged few. This is an era of mass HE, with large cohorts of students and often very large classes. There is a challenge to engage students in the education process, and as a consequence, it may be difficult to satisfy them (Krause, 2005a). Although the federal government recoups part of its funding through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS-HELP), the bulk of money received from universities for domestic students still comes directly from the Commonwealth (Australian Government, 2016b).

Universities have to make internal resource allocation decisions and use a range of criteria to determine which programs, or courses, remain active. There is an increasing emphasis on good teaching and student satisfaction within HE programs, and these two criteria are becoming increasingly important within universities’ policies. Students are not only better informed than they were in the past, but they also have the tools to make their views known to a wider audience. Social media in its many forms can be a marketing advantage, but poor critiques and damaging comments are a major headache for those trying to market programs – or teach in them. The high cost of tuition and a greater awareness of consumer rights are important parts of this equation.

Hilmer and Hilmer (2012) state that there is a lack of diversity in the Australian university system. They believe Australian universities are becoming all the same, managed in the same way, funded in the same way – and it is this very sameness that has created a generation of disinterested students. Many are attending a university because it is the only way they can move into their chosen career. According to Hilmer and Hilmer (2012), where once universities were places of student incentive and higher learning, they are now often career pathways for the masses. Hilmer and Hilmer (2012) looked at changes occurring in the rest of the Western world to diversify HE institutions and asked, ‘What is our government going to do about the problem?’

The merging of all institutions of technology into universities in the 1980s pushed students otherwise undesirous of a university education into the system. In response to the Bradley report (2008), the Australian Government is making a large investment in Australian
universities to drive reform. Specific to learning and teaching, in 2010 it proposed an injection of an additional $1.5 billion over four years, and a total of $5.4 billion to the HE and vocational education for technology (VET) sectors in general. The goal was to be in the top group of OECD countries in both participation and performance by 2020 (Australian Government, 2010). A change in government led to changes in priorities and budget constraints. The Australian Government commissioned a report on HE entitled *Higher Education Funding in Australia* (2015), which compares the situation in Australia with several other developed countries, but so far there has been no reported change in policy. The HE experience today is very different from the past, but that does not make it any less valid. Along with other changes, cohort size has increased and Australian universities now offer a greater variety of programs. In the past technical colleges were predominantly for specialised career education and universities were places of research and academic degrees. This is no longer the case; many of the old technical certificates have been replaced and the current university model has seen a merging of these functions. HE teachers must adapt and design curricula appropriate to the modern HE student.

As well as students and universities, the third stakeholder in the HE triangle is industry and it needs to be satisfied that students are emerging from their HE experience work ready (Mills et al., 2008; Mello, 1998). Property education is very specific and most graduates look to start work in the industry. Within Australia for academic purposes, the property industry is taken to include many areas and covers residential, commercial, rural and specialist land development. It includes the sale and leasing of property, and all financial transactions pertaining to land.

The property industry has come to rely on universities providing important training to graduates and the system of work integrated learning programs allowed final-year students to work several days a week in industry. The profession encouraged and supported this system, but work integrated learning is no longer a formal part of any Australian university programs. Two of the ten universities have three weeks of unsupervised work experience as part of their programs, and another allows possible exemptions for electives if the students are working (Baxter, 2013).

Industry participation in property education is active through professional body accreditation of the programs (primarily the API and RICS), and also the use of leading professionals on advisory councils or boards of universities and committees, and as specialist guest presenters.
Gaining accreditation is often a successful marketing tool for the university sector but, importantly, it is also critical for students seeking professional designations as part of their careers. Professional body accreditation would normally be expected to focus on content, but increasingly, issues such as good teaching and student satisfaction are taken into account as well. Within the university sector these criteria are also increasingly important for academic staff seeking to further their own careers. Although an important component of property education, this accreditation requirement also places restrictions on the educational programs and removes a great deal of flexibility from academics with regard to course content and material (Baxter, 2013).

If stakeholder satisfaction is perceived as a necessary characteristic, then it needs to be determined what the stakeholders expect from a HE experience. In this research, the Industry stakeholder refers to employers and graduates in the property industry, as they are the groups most impacted by property HE. The other two stakeholders are property HE students and the universities that provide the degrees. There is a need to ascertain stakeholder expectations and, if possible, meet them. Stakeholders may be satisfied if they see a genuine effort by all parties to work together to improve HE in the property discipline.

1.2 Research questions

This research aims to identify stakeholder expectations of property HE programs in Australia, and there is a number of questions that need to be answered in the context of this research.

1.2.1 Primary research question
Question 1: Why was student satisfaction with property programs so low?

1.2.2 Secondary research questions
Question 2: What has changed to cause an improvement in student satisfaction for property programs?

Question 3: What is higher education in property programs in Australia?

Question 4: What do stakeholders expect from property higher education programs in Australia?

Question 5: Why is stakeholder satisfaction important in higher education?
Question 6: How can stakeholder satisfaction be achieved within property higher education programs?

1.3 Research context

The stakeholders in a university context are many and varied; however, the main three are students, industry, and the university, with subgroups within each of these categories. The relationship between the parties is often formalised as to their respective roles and expectations, and often decisions about the respective parties are made by small segments of the group such as advisory councils (industry members who advise on courses and content), student representative groups (interested students who question their experiences), or university staff on the university council. These processes do provide cameos of interest, but this research seeks to involve a much wider group than just these subgroups to obtain the views of the widest grouping of stakeholders.

There is a need to reach a broader industry group than those currently offering curriculum advice. This research asks industry employers and property graduates for their feedback on the degrees that feed into the property industry. Likewise with students, although they are surveyed (usually) each semester during the progress of their degree, and immediately after graduation, the process may be rushed, applied in an ad hoc manner, or responded to by very small numbers. Many students do not relate to the questionnaires (Dalton & Denson, 2009; Sambell et al., 2013). This research needs to ensure that the methodology used is fit for the purpose intended and that response rates are optimised (Rowley, 2003). Gapp and Fischer (2006) conducted their own surveys of their HE classes and the feedback from students was that the process was more inclusive than previous survey-driven approaches. The students questioned in this process felt that things were changing for the better.

The HE industry needs to listen to their stakeholders and learn what is important to them. If the stakeholders are to be satisfied, there is a need to know what they think is important in property HE. It is possible that the three major stakeholders may have conflicting expectations and there is a need to discover possible ways to manage any conflict within the different expectations. This research investigated ways to improve satisfaction for HE property programs in Australia and suggests ways they can match other HE programs where the Course Experience Questionnaire/Australian Graduate Survey (CEQ/AGS) satisfaction levels are already higher. Student satisfaction is traditionally externally measured in HE in
Australia by the analysis of graduate responses to the CEQ/AGS, which is administered annually with funding from the federal government by Graduate careers Australia and (since 2015) by the Social Research Centre. Property HE programs are offered at 10 Australian public universities and they are all accredited by the API, the professional body responsible for upholding standards in the Australian property industry.

Graduates from these 10 Australian university programs have responded to the CEQ survey, and later the CEQ/AGS, since its introduction in 1998 and the results from these programs have traditionally scored lower than most other HE programs. For example, in 2000 the national averages for the good teaching scale (GTS) for property programs were 31.5 per cent; whereas for building it was 41 per cent and business administration was 45 per cent.

The Australian data for 2007 show the lowest scores for GTS and Satisfaction in property disciplines. They were 34.5 per cent and 51.5 per cent respectively, compared to management and commerce programs, which scored in the vicinity of >50 per cent for GTS and >70 per cent for satisfaction. The response rate for that year for property graduates was approximately 90 per cent, so the figures may be regarded as significant. By 2011, all the public universities had improved both their GTS and overall satisfaction, with an average GTS of 48.3 per cent and overall satisfaction of 73.3 per cent, compared to management/commerce of approximately 65 per cent for GTS and over 80 per cent for overall satisfaction. However, the responses for 2011 were lower than for 2007, with only approximately a 60 per cent response rate. This leads back to the research questions set out above in an effort to explain and make suggestions for improving satisfaction with property programs in Australian HE institutions. This is a longitudinal study and as is often the case, the situation has changed with regard to HE student satisfaction over the period of this research. Australian universities have recognised that there was a problem compared to our overseas competitors and have taken various steps aimed at improving student satisfaction. The very low satisfaction scores have gradually improved for property programs since 2010.

The majority of HE students studying property programs in Australia today are aged 17–27 years and are commonly referred to as Generation Y. Sheahan (2005) discusses the characteristics of this group of people who were born in the late 1980s and early 1990s and are the current target of professional organisations in terms of employment. These young people have grown up in very different times to their largely Baby Boomer parents, and even Generation X (born from the 1960s to the 1980s). The typical HE student who attended
university in the 70s, 80s and 90s had different expectations from the current cohort of students who have been attending university since 2000 (Collins, 2011). Collins (2011) suggests it is time to realise that education needs to be different for this age group if there is to be any chance of them having a meaningful HE experience. This view is further reinforced in the discussion in later chapters of this thesis.

Universities in Australia today enrol greater numbers of students than was possible even 10 years ago, with an increase of 9.6 per cent in 2012 following the uncapping of university places (Universities Australia, 2016). This is seen as a chance to widen the horizons of the growing educational community and help create a stronger and fairer education system, which can fuel economic development and productivity. Modern universities are places of great diversity and current government initiatives aim to increase this even more into the future. In 2010, the then Australian Government aimed to increase by 2025 the bachelor attainment rate from the then current 32 per cent to 40 per cent of all 25–34 year olds (Australian Government, 2010). The present federal government of Australia is currently reviewing policies with regard to HE. With this in mind, government policy for HE 2016 will be the same as for 2015 (Australian Government, 2015).

An Ernst and Young report on HE (2012) is a Victorian-wide report with implications for all HE institutions across Australia on the drivers of student choice, the competitive performance of different universities and their responses to the demand-driven funding introduced by the federal government in response to the Bradley report (2008). A survey was conducted involving a questionnaire of 1000 Victorian students and interviews with 20 executives from seven Victorian universities.

There are five key points to their findings:

- Battle for market share – competition will be hard for Tier 2 institutions with weaker brands and reputations. There will be a possible threat from new entrants and increased competition from OECD countries for the international student market.

- There are gaps in market perception by students, particularly with regard to Tier 2 institutions.

- Universities will need a clearly differentiated market position and strong alignment of the student experience and brand promise, to survive.
• As the market becomes more consumer-driven, institutions should consider psychographic segmentation and other multi-brand strategies to hit the multiple student segments.

• Finally, at-risk universities may also need to consider restructuring, including mergers and divestment with regard to courses (programs), degrees and research and development centres.

Although this report did not specifically ask students about satisfaction, the survey results highlighted the things students found to be important and greater flexibility and choice were two of these. The report suggests new institutions might enter the market targeting a niche customer segment and that existing HE institutions will need to be clear about who they are targeting and why. It also suggests that competition from non-OECD countries will increase and places will be offered at more competitive prices for international students. Therefore, Australian tertiary institutions need to be more competitive to compete with overseas universities. One strategy to combat this could be that HE institutions may choose to partner with emerging markets in developing countries and several Australian universities have already done this. It is realised that many overseas students, especially from low socioeconomic groups, cannot afford both high fees and to live in Australia while they study. It makes sense to offer them programs in their home country. When asking students about their 'drivers of choice', the findings rated quality of education, career opportunities and specific courses (programs) as their three top reasons for choosing a university. Quality of education was rated by 61 per cent of the student responses, compared to facilities at 13 per cent and location at 26 per cent. This research supports similar findings where students rate the quality of their education as the most important characteristic in their HE experience (Dalton & Denson, 2009; Hill et al., 2003).

Mass HE brings with it different abilities, age groups and backgrounds, which increases the need for the HE sector to be flexible and innovative in its approach to tertiary education. However, the increased number of HE students has also come at a price. It can no longer be assumed that attending an HE institution is the student’s only current role. The changing nature of the modern student and their diverse reasons for attending an HE institution means any cohort of students will have many different aims and goals. Many of the current body of students studying at Australian universities are working, either full or part time and this is often a drain on their time and energy (Cornish et al, 2009). This cohort has grown up with computer games, mobile phones and the internet. This familiarity with digital technology is
blamed for an entire generation of students with shorter attention spans, a love of multitasking and an impatience for things they see as irrelevant to their immediate needs (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2009; Kandlbinder, 2010).

1.4 Characteristics of the stakeholders for property HE in Australia

In any HE program, the major stakeholders are the students, then follows the university and their associated academics, and finally, industry. Because HE property programs in Australia are all accredited by professional bodies such as the API, industry has a vested and persuasive interest in HE property programs. Each party in this triangle closely monitors one another. Students, at an early stage, are encouraged to join their accrediting bodies. Being student members helps them understand how important this link is. This research aimed to seek opinions, ideas and feelings from all three major stakeholders in an effort to understand what drives each, and to find ways to encourage cooperation and growth for the whole of property education in Australia.

1.4.1 Students

Students today learn very differently from students in the past and this is partly due to digital technology (Prensky, 2001). Current students use computers in class instead of notebooks, and most modern universities have Wi-Fi available in classrooms. This is a very different learning experience from that of even five years ago. Many students today spend very little time reading textbooks and try to gain information by electronic means. Prensky (2001) found that over their lives the average HE student in the US had spent less than 5000 hours reading, over 20,000 hours watching television and over 10,000 hours in computer and cellphone activity. It is important that universities adapt to their students’ preferred manner of learning, because the reality is that after years of education, Generation Y HE students will graduate into a competitive world of fewer available jobs and with a HECS debt of up to AUD$40,000 (Huntley, 2006). Sternberg (2012) believes Generation Y, although presented as a new breed of techno-savvy learners, is only a product of their times and teaching this generation requires new teaching strategies and new environments.

Some things may not have bothered HE students 20 years ago (for example, cancelled classes or boring lectures), because they were not paying much for the experience and were often not working. However, evidence suggests these things are heavily resented by current students as a waste of their time and money (Davies, et al., 2007).
1.4.2 The universities

Currently, there are approximately 50,000 Australian university-based academics, and despite the increasing university student numbers and larger class sizes, good teaching scores are increasing. Effort is being made by universities and academics to improve their offerings. Historically, Australian universities added 250,000 students to their programs in the years 1987–97, and by 2010 there were approximately one million university students, with 200,000 being international students (Davis, 2012). One of the legacies of the move in the 1970s to convert the then technical colleges into universities, and then again in the 1980s when Australian universities were consolidated, is that the outcome was a sameness that has been replicated across all universities and across all states (Davis, 2012). This sameness of university programs is one of the problems underlying this research, with regard to property HE. This situation is also compounded by the requirements of the accrediting bodies who insist that every accredited property program contain the same minimum content. Australia is a large country and each of the states and territories has its own universities; there is really no incentive to move states, or examine different programs, because there is very little difference in what the universities offer. Unlike the United States or Europe, we do not have centres of specific learning expertise. There needs to be greater flexibility in selection criteria, programs offered, and specialities, to give Australian HE students greater choice. Do prospective students really know what they are signing up for? This single model of an Australian public university is not equipped to deal with the expected expanding spectrum of students. When faced with little choice, students choose to go where family and friends completed their university studies, or a university that is geographically close (Davis, 2012).

On 10 January 2012, university entrance requirements were changed after decades of close government control on how many students were allowed to be enrolled in any particular program. On that date, the system was thrown open to demand-driven choice by prospective university students. This meant that student numbers for HE programs have the capacity to increase, which had been extremely difficult to do until then. This change will take time to move through the HE system, because universities have restraints such as facilities and staff to contend with. However, this does open the HE door to many more people (Davis, 2012). Contemporary universities are more business-like than ever before and this has arrived at a time of an ‘open and competitive economy and a student-consumer who is said to be more concerned with value for money than the older educational values of knowledge, ideas and personal development’ (Marginson & Considine, 2000, p. 234).
A closer look at the governance of 17 of Australia’s 37 universities shows it to be more fragmented, improvised and temporary than appearances show. This new form of university management has not successfully drawn the average academic into its strategic and institutional objectives. Australian universities today, apart from the sandstone few, have all reinvented themselves to a high entrepreneurial, an international, or a distance education university (Marginson & Considine, 2000). This disconnect from mainstream academics is supported by the findings of this research. When interviewed by the author, a number of property lecturers expressed confusion, or disillusionment, with the path their university was taking.

1.4.3 Industry

All Australian property degree programs are accredited by specific professional industry bodies; namely, the API or RICS,. On the one hand, the industry leaders who are members of these organisations oversee what is taught in a property degree; and on the other hand, they then employ the graduates in their businesses. Like all specialist areas, industry cooperation and involvement are essential. Until 10 years ago, most HE property programs had some form of work experience which students undertook. This gave industry members a chance to trial graduates before finally making any permanent employment decision. The increases in the number of property students and the consequent difficulty in organising a work experience scheme, has meant it is rare for universities to offer this service to industry any longer. When interviewed by the author, many industry employers expressed disappointment that these schemes no longer existed.

These are the three major stakeholders and they each have different expectations of the HE experience. But what exactly is such an experience and how will it impact on the students who take part in it?

1.5 What is higher education?

Theories about university education may differ, but inherently, most educators have a strong concept of what a university education entails. Bowden and Marton (1998) believe university studies should equip students with the ability to deal with situations in the future which are unknown until they occur. They must be guided to expect the unknown and be able to meet challenges. They argue that simply giving students the facts is a static situation which does not prepare them for the dynamic and ever-changing world which they will confront in the
workplace. Candy (2000) takes this idea even further and describes ‘lifelong learning’ as all aspects of education and training at all stages of life and wherever it occurs.

In addition to teaching and learning activity that takes place in the university itself, Candy (2000) maintains that opportunities exist to link with students from all cultures, ages and other institutions (vertically), with learning in industry and other areas outside the university (sideways links) and continuing into postgraduate studies (forward links). When discussing teaching and assessment strategies, Candy (2000) considers the teaching approaches most likely to encourage students to engage in lifelong learning skills include those that involve real-world learning. This is supported by de la Harpe and Radloff (2006), who encourage universities to ensure learning environments are a student-centred process, rather than content focused, and that learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks are aligned. Over time, therefore, there is a consensus between academics and researchers as to the qualities needed in HE, and this research shows these values are still shared by the current generation of students and industry.

In the US, the Educational Commission of the States (1995) concluded colleges and universities that effectively engaged students were those which added value and channelled student energies into appropriate activities. The National Survey of Student Engagement in the US draws heavily on the ‘Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education’ (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) in preparing the student engagement questionnaire. It is suggested these principles remain current, and they are:

- encouragement of student–faculty contacts;
- interchange and cooperation among students;
- use active learning techniques;
- provision of prompt feedback;
- promote time spent on the tasks;
- encourage high expectations; and
- respect for diverse talents and different ways of learning.

The Educational Commission of the States (1995) also added the following two factors to those suggested by Chickering and Gamson (1987):
• that the environments be perceived by students as inclusive and affirming; and

• that they be places where expectations for performance are clear and set at achievable levels.

Like Bowden and Marton (1998), Chickering and Gamson (1987) believe students should be prepared to understand and deal with life. They argue that what is taught is equally important as how it is taught; but until the ‘how’ is consolidated, it is difficult to tackle the curriculum. They also offer strategies to implement the seven principles, but the extent of adoption is difficult to quantify. This is one area that can be considered in the strategies adopted in this research. It is also important that students become actively involved in their education, and that they take responsibility and not always blame their teachers for their poor performance. It is important that they be aware of their particular learning styles and approaches to the assessments they are given.

Some matters are constants in the literature and this was evident in the feedback received in relation to this research. For example, to become an active learner, students need to be given structured exercises, challenging discussion, and team projects with peer critiques in the classroom; this type of activity should also be encouraged outside the classroom through, for example, research projects and online discussion forums. It is very difficult for students if they are not given appropriate and prompt feedback on their assessment tasks. This links with time management for HE tasks, and it is also important that students develop a timetable for the tasks they have to undertake. With regard to expectations, academics must set high standards and guide students on how they can achieve them. Finally, students need opportunities to show their talent and learn in ways that suit them (Bowden & Marton, 1998).

There are various tactics that can be put into place to enhance these characteristics. Curricula should have a mix of learning styles to enable students to experience things they are comfortable with, and yet on the other hand contain new styles to challenge them. These are straightforward examples, but may not feature on the radar of lecturers who have only a scant idea of educational methodology and who gained their appointment through industry experience, research output, or possession of a relevant doctorate. Although many Australian universities insist that new academics undertake professional development in education theory, this often does not impact on existing staff.
1.6 What is a higher education experience in Australia?

The Australian Graduate Survey shows there are many different components which, taken together, make up a HE experience. None of these components can stand alone, but must work together. When evaluating their HE experience, students will reflect on the entire experience. It is unrealistic to expect that they encountered no negative experiences over their university time, but the goal for universities is to enhance and improve on the positive ones. During the course of their university experience, students will engage in myriad experiences which might be considered more broadly as either educational, academic, administrative, social, facilities or career components of their HE experience. How important each one is to the students will depend on the thoughts and expectations of the individual student. For this reason, the characteristics of an HE experience are listed (in no particular order) in the model in Figure 3 which appears in Section 2.4. No one component in the model is necessarily more important than another. The components that are seen as the responsibility of the university are discussed first, followed by those factors that are dependent on the student and finally; the role of the third primary stakeholder – industry – is discussed regarding its contribution to the HE experience.

1.6.1 Background to higher education in Australia

In 1970 only three per cent of Australians held a degree. The number is now over 30 per cent of young people and this is expected to increase to 40 per cent by 2025. Suddenly, student demand will shape the programs universities offer, and this transposed into record student acceptances in 2012 across Australia (Australian Government, 2010). HE is now a competitive market, but the deciding factor is quality, not price, unlike many other markets. This makes it extremely important for universities to guard their reputations. The government website myuniversity.gov.au was established to assist prospective students with their HE decisions. This website has been replaced by www.qilt.edu.au. Another factor to consider is the role of international students. HE is currently the fourth-largest export sector in Australian trade. In 2010, HE institutions enrolled more than 250,000 international students and earned around $16 billion in export income. By 2015 this number had increased to 275,000 (Australian Government, 2016).

Uncapping university places in 2012 may have given prospective students more choice; however, the economy has natural employment controls and future graduates may have more
difficulty gaining work in their chosen fields (Universities Australia, 2016). When student enrolment numbers were restricted, only sufficient graduates entered the market for the vacancies in their specific disciplines. A free market gives industry a greater choice of graduates, and this competitive market encourages students to make the effort to stand out. It may be that students on the whole have not been alerted to this fact and they all feel they will find well-paid jobs on graduation. For a niche market such as the property industry, this may not still be the case and industry employment may become more competitive; this is the challenge of transition (Davis, 2012).

Public universities are led by scholars and they value peer judgment and consultative decision making that are academic; to them, universities are places of higher learning and research. Their primary purpose is to pursue education and advance knowledge. Students, on the other hand, may value very different outcomes and they will drive very different priorities. The HE peak body is Universities Australia and it must work with government to ensure that adequate funds are available to ensure high standards in graduates and research are maintained and hopefully increased. Australia needs a HE agenda that meets the needs of the global community (Davis, 2012; Davidson, 2009).

Never has it been so important to know what students expect from their HE experience. First, the Bradley Report (2008) and the Australian Government (2010) response to it, make it obvious that major change is expected for HE in Australia. The Ernst and Young (2012) report on HE in Victoria surveyed 1000 students in a small, but significant, sample of the thousands of HE students across Victoria. Reforms are slowly being introduced in the HE sector in an attempt to bring Australia back to the competitive edge it once held against the other OECD countries.

Giving students what they want, particularly international students, is only half the battle. Sending the message out, and understanding and managing expectation, is of prime importance as well. With HE in Australia now being demand driven, it is important to discover what students want. The problem with this model is that there is no guarantee of a job at the end of the degree. If the number of students with degrees in the various sectors is larger than the attrition rate combined with growth in that particular market type, then there will be high graduate unemployment and a general dissatisfaction with the system that was supposed to help them, but then failed (Boyd, 2010; Parker, 2012). When numbers for particular disciplines were controlled, it was a reasonably straightforward step: once you had
the qualification, you then obtained a working position in the industry of your choice. This may not be so easy now that the doors have been opened to as many students as universities wish to accept. The problem may be exacerbated, because current students expect to obtain successful, high-paying working positions just like previous graduates have. In addition, they often feel it is owed to them because they are also paying a high price to obtain their qualifications. Universities are growing in the number of students they enrol but in the current economic climate the economy is not growing at the same rate. Graduate employment rate dropped from 56.4 per cent to 41.7 per cent 2008–2014 (Lamacraft, 2016).

The researcher chose to investigate stakeholder expectation in one discrete university program: property education. The reasons for choosing this discipline are threefold. First, these programs have relatively low good teaching scales (GTS) and student satisfaction scores nationally and across all universities that offer a property program. Second, the programs are all accredited by professional bodies that take an active interest in course (program) content. Third, property is the discipline the researcher has had the most teaching experience in.

1.7 How do we measure satisfaction within higher education?

The Course Experience Questionnaire and Australian Graduate Survey (CEQ/AGS) were designed as performance indicators of perceived teaching quality in HE. They have been used as such a measure across all Australian university graduates since being introduced in the 1990s. The instruments were designed to measure differences in teaching quality across several institutions and include items concerning teaching about which students have direct experience. The CEQ/AGS is accepted as a valid indication of student satisfaction. The major problem with this indicator is that the completion rate is very low for many university programs, particularly in property education (Wilson et al., 1997).

The five scales of the CEQ are:

- good teaching (eight items);
- clear goals and standards (five items);
- appropriate workload (five items);
• appropriate assessment (six items); and
• emphasis on independence (six items).

Correlation between these items indicates a relationship between heavy workload, inappropriate assessment and superficial study methods and between good teaching, clear goals and standards, and deep approaches to learning (Wilson et al., 1997). Research by Scott (2006) on the Course Experience Questionnaire (now the Australian Graduate Survey – AGS) for Australian HE graduates has been used to gain an understanding of what items are the most important to HE students. The AGS is the only nationally generated data for HE graduates in Australia and since 2015 it has included the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) and the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ).

The current instrument (AGS) has an introductory set of questions aimed at providing an indication of graduate destinations: called the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), it is followed by the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) which has been administered to every Australian graduate since 1992, but is now presented in a different variation and includes 23 questions about learning and teaching (the previous instrument had 28 questions). The new CEQ has two open-ended questions asking graduates to recount their best and worst HE experiences (Appendix A) (Australian Government, 2010).

The research undertaken by Scott (2006) is still relevant, because the survey combines rating and open-ended comments on the best aspects (BA) and the most in need of improvement (NI) for a student’s tertiary experience. This study used a database of over 168,000 comments from 95,000 graduates from 14 Australian universities for the years 2001–04. This resulted in 285,900 hits on their university experience. The survey was possible due to IT software called CEQuery. This software classifies comments into five main domains: outcomes, staff, course design, assessment and support, then into 26 subdomains. The relative importance of the total hits was approximately:

• course design: 41 per cent;
• staff: 26 per cent;
• support: 14 per cent;
• outcomes: 12 per cent; and
assessment: seven per cent.

This gives an indication of the relative weight of the factors that motivate student engagement in an Australian context. This analysis reveals that practice-orientated and interactive, face-to-face learning methods attracted by far the most ‘best aspects’ (BA) comments than the usual ‘sage on the stage’ mode of traditional lecturing. This indicates the importance of shifting the focus to student-centred approaches to course design. For this group of 95,000 students, learning remained very much a social experience.

The study also identifies three areas that warrant an intensified focus for improvement (NI):

- assessment;
- student administration and support; and
- course structure and expectations.

Scott’s study identified that it is the total experience of a university that shapes students’ judgments of quality and motivates their engagement in their studies, and not just what happens in the classroom. As part of the study, Scott conducted feedback workshops of more than 100 key staff from the 14 participating universities. The workshops endorsed the use of CEQuery as an educational tracking tool and formulated a set of educational guidelines that have emerged from this particular study for sound HE teaching:

- a sound, flexible, relevant and responsive course design;
- capable, committed, accessible and responsive staff;
- efficient and responsive administrative, IT, library and student support systems actively working together; and
- relevant, consistent and integrated assessment of a university standard that the course design, learning methods and resources support.

These items covered by the CEQ are consistent with the education objectives outlined previously in this chapter by Bowden and Marton (1998), Chickering and Gamson (1987). The report then goes on to state that the factors asked in the CEQ, which were important to students in their course (program) were:

- relevance;
desirability;
distinctiveness; and
achievable (Scott, 2005).

Many academics in HE are struggling with student disenchantment and are exploring ways they might successfully engage with their students. Snyder (2003) notes that often the cultural environment of HE did not encourage active learning in students and teachers needed to be creative in their subject matter to encourage creative learning. Snyder maintains that teachers must take a risk and experiment with different teaching styles and methods to facilitate change. D’Andrea and Gosling (2001) discuss the gap between educational rhetoric, such as ‘enhancing the student experience’ or ‘quality of learning’ and what is often actually delivered to the student. They feel it comes back to teacher enthusiasm and student expectations.

By using focus groups of students, Lizzio et al. (2002) tested student concepts of good teaching and other items covered in the CEQ. They found teacher quality was very important to HE students and that students also linked this with the importance of using reviews of workload and assessment practices (Lizzio et al., 2002; Kember & Leung, 2010). If students are informed about the different processes and the educational reasons for them, they are more likely to be supportive of their introduction and be willing to cooperate in new ventures. Whether a student experiences satisfaction, or lack thereof, is the result of a combination of many factors in the education experience. Possibly the most important of these is student engagement, from which all the other factors flow (Australian Government, 2010, p. 14):

How we teach changes regularly. What we teach is in part tradition, part response to emerging fields of knowledge and part industrial practice to control entry to a profession (Davis, 2010, p. 35).

Davis (2010) goes on to state that a university education should be more than skills for a job qualification. A graduate should be trained to apply knowledge to new circumstances.

There are certain similarities in all HE programs. To really understand why there are specific problems with HE property education in Australia, we need to look at what makes these property programs different from other HE programs and how this then creates specific
problems. Many of the problems that emerge during this research are common to many HE programs in Australia, but many others belong only to property programs.

1.8 Background to property higher education in Australia

Until the 1970s, property education was acquired through a technical education pathway, now commonly known as vocational education and training (VET), or through diploma courses at colleges of advanced education. The choice was essentially either a certificate in either valuation or real estate, or in many cases, both. The 1970s ushered in rampant inflation with soaring housing prices in Australia. Baby Boomers had entered the housing market and there was a shortage of supply. It was soon realised that a person’s home would be their major asset and with a home ownership rate over 80 per cent in Australia, this was an important consideration. At the time when many Australian technical colleges became universities, many of their courses (programs) became degrees. The thinking at the time was that the property industry was emerging as one of the most important industries in the world, and the forerunners of what is now the API decided that by the early 1990s new members would be required to have a degree.

Property education in Australia has long been overseen by the API (and its forerunners, the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers, the Australian Institute of Valuers, the Australian Institute of Valuers and Land Administrators, and the Australian Institute of Valuers and Land Economists) and it continues to advise and accredit university courses today. It is an integral part of the Australian property industry, because it manages and controls the certification and registration of practising valuers and other property professionals. As the property market in Australia grew, so did the need for property professionals, not just those that worked in property sales. The number of name changes the professional body adopted through the 1980s and 1990s is in itself indicative of the changes that were occurring in the professions making up the property industry and the ongoing search for relevance. Property HE largely started out as property units which were components or streams of a business degree, and has grown and merged into its own degrees since the 1980s. Although a boutique degree, a property degree in Australia is usually found within the business faculty of most major universities, or in some cases within the built environment group, as for University of Technology, Sydney, The University of Melbourne and RMIT University. A typical HE property program will contain courses specific to the property industry and will include
property law, land valuation, property investment, urban and general economics, property
development, feasibility studies, and many of these areas will be offered over more than one
year. Detailed program outlines are available at all 10 Australian public university websites,
or on www.api.org.au. A summary outline of the 10 public university property HE programs
in Australia is set out in Figure 2 below.
## Figure 2: Program details of the 10 universities offering property degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Length of program</th>
<th>Elements of program structure</th>
<th>Title of program</th>
<th>Mode of delivery</th>
<th>Number of enrolments</th>
<th>Other features</th>
<th>Academic program coordinator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3 Val. electives</td>
<td>Bach Commerce</td>
<td>F/T &amp; P/T</td>
<td>180+</td>
<td>3 week placement</td>
<td>Steven Rowley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Val electives &amp; Distance Edu.</td>
<td>Bach of Property</td>
<td>F/T &amp; P/T</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Garrick Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deakin University</td>
<td>2/3 years</td>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>Bach of Property &amp; Real Estate</td>
<td>P/T Online</td>
<td>500+</td>
<td>Can complete in 2 years, 3 learning</td>
<td>Richard Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Flexible majors &amp; sub-majors</td>
<td>Bach of Property Economics</td>
<td>No P/T &amp; face to face</td>
<td>200+</td>
<td>30 days of work placement</td>
<td>Chris Eves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT University</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Set program, no choice</td>
<td>Bach App. Sc. Property (Honours)</td>
<td>No P/T &amp; face to face</td>
<td>300+</td>
<td>Common 1st yr. if working, claim 3 electives</td>
<td>Judith Callanan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Can select spec. (e.g., Valuation)</td>
<td>Bach Bus. Mgt.</td>
<td>F/T &amp; P/T</td>
<td>150+</td>
<td>Heavy in Valuation</td>
<td>Clive Warren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Generic degree; choice of 4 electives</td>
<td>Bach Bus. Prop. (Prop.)</td>
<td>F/T &amp; P/T</td>
<td>150+</td>
<td>Offers double degree with Business</td>
<td>Sharon Yap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Spec. different areas (e.g., Valuation)</td>
<td>Bach Property Economics &amp; Development</td>
<td>P/T available</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stephen Boyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>4 vals. Units - no Rural Vals.</td>
<td>Bach Property Economics</td>
<td>no longer have P/T</td>
<td>200+</td>
<td>Offers Honours year</td>
<td>Janet Ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>A number of electives</td>
<td>Bach Bus. &amp; Com. (Property)</td>
<td>External study P/T 4 years</td>
<td>250+</td>
<td>Can fast track Rural Vals.</td>
<td>Graeme Newell/Chyi Lee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: F/T = full time study. P/T = part time study.
As to where the discipline belongs within a university is a point for discussion. Traditionally, property training started with valuers, who formed part of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in the United Kingdom, and traditionally, the degrees sit in the schools of built environment, or engineering in that country. Within the US the area has always been titled real estate and falls within business schools. Within Australia they have also usually emerged within business schools. As to the length of the program, as a result of the Bradley report (2008) and the Bologna model, the preferred duration of study is directed by government to be of three years’ duration as an undergraduate degree, or four for an honours degree. The Bologna model is based on the results of a series of meetings of 29 European education ministers and the agreement signed in Bologna in 1999.

1.9 Property education now

On 5 August 2011, as a direct result of the release of the Bradley report (2008), and the policy response from the Australian Government (2010), a national symposium on the future of property education in Australia was held in Adelaide. The event was held because it was felt by the organisers that property education in Australia was at a crossroads, with their current undergraduate property programs having evolved purely to supply the property professions. It was considered likely that these graduates may not continue to meet the requirements of the broader property industry, especially if universities choose to increase cohort sizes to implement federal government education policy and remain economically viable. Increased cohort size often leads to the diminishment of practical activity such as work experience and field trips, due to the difficulty of managing large groups of students. The federal government is currently pursuing a commercialisation strategy for the university sector and is now embarking on a process of ‘educational massification’ following the recommendations of the Bradley report (2008). The property industry, through the Property Council of Australia, seeks to challenge existing knowledge, reshape paradigms and develop new decision-making tools in conjunction with property academia, and seeks a new formalised interaction between the industry and academia. This model will lead to career academics with strong research and publication profiles, but with little experience in property practice.

All 13 Australian universities offering property programs have a significant level of commonality, in part due to the specific requirements of the professional accrediting bodies.
This does not tally with the Bradley report, which requires greater clarity in the boundary between the vocational education for technology (VET) and the HE sector. The relatively small numbers of students enrolled in property programs (approximately 2000) does not fit the commercialisation of the Australian universities model, and neither do property academics often fit the research and thought leadership model.

One of the major problems in this area is the disconnect and misalignment of the Property Council of Australia (PCA) with property academia in Australia, and a similar disconnect between themselves and the API, which is the major accrediting body for property education in Australia. The PCA seeks to set up its own national research agenda which would leave academia out in the cold. This symposium found six major issues with property HE in Australia:

- adequacy of financial returns;
- adequacy of delivery;
- lower standard of student;
- difficulty of finding qualified academics;
- difficulty in finding research to focus on; and
- stakeholder disconnect and misalignment (Parker, 2012).

The results of this symposium show there are cracks in the structure to which property programs in Australia are attached. Different factions of industry have created different research forums and this is impacting on the quality of research available to universities. If property programs cannot generate a research income, they will have difficulty receiving funding from the federal government. In addition, the GTS and satisfaction score for property programs is still below that of most other programs and this creates a problem. Industry leaders, on the whole, have little desire to teach or undertake a PhD. This makes it extremely hard to recruit academics with the qualifications required by the government. Although universities all have their internal student survey processes, there is still very heavy reliance on CEQ/AGS scores. Universities need to understand why these student satisfaction scores for property are traditionally low and find strategies to improve them.
1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the major areas of the research, including the research questions, the reason for completing this research and the background and current situation in property HE in Australia today. Most importantly, the chapter sets the scene for an analysis of a student experience in a property HE program, and the feelings, thoughts and aspirations of the other stakeholders who provide the experience, or have completed the experience, or are employing the graduates following this experience. This now leads into a more extensive discussion of HE in Chapter 2, the literature review, which examines the history, development and principles affecting stakeholder expectations of Australian property HE programs.
Chapter 2 – Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the relationships surrounding higher education (HE) in universities. It also discusses aspects of the HE experience and the theory behind the components that make up this experience. It commences with the current HE student and then funnels down into the components of a HE experience.

It is important to understand the background and future of HE when examining stakeholder expectation of any HE program. Where does it come from and what changes need to occur? Linked to this is student satisfaction, because this is the major measurement criteria for the success, or otherwise, of any HE program and it forms the basis of an examination of stakeholder expectations.

The chapter also discusses the specific area of property HE, both internationally and locally. The analysis covers the wider community, academic and industry stakeholders, and the importance of considering all aspects of a student-centred approach to HE. This chapter forms the background and current situation within HE with regard to the stakeholders and it creates the springboard to move into the area of discovering answers to the research questions raised in Chapter 1. This chapter concludes with the research design as a link to Chapter 3, Methodology.

Predominantly, this thesis is about perceptions of property HE in Australia, through the eyes of the three major stakeholders. A study of stakeholder expectations of property HE in Australia requires a discussion of all relevant influences, including:

- an examination of the components of HE – specifically, property HE;
- a discussion of the marketing influences on student expectations, perceptions and satisfaction;
- an analysis of the stakeholders and their expectations with regard to property programs; and
- the direction property HE is taking into the future (Gibbs, 2010; Davis, 2012; Candy, 2000; Prosser & Trigwell, 2004; Radloff & de la Harpe, 2001; Tagg, 2005).
These background items are essential to understanding how HE and especially property HE, has evolved and what a HE experience may move towards in the future.

2.2 Who is the current higher education student?

A HE student today is a very different person to the student in 1996, who was a very different student from one in 1976. Their socioeconomic backgrounds are often very different and their technological backgrounds are certainly very different (Sheahan, 2005). There were no laptops or smart phones in 1995, no internet and no YouTube, no Twitter, or Facebook. These six things alone make teaching a current HE student a challenge. Experts have many terms for this cohort of HE students, but really the differences can be broken down to the fact that they are young people attempting to enter a very competitive workforce and they have many more distractions than any other student in history (Cornish et al., 2009). Coates (2011) may say they have been ‘mollycoddled’ by their parents and secondary school teachers and therefore are ill-prepared for the challenges of university study. He believes Generation Y students expect the HE experience to cater to them, rather than them adapting and expending their thinking. He sees campus intellectual energy declining; he sees teachers struggling to entertain large groups of disinterested students who complain about boring lectures and heavy workloads; he sees students who have unreasonable expectations. A few put in the necessary work and effort, but most aim to do the least work possible (Coates, 2011).

Sheahan (2005) calls the current HE student an anomaly. He believes they are the most over-parented, over-educated, welfare-dependent generation ever. They stay at home longer and are in education longer, and yet they say they rank independence highly. This age of uncertainty and insecurity has created a generation who are flexible and mobile. They are highly focussed on themselves and their careers. They are the first generation to be regarded as truly mobile; they have embraced the smartphone technology and all it offers (Huntley, 2006). Generation Ys on average spend five hours a day in front of a screen doing things that they control. They are either intensely engaged, or intensely bored, and they oscillate between the two. They want instant gratification and although they may be able to multitask, on the whole they are not good at problem solving. They appear to have little time in their busy lives for reflection and contemplation (Sheahan, 2005).

We know that Generation Y are very socially connected and heavily influenced by their friends, but we have no understanding as to whether these characteristics will transfer to this
new generation. Generation Z are the first generation born into the digital age, and although it is too early to make generalisations, it is expected they will be just as easily bored as the current generation (Pupedis & Bellman, 2011). HE students all come to class laden with electronic equipment, from smartphones to laptops, and many turn to these distractions if a teacher does not hold their attention completely. The problem with this type of distraction is that it can be very quiet and may even go unnoticed. This means there need to be other ways to interact with HE students, rather than face to face experiences alone.

2.3 How different are they?

Generation Ys grew up feeling wanted in mostly small families and this has made them confident and relaxed. But three out of four have single parents, or working mothers (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Due to the current economic stress, inflation and the credit squeeze, it will not be easy for them to buy a house or raise a family. Generation Y students have different characteristics from previous generations of students because they have grown up in different times. This technologically savvy group have no time for completing preliminary reading before a lecture or researching a topic because it is interesting. To compound the problem, they are largely being taught at university by older Baby Boomer lecturers. But exactly what are their characteristics? They are (Sheahan, 2005):

- Street smart – they are the media generation and they see right through it. They have no time for incompetence and propaganda. They are innovative and creative and want to do things the fastest way.

- Mature and resilient – they are a generation who have had to deal with the emotional hardship of the family breakdown and are often left to their own devices. They not only have to grapple with peer pressure to smoke and drink, but are confronted with hard drugs and illicit online activity.

- Educated and fast learners – over 70 per cent finish secondary school and 70 per cent of these receive some post-secondary qualification. A large proportion work while completing their education. They are smart, but they are can also be know-alls. They want the shortest path to success.

- Practical – they are pragmatic and want to know the best way to do things.

- Enterprising – being largely creative, innovative and resourceful, they have little time for planning and strategising. They need to understand why these things are important in the world of business if they are going to do them.
• Manipulative – they will go to any lengths to achieve what they want. After all, they’ve seen all the television shows.

• Socially, culturally and environmentally aware – once again, the effect of media and society values. They are very social and loyal to their group. They make good team players.

• They can be easily distracted – so the tasks must be many and varied to hold their interest.

• Purposeful – they will do the work as long as they see the value in it.

• Open, accepting, inclusive and connected – but often only in a digital way and they rely completely on their electronic devices with rarely any backup when these fail.

• They are success orientated and have separated effort from reward. Many expect to acquire wealth and success just for showing up.

• Image conscious – they grew up on brands and the marketing machine. Therefore, it is all about where they work, who they work for and which university they go to, rather than whether this is suited to their particular personality type (adapted from Sheahan, 2005).

Not only is the current student a different social creature from their teachers, but they are also embarking on a very different educational experience by attending university. The language and rules of engagement at university will be as foreign to many local students as they are for international students. As student numbers grow, this feeling of strangeness and isolation may only grow too. HE students need sympathetic teachers, but in many instances, this may not be the case (McLean & Ransom, 2005). Lawrence (2001) believes many international and local university students are confused and disillusioned and they are often met with a lack of understanding by their teachers. Many university teachers today behave as if they have a switched-on and aware group of students, instead of the nervous and frightened first-year students they actually have. The problem is only exasperated when groups of local and international students are mixed. On the whole, they are not prepared to stand on their own and choose their own assessment, or find the answers themselves. Both international and first-year local students have come from educational systems that are controlled and monitored and where there is no concept of being an independent learner (McLean & Ransom, 2005).

It is not surprising that students coming from secondary schools might view education as a consumer product. We need to be aware that most lecturers operate in a modernist world.
This offers clear meaning and defined terms. Students, on the other hand, belong to the postmodernist world. This world plays with indeterminacy of language and refuses to fix meaning. In the HE field, the symbol of the qualification has subsumed the reality of education. A postmodern perspective sees the shift in society from production to consumption (McArdle-Clinton, 2008). The terms ‘traditional’, ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ indicate the distance in mutual understanding between the teacher and the student. The majority of the population have grown up in the traditional or modern society, but the Western world society of today is postmodern and this brings with it many challenges for HE (McArdle-Clinton, 2008).

In her study of HE students across a number on international institutions, McArdle-Clinton (2008) found very little reliance on textbooks and library resources with the majority of students in her survey. They expected the necessary materials would be provided by the lecturer. All the students surveyed preferred packaged notes and handouts, compared to independent reading. The four countries covered by the survey were Ireland, Australia, France and South Africa. The research covered 95 academics and 778 students. McArdle-Clinton (2008) found that although 65 per cent of students felt they should do extra reading, they never did any. The students ranked a qualification and job prospects above interest in their course. With regard to the academics, 90 per cent felt intimidated by the students to ensure all exam questions were covered in class and all notes were prepared for them. Seventy-eight per cent of the lecturers felt the students viewed their degree as a commodity and they felt frustrated at the lack of interest in learning expressed by most students in the study (McArdle-Clinton, 2008). We know current HE students behave differently and have different priorities from students in the past, but has the university experience changed to take these factors into account?

2.4 What is higher education?

For almost 30 years, since the Dawson reforms in HE in the late 1980s, the Australian Government has been grappling with how to allow more students access to the benefits of HE, yet simultaneously maintain high quality and affordable education. The demand-driven system introduced in 2009 has seen an increase in Commonwealth-supported undergraduate places up to 2015 and government expenditure on HE learning and teaching has increased by 55 per cent over that period. In 2014, approximately 1.4 million students were enrolled in HE
programs and almost 350,000 of these were international students. A further review was commissioned by the Australian Government in 2014 and it was recommended that there be no change in existing policy for HE funding. At present, the Federal Government funds, on average, less than 50 per cent of fees and students fund the remainder; depending on the overall cost of the degree they have undertaken (Australian Government, 2015).

Despite the increase in funding, it is a fact of life in Australia that HE students pay for their education and this trend will continue. It is also a fact that workplace expectations have changed. A degree is often necessary before you can begin many careers today. The major reason students currently have for enrolling in a university course (program) is to enhance their career prospects (McArdle-Clinton, 2008; Universities Admissions Centre, 2016). Yet surveys show that one in four would choose another university, and six out of 10 graduates would choose a different course, if offered the chance again. Further, only three out of five students in the UK believe their degree gives value for money spent (Naylor, 2007).

By 1997 universities had become places to acquire training for a skilled workforce and places of discovery through research. Within the UK the goal was to place 50 per cent of school leaving students into HE by 2025 and in Australia that goal is 40% (Naylor, 2007; Australian Government, 2010). The reality is increasing student numbers and decreasing money being spent on facilities and staff. Salaries for HE academics in the UK have only increased in real terms by one per cent since 1981, whereas the average increase for non-manual workers for the equivalent time was 40 per cent in real terms. In Australia, academic salaries have fallen 25 per cent in real terms since 1984, and over the same period, the student/staff ratio has increased fivefold (Australian Review of Public Affairs, 2016). In the 1960s, university education was linked to economic prosperity in the Western world. Naylor (2007) believes that ever-increasing student numbers, without increasing resources, leads to reduced quality of learning and teaching, and poorer prospects for appropriate employment. As HE student numbers increase, usually so does the student/staff ratio, because new staff are often not appointed at the same rate (Naylor, 2007). The situation in Australia shows the student/staff ratio in tertiary education as increasing from 4:1 in 1984 to over 20:1 in 2005 (Australian Review of Public Affairs, 2016; Newell et al, 2010).

The relationship between the university and the academic is a contractual one, and there is a clear duty of care required at law from both sides. However, students do not have this level of protection. Their relationship to the university is more one of a client or customer. For
students, accountability in HE is often confusing (Naylor, 2007). They are partners in the HE experience, not just passive purchasers of a product. They are a unique customer, in that the experience demands their active involvement. If they do not engage and expand intellectually, they are being short changed. It is as much their responsibility as the institution’s to gain as much from the experience as possible (Naylor, 2007). Most universities have a student charter setting out student responsibilities, but many HE students do not read them and are unaware of many of their rights and responsibilities (RMIT University, 2016).

In the process of grappling with the new HE experience, many students become confused and distant. But what exactly makes up the experience that they are undertaking? An examination of educational programs must include a thorough analysis of the many sectors of the program, as Gibbs (2010) states in The Dimensions of Quality. This is an appropriate starting point for a discussion about HE. He begins by using the structure developed by Biggs (1993) in his classic article on HE. Although more than 20 years old, the concepts outlined by Biggs at that time are still a very relevant framework from which to begin an analysis of any university program. Gibbs (2010) divided HE practice into what he saw as the 3Ps: presage, processes and product. All components of a university program fit within one of these premises.

### 2.5 Components of a higher education experience

How can stakeholder satisfaction be achieved within property HE programs? What does it take to ensure property HE students complete university satisfied with their educational experience? The HE sector in Australia is a multifaceted and complicated industry. To better understand the framework within which this sector sits, this research has developed a model that encapsulates the components of a HE experience and identifies the key influences of student satisfaction (Figure 3). It is only through gaining an understanding of the factors that make up the sector that we can begin to isolate and analyse their specific effects on students’ overall HE experience. The resultant model is broad, is drawn predominantly from the student satisfaction survey literature, and is broken into subsets that represent/identify different aspects of the student experience, in line with the outline presented by Gibbs (2010) and based on Biggs’ (1993) 3P model.
This section of the literature review discusses the major subsets of this model and then inserts the appropriate subset within the text as Figure 3. The educational subsets that make up the ‘Processes’ section of Biggs’ HE model are discussed in no particular order, and the appropriate subset of the model taken from Figure 3 is included at the beginning of each section.

**Figure 3: Model of higher education (HE) Model developed by author from sources**
2.5.1. Presage

Presage variables are the ones in existence before students commence their HE experience and include the resources and the funding, the manner students in which are selected, the quality of the students and the academic staff, and the nature and scope of the research undertaken at the particular institution (Gibbs, 2010). The term applies to that part of a HE experience that exists before a student commences their education. From the students’ point of view, the most important of the presage characteristics are the facilities and other resources, such as library facilities and information technology (IT) availability.

Many students in Australia choose a university based on proximity, reputation or family connections (Davis, 2012). Another presage characteristic that impacts on the student experience is how the university chooses to use its funding: to enhance the student experience, improve facilities, pay part-time academic staff and so on. Quality of students and how they are selected are presage factors, as are the degree of collaborative learning that occurs within the various degree programs offered by a university. Student/staff ratios and the quality of teaching staff are two other important, but less obvious, presage characteristics. These last two characteristics often form the basis of much of the student dissatisfaction with their educational programs and are important characteristics for a university to be aware of (Gibbs, 2010). IT is probably one of the most important presage components of a university and it is also an area that receives many complaints from both students and staff. This is a general complaint across all universities, and although the systems appear to improve each year, they are still unable to keep pace with expectations.

To illustrate how important it is for a university to manage the presage factors, Gibbs (2010) asks his readers to imagine two universities in the same city. University A is a sandstone university and has spent a lot of its funding on improving their facilities and resources. It also has a low student/staff ratio, which makes for smaller class sizes; however, many of their senior academic staff are heavily involved with research to maintain their high funding grants. As a result, students are mainly taught by recent doctoral graduates and part-time staff. University B, on the other hand, is a modern, purpose-built university located in the suburbs. Its research output is not high and the academics have heavy teaching loads.

Although this university may struggle for funding, the student experience is fulfilling, with much collaboration between students and staff. There is a commitment by this university for a richer, student-centred experience.
In Australia, presage is a balancing activity between these two extremes, and individual programs, staff and students are at the mercy of decisions made at the policy level and which are often in place for many years at a time.

2.5.2 Processes

The second major characteristic of a HE experience is the process dimension. Presage may determine the physical spaces where the classes are held, the availability of technology used and the quality of teaching staff, but it is in the processes of a university program where most student experience is directed. If universities are to promote lifelong learning, there are five areas that universities need to consider:

- the structure of the curriculum;
- the content of the curriculum;
- teaching methods;
- approaches to assessment; and
- the student support system (Candy, 2000).

Process covers the effects on the educational experience of the broader areas of teaching, together with student administration activity. The more sophisticated a university becomes the more open to administrative errors the student experience may be. Within the learning and teaching component it covers assessment and feedback, teaching style and methods, level of intellectual challenge (curricula) and class sizes, and finally communication, relationships and non-curricula activity (Gibbs, 2010). These Process activities have been formed into models covering the major areas within these topics. The content in the models have been developed by the author from various educational sources. Figure 4, in the following section is taken from the HE model introduced in Figure 3, and represents a subset entitled Curricula (level of intellectual challenge). It is composed of seven sections and each one is discussed below.

2.5.2.1 Curricula (level of intellectual challenge)

Curricula forms a large portion of the Processes sector of a university and this component forms two of the five areas that Candy (2000) considers essential for a university following lifelong learning principles, as outlined in Chapter 1 and shown below in Figure 4, and determined by the literature (Tagg, 2007; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Candy, 2000). Each
element of curricula will be discussed in detail as they are important in the overall design of a HE degree.

Figure 4: Curricula – level of intellectual challenge subset

When designing curricula for university students, there are several criteria to be considered. Learning outcomes and graduate attributes are at the top of the list. RMIT University, for example, has a capabilities statement that overarches the traditional learning outcomes to encourage the development of a broader and more rounded student who acts as a professional, reflects as a citizen, and learns from their experiences (School of Property, Construction and Project Management, 2003). D’Andrea and Gosling (2001) discuss the gap between educational rhetoric, such as ‘enhancing the student experience’ or ‘quality of learning’, and what is often actually delivered to the student. It comes back to student expectations. If students are informed about the different processes and the educational reasons for them, they are more likely to be supportive of their introduction. This is supported by de la Harpe and Radloff (2006) who encourage universities to ensure learning environments are student centred and process focused, rather than content focused, and that learning outcomes, learning activities and assessment tasks are aligned. This all makes good educational sense, but many teachers start off enthusiastically and over time slip back into old habits.

If the content of what is included in the term ‘curricula’ is examined, it is possible to see the entire subset and how it evolves and changes as new concepts and ideas are tested and absorbed into an HE experience. An examination of the broad content of the various programs indicates a certain level of similarity, mainly due to the strong influence of the
major accrediting body for Australian property programs, the Australian Property Institute (API). The API sets out clear and uncompromising conditions on what they expect in any property program it accredits. In the API’s course accreditation policy, requirements of the universities that they accredit are rigorous and wide-reaching. In the first instance, the degree must be a bachelor, or postgraduate degree delivered in HE and recognised by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (Australian Property Institute, 2013).

The API sets out minimum requirements for content. The first knowledge field covers general property accreditation, and the second covers specialised knowledge for valuation. The first schedule contains: building construction, finance and accounting, commercial law, property/valuation fundamentals, property investment, property economics, property law, property management, property market analysis, land use and planning and development. Schedule 2 covers valuation applications and statutory valuation (Australian Property Institute, 2013).

2.5.2.2 Contact hours and workload
With regard to contact hours and workload, once again there are many similarities between the institutions offering property programs, as is the case for most programs across all universities. Of the 10 universities being examined, all operated on a semester system of 12 weeks, most offering two semesters a year, but a few providing the facility of summer school to fast track the degree process. Some of the universities offer a portion of the program online, but all adhere to weekly material over a 12-week period. A common full-time study load is four subjects (courses) per semester, sometimes increasing to five. All universities in the study, with the exception of RMIT, offer their programs over six semesters. RMIT offers a four-year (eight semesters) program, including an embedded honours year (School of Property, Construction & Project Management, 2016). Figure 2 in Chapter 1, has a schedule of the outline of the 10 universities under this study.

2.5.2.3 Aims and learning outcomes
Most undergraduate degrees have a component of general education and then a focus on a specialised area. It is therefore important that the learning outcomes are very clear in the general courses (subjects) to ensure students understand the concepts before they embark on the specialised courses (Tagg, 2007). Darling-Hammond (2006) supports using multiple measures of teacher education outcomes for students to be more able to clearly understand what is expected from them. It is important to use the combination of factors that best
contributes to successful student learning outcomes. Tagg (2007) believes students need to be taught to become expert learners; they need to learn how to learn. If they can pick up this type of skill early on in their university career, they will apply the concepts to other areas of study. He found students generally approach a given task in one of three ways:

- to simply complete the set task (surface learning); or
- complete the task and understand the reasoning behind the task; or
- combine the first two and extend the learning into a wider field than just what was asked for.

It is through learning outcomes that we can push student learning towards problem solving and a genuine desire to do more than simply find an answer. If this skill is taught in the general courses the skills will flow on into the program specialities (Tagg, 2007).

2.5.2.4 Structure of curricula
The structure of the curricula within property programs is monitored by the API and there is also a degree of similarity in the flow of subjects (courses) from semester to semester. For example, in the discipline of valuation, it is generally accepted that residential valuation comes before statutory valuation, urban valuation, rural valuation and, finally, advanced valuation. Other discipline areas flow in the same manner (Australian Property Institute, 2016).

2.5.2.5 Class size
Different universities choose to operate on an individual basis with regard to class size. However, it is a general condition that most property programs under review have seen an increase in student enrolment numbers since the release of the Bradley report (2008) and the then change of government policy that allowed universities flexible student entry (Australian Government, 2010). This has meant a university that may have had an annual intake of 50 property students in 2013 could now have an intake of 100 students at first year, or even 300, depending on available classroom sizes. Most often, class size is determined by the available classrooms, rather than what is educationally more suitable (Australian Property Institute, 2015).

Another factor that determines class size is the choice of the program manager, or the individual academics. Some academics prefer workshops of up to 50 students that may
operate on what is known as ‘lectorial’ mode, with part-lecture/part-activities. Others prefer a lecture to the entire intake of one or two hours and then tutorials of up to 50 students. A third mode is simply offering a three-hour lecture. However, if a university is using a blended mode of delivery, class size may be as large as it is feasible for the academics who are marking the assessment to complete feedback. Another determinant of the blended mode of delivery is how often they need to schedule face-to-face contact and the size of these face-to-face classes (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005). Policy on class size is almost impossible to determine for any given university, given the variations that can occur between disciplines, subjects and teacher preferences. However, it is recognised that on the whole smaller class sizes lead to both students and teachers having a more rewarding and personal educational experience than those experienced in large classes (McDonald, 2013).

2.5.2.6 Content choice and organisation
Differences in availability of material in either printed, or online format makes this information difficult to obtain from university to university. But this is an area where a university can fine tune its offerings. If the courses (subjects) are controlled, it is in the items included for study where creativity and relevance to industry can be included. With regard to the organisation of the classes, this varies from university to university, with most running classes during the day, into the evening. It is not uncommon for intensive courses to be offered at summer school or even over weekends. Often the organisation of class times is outside the control of the program, as all programs in a university compete for the limited room resources. With regard to course content for property programs in Australia, all 10 public universities in this research study are accredited by the API and as such certain course content is mandatory for accreditation (Australian Property Institute, 2016).

2.5.2.7 Design of curricula
Curricula design is another area where a program can add value. Innovative and creative assessments can engage students in the learning process, just as tired and technical assessment can leave students bored and disinterested (Mazur, 1999). The various delivery modes available and used in HE are discussed in the next section.

As well as using innovative delivery modes in how material is taught, the actual content is the second part of the design of curricula (Lilja & Richardsson, 2012). An examination of the content of the programs of the 10 universities in this study found a large degree of similarity
within material taught. This is largely because all the programs are accredited by the API and it stipulates a lot of what material must be taught (Australian Property Institute, 2016).

2.5.2.8 Delivery mode

There are several different delivery modes within a university system, and the more traditional lecture, followed by tutorials, is now joined by workshops, lectorials, online teaching and the most recent mode, blended learning (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005). Both students and academics agree that blended learning provides a greater degree of flexibility than traditional lecture-based courses (Poon, 2012). However, it is important to ensure that offerings really are blended learning and not simply online learning. There needs to be a reasonable degree of face-to-face contact as well as other mixes of delivery for students.

Newell (2013) supported the introduction of blended learning, but cautiously suggested that the material offered to students needed to be of a high standard and very interactive. Sufficient time and effort needed to go into designing online blended learning formats.

Blended learning strategies vary according to the discipline, the year level, student characteristics and learning outcomes, and have a student-centred approach to the learning design of the material presented. Blended learning can increase access and flexibility for learners, increase the level of active learning, and achieve better student experiences and outcomes. For teaching staff, blended learning can improve teaching and class management practices (Poon, 2012). An example of blended learning might include:

- face-to-face and online learning activities and formats;
- traditional timetabled classes with different schedules, such as weekend, intensive, external, trimester;
- well-established technologies, such as lecture capture and/or with social media;
- interactive technologies; and
- simulations, group activities, site-based learning, practical application and so on (adapted from University of Western Sydney, 2016).

In a survey responded to by 442 students, Poon (2012) found several advantages for blended learning programs:

- the convenience of not having to attend as often as for traditional delivery;
- the flexibility of when to complete assignments;
- the ability to work around a job responsibility; and
- the perceived advantage of several different delivery methods.

These advantages were often offset by a loss of interaction between lecturers and other students and the risk of academics not fully monitoring their learning progress. These problems could be overcome if the program involved simulated learning, chat groups, site visits, case studies and guest industry lectures. It is evident that blended learning is being used within property HE programs in Australia. At this stage such courses are in the minority for undergraduate property education. A study carried out on 69 Deakin University property students found the students preferred the blended learning mode to total face-to-face lectures, and 82 per cent of the respondents accessed the material from home (Cornish et al, 2009).

2.5.2.9 Deep learning challenges
The challenge to be student- and- process focused takes planning and creativity and is one of the reasons students usually enjoy study tours and field trips. When interviewing US College students attending international study tours in Europe, Younes and Asay (2003) found all participants learned something unexpected, either about themselves, others or the environment they were visiting. The students who had never travelled before gained confidence and said having other students there was helpful, very much like a ‘second family’. Study tours/field trips force students to actively learn, and the learning occurs in many different areas, including socialisation, environmental and educational.

Snyder (2003) notes that often the cultural environment of many HE institutions did not encourage active learning in students, but rather relied very heavily on the rote learning of material. He found that teachers needed to be more creative in their subject matter to encourage creative learning. Snyder further maintains that teachers must take a risk and experiment with different teaching styles and methods to facilitate change. A study tour or field trip fosters this active learning and the student/lecturer relationship is usually more interactive than in the traditional classroom model. As Morrison and Johnston (2003) express it, students are learning continually and in many different ways, and this can be challenging for both the students and the teachers.

In her discussion on the use of an innovative learning model in place at McGill University, Canada, McAlpine (2004) touches on the dichotomy of whether to cover all the coursework,
or to allow deviation from it through experimentation, and hence not have time to cover all
the course content. This dilemma is a very real one for universities today, with demands from
accrediting bodies for specific content in curricula. McAlpine (2004) found that some
students were very positive about the greater flexibility and informal discussion, and yet
others were angry that parts of the content were not covered. They preferred to be scribes in
class and digest the content at their leisure.

It is a difficult situation for a teacher, given that the modern student is usually provided with
in-depth notes and PowerPoint presentations. This is not how content is handled on a study
tour or field trip, and this is one of the reasons students enjoy them more. They are actively
involved in the learning experience. The teachers may be the experts, but they are in learning
mode as well. They become more like a mentor, rather than a lecturer and the rigidity
between the parties is softened (Tam, 2002).

It comes back to student expectations. If students are informed about the different processes
and the educational reasons for them, they are more likely to be supportive of their
introduction (Athiyaman, 1997; McAlpine, 2004). If students know and expect the learning
process to be different, as tours and field trips are, they are more accepting of variations in
the teaching process. If they understand the value of independent and creative thought
processes and these can be shown to them as characteristics highly sought-after by industry,
then the curriculum can be more flexibly delivered.

The type of learning that takes place on a tour/field trip enhances this type of motivation and
self-efficacy levels, because everyone is learning together and over the same timeframe.
Likewise, the accompanying teachers also need to be motivated and enthusiastic. Tours/field
studies will not be successful unless the teachers who accompany the students are committed
to the project. They need to be aware of what to expect and be prepared to relate to the
students on a social as well as educational level (Zusho & Pintrich, 2003). Kuit et al. (2001)
found the teachers on such study tours / field trips need to be good communicators and
organisers, and have an enthusiasm for the task they are undertaking. They also need to be
reflective, able to change direction and be creative in their ideas when things do not go
according to plan. The success of the trip relies on the teachers and the program more than
any other factors. The assessment tasks for this type of program work best when using the
expanded assessment criteria set out in Radloff and de la Harpe (2001) covering: cognitive
aspects (notes provided); metacognitive aspects (site visits and excursions); motivational
aspects (the tasks required them to apply learning in a new, creative manner); and affective aspects (working in groups and expressing their ideas to their peers, as well as socialising with them over the period of the activity).

One advantage of tours and field trips for both the university and the students is the flow-on effect of their usually enjoyable experience. In her study of HE students’ experiences, Tam (2002) found when students perceived a positive relationship with teachers, they reported a higher quality involvement in university experience overall. Tam found residing in campus accommodation was identified as a significant indicator of student satisfaction with their university. This type of experience puts some universities in this study at a disadvantage because they do not all have halls of residence. Study tours and field trips contribute in some way to fulfilling this role and should be encouraged, despite the problems in organising and supervising them. It is not always possible to take students on field trips and study tours, but there are still ways of making learning interesting and challenging, and one of the most highly regarded methods is the use of problem-solving styles of teaching.

The second of the processes subsets to be discussed in this review comprise teaching methods and styles. Figure 5 below illustrates the five components of this particular subset taken from The Higher Education Model introduced in Figure 3.

**Figure 5: The teaching methods and styles subset**
2.5.2.10 Teaching methods and styles

HE staff and students are made up of an enormous pool of individuals and as individuals it is very difficult to make generalisations about their thoughts and actions. With regard to Australian universities, Ramsden et al. (2007) surveyed 439 lecturers with reference to their approaches to teaching large first-year classes (greater than 170 students). They found a causal path from experiences of academic leadership for teaching and collaborative management, and a commitment to student learning and the context of teaching by lecturers. Lecturers who felt this leadership support were more likely to agree that large class size and other variables do not hinder effective teaching.

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) see good teaching as comprising five factors:

- continuous awareness of students’ present learning situation;
- an awareness of contextual dependency of learning and teaching;
- continuous awareness of students’ perceptions of teaching technologies, including IT;
- awareness of student diversity in classrooms; and
- awareness of the need to continually evaluate and improve teaching.

Ramsden (1992) takes it one stage further:

- learning from students where learning is a continuous process. These findings by Prosser and Trigwell are supported by much of the discussion to follow including Akerlind (2004) who promotes the student learning focused teacher and also Norton (2005) and Hattie (2007).

In her paper regarding data from first-year experience (FYE), Kift (2004) found the majority of HE teachers are either stretched or weary, with no time to contemplate change, or are adverse to change. Several dedicated and committed teachers are rising to the challenge, but many more are simply disconnected from the idea of treating students differently. The challenge is to find support for any changes from academics who are prepared to take the pedagogical risks necessary to follow FYE objectives and who are senior enough to invest the time to improve the FYE (Kift, 2004). One very interesting approach to HE teaching commitment appears in the research by Akerlind (2004), which is based on interviews with 28 university academics at Australian universities from a mixture of disciplines. From these
interviews, the author developed four categories of teacher experience which are broader than the traditional teacher-centred or student-centred approach:

- a teacher transmission-focused experience;
- a teacher–student relations-focused experience;
- a student engagement-focused experience; and
- a student learning-focused experience (Akerlind, 2004).

Akerlind (2004) discovered that teachers gained very little personal satisfaction from the first type of experience; but they gained some measure of satisfaction from the second method of teaching. Although requiring more preparation time, the third method was very rewarding and the fourth was not only immensely satisfying, but also extended the teacher’s own knowledge of the subject area. The conclusion was that although many lecturers see teaching as interfering with their research and use only the first two approaches, those that choose to focus on the latter two methods find that teaching can actually enhance their research potential (Akerlind, 2004).

The type of teacher a person becomes is heavily dependent on their inherent beliefs and concepts held. When an academic is employed, it is rare for them to have to demonstrate that they are a competent and passionate teacher. They are far more likely to be employed based on their publications and research output, with a stipulation that they undertake study units of postgraduate teacher education (Parker, 2012). Although the findings of Akerlind (2004) are now over 10 years old they are commonly held beliefs by most academics. The concept of a student centred approach to teaching is very much adopted and supported by universities. However the idea of teaching in a student learning focused way is still very revolutionary. To do this well takes a lot of thought and preparation, they take time, something a modern academic has very little of. The path to promotion and continued employment is linked heavily to research output and although more recently the emphasis has also switched to peer review of teaching, there is little support for trying new methods of teaching (Hattie, 2007).

Like many countries, Australia does not have a definition of effective HE teaching. However, various government initiatives have led to the promotion of excellent teaching, and in 2004 the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) was established. This body set out guidelines for effective teaching which many Australian universities continue to follow in
their teaching awards and was closed at the end of 2011. Some of the functions of the ALTC were handed over to the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT). The following five headings cover the range of activities that all effective HE teachers aim for (Devlin & Samarakoon, 2010).

2.5.2.1 Teachers’ beliefs, concepts and reflective practice
Norton et al. (2005) conducted an intensive survey of teachers’ beliefs and intentions across four universities in the UK. They found a contradiction between beliefs and intentions, with the latter being more orientated towards knowledge transmission than were their beliefs in the way they were teaching. They found that even teaching similar material, different teachers taught in different ways and this could have a large effect on student satisfaction. Although this research was based on teachers’ self-reports, rather than actual teaching practices, they were able to highlight the fact that different disciplines held different beliefs about teaching methods and that women were more orientated towards learning facilitation than were men (Norton et al, 2005).

Everyone is usually confident about their teaching, but individual teaching styles are rarely discussed. For most teachers, their teaching is a private matter. Hattie (2009) argues that the art of teaching relates to what happens when everything is over. It is the way the teacher reacts to what the students submit that determines how much students learn. He believes achievement is more likely to be increased when students choose learning over performance, accept feedback, benchmark to other students, possess a high desire to learn, and use self-regulation rather than learned helplessness. Teachers would have more success addressing these strategies rather than trying to change the levels of achievement. The students need to want to learn and then they motivate themselves. It is very easy to demotivate students with too much pressure, unrealistic goals, class embarrassment and so on. Achievement plus effort plus engagement are keys to success in learning (Hattie, 2009). His research shows that the most memorable teachers are those who:

- build relationships with students;
- help students to have strategies, or processes, to learn the subject; and
- demonstrate a willingness to explain material and help students with their work.

From his extensive research, Hattie (2009) highlights six statements about excellence in teaching:
• Teachers are a very powerful influence on learning.

• Teachers need to be aware and knowledgeable about all of their students to ensure they reach their potential.

• Teachers need to be directive, influential, caring and passionate about their learning and teaching.

• Teachers need to know what each lesson will cover, where they are going and what they hope to achieve.

• Teachers need to be able to explain so that every student is able to construct and reconstruct the knowledge and ideas.

• School leaders need to create learning environments where it is okay to be wrong and easy to learn and explore knowledge and understanding (Hattie, 2009).

The arguments that have been made here for teachers needing to be aware of their students and their various needs and demands, to build relationships with them is the core concept behind what makes a good teacher and this is supported in the findings of Yam (2012) who found that students wanted their teachers to be approachable, motivating and helpful. Poon (2016) analysed 1258 student responses from CEQ data from 2010-2013 and found the three most important factors desired by graduates to be the quality of staff and the program, the student learning environment and the personal development of them as students.

2.5.2.12 Variable and/or interactive delivery

It is widely accepted that the modern HE student wants to be entertained. On the whole, they lead a fast-paced existence, and with their smartphones and classroom Wi-Fi on their computers, teachers need diverse strategies to hold their interest. If a teacher reads from a PowerPoint presentation with no attempt at engaging with their class, students will simply involve themselves in their own electronic world. In bygone years, students would talk in class when they were bored and disinterested; now they simply play with their electronic devices. Many teachers mistakenly believe if the class is quiet then students are paying attention. Teachers need to vary their technique and activities, and offer a range of interactive deliveries, if they wish to hold students’ attention (Cornish, 2009; Boyd, 2010). One innovation gaining momentum is blended learning and this teaching strategy is outlined in the previous section. It is suggested that when using blended learning, keep teaching styles simple and interesting to maintain student engagement (Poon, 2012).
2.5.2.13 Respect for diverse knowledge, talents and background
Modern university students come from many diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and they also come with a diverse knowledge base and myriad different talents. Teachers can no longer assume one type of delivery will suit this diverse group of students. Some students learn predominantly by listening; others react better to visual presentations; and still others prefer a mixture of both audio and visual, and even a collaborative style. A good teacher will be aware of these differences and adjust their teaching methods accordingly (Tagg, 2007). The larger class sizes and increased internationalisation of Australian HE students means the student population is much more diverse, both culturally and knowledgeably. Effective teaching will need to evolve, taking these changes into account. Teachers need to adopt an educational pedagogy that consists of a wider range of learning styles and language flexibility (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010).

2.5.2.14 Flexibility and willingness to change
It is important that teaching staff be flexible in their approach to their courses, and be aware that different modules and courses (subjects) will be more interesting and will motivate students if they are delivered in different ways. Academics need to be willing to try different ways of teaching, and to seek help from others in their school who are successful in this way. They should especially approach teachers who have won awards for their innovative and excellent teaching (Budge et al., 2007). For example, if using blended learning, this will require a flexible approach to ensure different forms of materials are used. In particular, with regard to property education, the inclusion of simulated learning such as case studies, site visits and lectures from practitioners is extremely important (Poon, 2012; Cornish et al, 2009).

2.5.2.15 Foster creativity, imagination and innovation
One of the major ways to foster creativity, imagination and innovation is through assessment tasks specifically designed to capture these characteristics. Not all academics have the ability to foster these characteristics – nor do they have the necessary skills to design assessment tasks that encourage this type of lateral thinking. It is important that teachers are given professional help to achieve these aims, both in their classroom activities and in the development of different types of assessments (Tagg, 2007).
2.5.2.16 Assessment and feedback

The third Processes subset to be discussed in this review is the Assessment and Feedback subset, also taken from The Higher Education Model introduced in Figure 3. This is shown in Figure 6 below, and the four components of this subset are discussed below.

**Figure 6: The assessment and feedback subset**

![Diagram showing the assessment and feedback subset]

2.5.2.17 Appropriate assessment

By constructive alignment, Biggs (1996) denotes systematic alignment between teaching methods and assessment. The traditional, or objectivist, approach to HE is that teaching is a matter of transmitting a body of knowledge and learning is to receive this accurately, store and use it appropriately. A more realistic approach is to see meaning as created by the learner, not imposed by instruction. The learner becomes central to the learning process. Biggs further maintains that the best way to achieve appropriate learning/teaching activities is more likely to be achieved if more than one teaching method is applied. By using examinations and tests, a teacher is setting the limits for learning and these are restricted to a time limit and a specific time and place.

Constructivism strongly supports the use of an assessment portfolio, where the students select at least some of the evidence they consider matches the course (subject) objectives. By having a variety of assessment tasks, the opportunity exists for students to reflect on what they expect and achieve from the unit (Sambell et al., 2013). As teachers, we must be clear about what we want the students to learn and what students need to do to demonstrate mastery of the material at an appropriate level (Biggs, 1996). This becomes increasingly more difficult with very large cohorts of students.

Biggs’ theories are supported by Yorke (2003), in his discussion on formative assessment:
Formative assessment needs to take account of disciplinary epistemology, theories of intellect and moral development, student stages of intellectual development and the psychology of giving and receiving feedback (Yorke, 2003, p. 278).

Yorke (2003) makes the distinction between formative assessment and summative assessment, and states that assessments set late in the semester where students often only see the mark and not the feedback can only be regarded as summative, not formative. This can occur despite the intention of the teacher because students rarely have the chance to learn from their mistakes. Yorke (2003) also discusses the difference between convergent and divergent assessments, where the former tests whether a student can fulfil pre-specified objectives, whereas the latter tests more open-ended tasks that involve them in reasoning (problem solving).

It is not only students who gain from appropriate assessment. A teacher can use the results as an indicator of the success of their teaching. Elton (2006) believes HE assessment processes are no longer fair to individual students. The assessment process is often subjective and unreliable, and often the due date for all of a student’s assessment can be the same week. He argues that academics need to schedule all assessments for a course (program) in a regular manner, be directed at the learning outcomes, and keep summative and formative types of assessment separate (Elton, 2006).

2.5.2.18 Types and approaches to assessment

Student grievances about assessment occur at a rate that is higher than any other item. It is on the basis of assessments that they will pass or fail, or achieve a high score for a course. Types of, and approaches to, assessment are also the subject of considerable research. Most universities require that academics provide a mix of different types of assessments within their courses (subjects), and some even stipulate the minimum and maximum number of assessments to be administered. Assessment must be based on the desired learning outcomes for the course and should be relevant tasks for the specific discipline and profession (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). Webster et al. (2009) found a clear link between students who perceived the workload and assessment as appropriate and the teaching to be good, and the ability to engage in deep learning strategies in their HE experience.
2.5.2.19 Time on task
As well as complaining about assessment, there are high numbers of complaints about the fact that many pieces of assessment are all due at the same time without consideration of the fact that students are undertaking four or more courses (subjects). There is a move in several universities to alleviate this problem by staggering when assessments are due in different courses, and ensuring the tasks required can be completed successfully in the time allowed. Students also favour having time in class to work on their assessments so they can be sure they understand the task in hand (Elton, 2006; Lee & Mallik, 2015; Lam & Rossini, 2013).

2.5.2.20 Appropriate feedback
HE students across the globe complain about the quality and variation of feedback they receive on their assessments, or even in some cases, do not receive. Attitude to the feedback, in all guises, is a major determinant of student engagement and satisfaction (Laryea, 2013). Bowden and Marton (1998) suggest student feedback is important in the pursuit of excellence. The purpose of receiving this type of feedback is to find out what is working for them and what is not. Once we have the feedback we need to act on it, or students will become cynical and disillusioned.

There are many definitions of feedback in the literature, but they all refer to information students receive as the process of communicating the gap between the assessment requirement and the actual student submission. Feedback can be formative, where the goal is to increase student skills and understanding of the subject under assessment and this is the preferred type; or it can be summative, which only focuses on the outcome and is usually represented by a mark, such as for a test or exam (Laryea, 2013; Chen, 2014; King et al., 1999).

It is generally agreed that feedback has several essential requirements and these are also illustrated in the model at the end of this section of the review. Assessment:

- needs to be timely;
- needs to address any deficiencies in the assessment;
- needs a good fit with the learning activities and assessment;
- needs to be easily understood; and
- should offer suggestions for the student to improve their learning (Biggs, 1996).
As well having the above properties, feedback can be provided in many forms. Written feedback is the most common form for HE, and this may often be streamlined into standard sheets with tick boxes. This is the type of feedback most disliked by students, because they feel it is not personal and very little effort has been made on the part of the marker. There is also peer feedback, self-assessment, oral feedback, face-to-face feedback, podcasts or videos, and even feed-forward to help with future tasks (Laryea, 2013). Lecturers need to communicate with their students to find out their preferred feedback method and if this is not possible due to circumstances, or student numbers, a compromise must be reached (Yorke, 2011)

In his research of 194 built environment students in the UK (47 per cent of the cohort), Laryea (2013) found they all understood what was involved with feedback and the importance of receiving thorough feedback on their assessments. Many times, however, they were disappointed with the quality and the type of feedback, especially if the mark was low. The students reported that verbal feedback worked well for projects and written feedback for essays, but their preferred overall method was face-to-face feedback, which is usually not possible with large groups of students. He further concludes that students need to be proactive in their own search for feedback, and feels they should drive their responses to their feedback to ensure they act on the feedback in order to improve and change. In conclusion, the students summed up good feedback as personal, timely, detailed, constructive and appropriately spread across the piece of work (Laryea, 2013). Hattie (2009) believes feedback should not praise, but instead fill the gap between where the student is and where they are aiming to be; this is the power of relevant feedback. A study by Love and Scoble (2006) found differences between student and staff perceptions in relation to feedback. In their study students felt that it was unnecessary to read staff feedback on their final projects as they had no chance to fix any problems, and that the feedback was therefore redundant.

Research on learning and teaching experiences at the Business School of the University of Glamorgan examined the experiences of a group of postgraduate students. They surveyed the students on their responses to feedback. All 22 postgraduate students were given written feedback and selected students also received audio feedback via Turnitin in Blackboard. All the students who received both types of feedback felt the audio was more personal and they felt the combination of both written and oral feedback was very helpful (Chem, 2014).
2.5.2.21 Relationships

The fourth major process subset to be discussed in this review is the relationships subset, also taken from The Higher Education Model introduced in Figure 3. This is shown in Figure 7 below, after which the five components of this subset are discussed.

Figure 7: The relationships subset

Students may or may not form any number of relationships while they are at university. Research shows the more a student is involved in university relationships, the more they feel like they belong and the more satisfied they usually are (Lefever, 2012). Usually, the most difficult time for a student at university is during their first semester. If they do not make a connection with lectures, peers, sporting or social clubs, they will feel disconnected and may often leave (Krause, 2005b).

2.5.2.22 Industry and community involvement

In a practical program such as property, it is important that the university develop a strong relationship with industry leaders and the general community at large. All 10 of the property HE programs examined in this study are accredited by professional bodies, and as such the academics involved in managing and teaching these programs have very strong links with— and usually advisory committees drawn from— property industry leaders (Australian Property Institute, 2016). In the literature specific to property programs, it is strongly suggested that industry practitioners be organised to present to students on important issues and changes occurring in industry. This is particularly important when the academics do not have the
necessary practical experience of recently working in industry, as recommended by the API (Poon, 2012).

2.5.2.23 Supervision/career transition
Although this might be an ideal situation, and did occur when formal work experience was part of the property programs, the increased student numbers in current university programs make supervision of graduates, or final-year students, in industry a thing of the past (Blake & Susilawati, 2009). However, most of the Australian property programs have strong links with industry and they often promote available jobs – and even make student recommendations to industry requests. Many large industry organisations also act as mentors and/or sponsor prizes for property students. For example, RMIT has an Employer of Choice Program where industry organisations sign up to a database and make their staff available to act as mentors for student research, attend employment workshops, offer career advice and sit on the Advisory Council (School of Property, Construction and Project Management, 2016).

2.5.2.24 Lecturers’ expectations
Considerable efforts have been made by universities to bridge the high school to university gap and help make a smooth and successful transition to university. However, for many students this transition still remains a challenge. This can ultimately affect students satisfaction, retention and success. The shift that students make from expectations to experience reflects changes according to factors such as accessibility to lecturers, learning to work more independently, adjusting to a larger workload, and developing a study-life balance in their first year (Australian Government, 2016). It is important that academics have realistic expectations of the ability of commencing students to be able to manage their workload and that they understand how some students take longer to assimilate into a university experience.

2.5.2.25 Staff–student interaction/collaboration
Research suggests the most highly rated teachers are those who offer to help students and follow through. They enjoy imparting knowledge and they have a passion for teaching. Research also says students are more likely to persist with their HE studies if they have built a relationship with at least some of the academics with whom they interact and collaborate (Balam & Shannon, 2010). There is a need to improve the relationships between students and teachers beyond the normal classroom time. This would improve rapport between the two groups, and foster trust and a sense of belonging in students (Yeo & Marquardt, 2011).
2.5.2.26 Fairness and moral order

Not everyone has the same moral standards. It is often seen as a responsibility of universities to teach ethics to their students. If students wish to enter the workforce as graduates and be successful in their careers, they need to understand fairness and moral order. In addition, they need to understand what is required of them to behave in an ethical manner. All professions have their own code of ethical behaviour, and for the property industry in Australia the responsibility of satisfying and upholding ethical standards lies with the accrediting bodies. For their part the universities are tasked with ensuring students understand what is expected and required of them (RMIT University, 2016).

2.5.2.27 Administration

The final process variable to be discussed in this literature review is administration. The services a university provides for its students are extremely important with regard to their overall satisfaction with their HE experience. Probably the most important of these is administration. If a student perceives that those in charge of administration at their university are efficient, then they will be satisfied with the level of service they are receiving. However, the modern student must take more responsibility for their administrative experiences than ever before. Although there are people to advise students, they now handle their own enrolment and timetabling, applying for graduation and myriad other activities which administrative staff did in past years. If things go wrong because a student made their own mistakes, it is possible that they blame the university system rather than accept they made an error? Regardless of who is to blame, mistakes happen and they colour a student’s university experience.

As student numbers grow and the increased use of web-based systems also increases, students are expected to do a lot more of the time-consuming items themselves. For example, enrolment and re-enrolment, along with timetabling, is now completed online and savvy students are ready to grab the best courses and the most efficient class times, leaving the less popular times and courses for less focused individuals. In some ways, this is an improvement on the manual systems of the past, but on the other hand, it does mean many students are confused and disorientated, especially in their first year (Kift, 2004).

2.5.3 Product

The final major characteristic of a HE experience, as outlined by Biggs (1993) and expounded by Gibbs (2010), is product. Generally, a university is evaluated on the basis of
their product. The most obvious of these is student performance and degree classifications (Gibbs, 2010). It can be argued, however, that unlike secondary education, there is no universal moderation system in place for HE. With the high proportion of group and course work included in student assessment, this subjective element makes score comparisons between institutions meaningless (Brown, 2010).

Another indicator of the quality of a university’s product is the amount and importance of their research output, student retention and, finally, graduate employability. It can be argued that global economic conditions play a large part in the success of the last two factors. In addition, student retention may not always be the fault of the university, but is also related to many other issues, such as the health, financial and family situation of the individual student. For these reasons, although interesting, the product characteristics are often not good indicators of the success of a university. Also, it is because the signs are so hard to read that government funders place such a high emphasis on student satisfaction figures when assessing a university’s success. The level of student satisfaction across all programs, along with the research profile, are considered the most important measures of the success – or otherwise – of a university in Australia (Australian Government, 2010).

On most measures, HE can now be regarded as a business, with students paying a lot of money to achieve their degrees, cross-subsidised by payments from federal and state governments, and other income such as research, innovation and grants. For this reason, the education industry looks to the business world as a guide to the treatment of the stakeholders in its sector. Students come to a university for many reasons, but wanting to learn and find a successful career are important parts of their expectation.

Industry has a vested interest in the employability of property graduates from Australian universities, because they rely on this source to fuel this fast-growing and often international business. The higher the quality of graduates and the more detailed their expertise, the less on-the-job training they will require when they are finally employed. Many employers recognise they have a responsibility to train new employees (Blake & Susilawati, 2009). To date, property graduates have a very high employment rate across Australia, with the exception of Western Australia.
The Higher Education Model developed in Figure 3 not only covers the role of the university and the student, but also the importance of industry and the related work experience in property HE in Australia.

2.5.4 The higher education student

Figure 8: The higher education student subset

Students also have a great deal of influence and responsibility in their own HE experience. They cannot simply enrol and then make no more effort. All enrolled students are eligible to take part in student feedback and satisfaction surveys, but many do not take the opportunity to do so. The usually low response rates, and the fact that it is possible for lazy students to blame their lecturers and their university for their poor performances, can create accuracy problems within this type of survey (Douglas & Douglas, 2007). Students need to be actively involved in their educational experience and there are several characterisations that are unique to them and for which they must accept responsibility.

2.5.4.1 Learning methods and styles of students

Action, not theory, is the starting point for learning. People perform tasks, solve problems and so on, not usually in isolation and certainly with in some interaction with their environments. This forms the basis of the learning process (Svensson & Ellstrom, 2004).
There is an argument for testing HE students’ learning styles. Yazici (2006) does this in her research concerning the effectiveness of group teamwork. Using the Grasha-Riechmann Student Learning Styles Scale (GRSLSS) system, she classified 140 students as having either competitive, collaborative, avoidant, participant, dependent, or independent learning styles. With this information, the groups were formed based on their particular major study to ensure the groups had a cross-section of educational skills. The purpose of the study was to see how students’ different learning styles affected their team learning performance. The learning style information was used to understand the educational performance of individual students and the overall performance by the groups (Yazici, 2006).

With regard to student learning, this will be based on their prior experiences, their own approaches to learning and their perceptions of their situation (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Their perceptions of their current situation at university will be heavily influenced by the teachers they have. The relationship between the teacher and the student is such that teachers who adopt a conceptual change/student-focused approach to teaching are more likely to teach students who adopt a deep approach to their learning. On the other hand, the information transmission/teacher-focused approach usually promotes students to adopt surface approaches to their study (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Diseth et al., 2006).

2.4.5.2 First-year experience

HE in Australia was once the domain of the elite; universities now provide opportunities for many within the community to learn and expand their knowledge and skills. Yet this open policy often comes at a price and current university students in Australia often find themselves part of very large cohorts. The level of support they receive varies and they are often left to fend for themselves in this very foreign environment. In their first year of HE students either adapt or disappear (Kift, 2004). There is evidence that many first-year students are engaged, but they engage in myriad ways and teachers need to be more creative to capture their interest (Krause, 2005b). Considerable research has been completed on first-year experience (FYE) and it appears this is where students are often lost. In 2004, students responding to the FYE questionnaire in Australia were found to fall roughly into two groups: those who persist and those who are potential dropouts. In fact, 28 per cent of the respondents said they seriously considered dropping out of HE. It is difficult for a university to control these factors and it is realistic to expect to have up to 30 per cent of students who are working to support themselves and have little time to devote to their HE program (Krause, 2005a).
2.4.5.3 Student motivation

At the heart of this research is the student stakeholder. Ultimately, they are responsible for a large portion of their HE experience. Obviously, not all HE students are motivated to the same degree. Research tells us the levels of motivation a student feels is related to any number of factors, and often more than one (Centra, 1977; Kuh, 2003).

2.5.5 Industry relevance and work experience

Other factors that especially affect property HE are specific industry relevance and work experience. Both students and industry understand and expect both of these to occur during their property degree, but due to financial and time pressures, and increasing student numbers, work experience plays a limited role in most of the 10 property programs today. If there is any work experience in a property program, it is now relegated to the role of credit for one or two electives, or a few weeks during the summer break (Blake & Susilawati, 2009).

If students know and expect the learning process to be different, as work experience is, they understand the value of independent and creative thought processes, and these can be shown to them as characteristics highly sought after by industry. Burke et al. (2005) found teamwork and communication skills are valued by employers, especially at middle management levels. Employees who excelled at these levels received promotion faster than others.

Watson (2002) notes that construction and property accrediting bodies in the UK rated communication and group dynamics as being important graduate attributes, along with industry knowledge and professional awareness. He also discusses the advantages of case studies and fieldwork in improving the learning experiences of students, by offering a broader knowledge base and through linking theory and practice. As well as expectations, motivation also plays a large part in tertiary education. A motivated student has a positive approach to their studies and their work, and this is usually reflected in their results. Zusho and Pintrich (2003) discuss the concept that if students believed that they could do certain tasks, then their ability to do so under stress was improved, and their use of learning strategies increased. The type of learning that takes place in the workplace enhances these types of motivation and self-efficacy levels, because everyone is learning together and over the same timeframe.

As well as the positive attributes of students doing work experience as part of their undergraduate degree, it is necessary for the program directors to be aware of student
expectations and the fact that many may be unrealistic in their approach to the workplace. Mello (1998) emphasises that students on placement need to be aware that work experience is very different from what they are used to in the traditional classroom. In the workplace, it is the responsibility of the student to actively manage their learning development process. Students undertaking work experience need to be comfortable taking the initiative, asking for assistance and confronting problems (Smith et al, 2009).

Research by Garavan and Murphy (2001) revealed that the cooperative education socialisation process is a complex one, highly individualistic, and influenced by a range of variables within the organisational setting. Cooperative education students need to move successfully through three stages: finding the placement, joining the organisation, and completing the placement. A student needs support and help to master these three important, but different, stages of a work-based placement. It is also important that they have experiences such as these in their formal studies leading up to the work experience, to ensure that independent thinking can occur. Unlike traditional group activity, which is very common at university, Ballantine and Larres (2007) advocate cooperative learning to simulate the type of teamwork that is expected in the workplace. They see the basic difference between the two as being the degree of individual accountability and independence that a well-structured, cooperative learning program will have. They also advocate that groups be chosen by the instructor to ensure a mix of learning styles and personalities, as is consistent with the workplace. Self-selected groups may be more comfortable for students, but they are unrealistic with respect to the workplace and do not challenge the students to learn the communication skills necessary to succeed in a workplace environment (Ballantine & Larres, 2007). In a study of property students at an Australian university it was found that work experience was valued by students as it both assisted with their studies, and improved their confidence with the workplace (Blake & Susilawati, 2009).

Schaafsma (1996) comments that successful cooperative education programs in Australia are seldom critically examined, because it is only when problems occur at work that any attention is given to the operation of the program. He goes on to note that we are missing an opportunity to capitalise on evaluating situations of ‘contested learning’. Many students in workplace situations find themselves in situations of domination, which has been socially constructed in the language and experiences of work, and it is these contested learning
situations that they often have to deal with on their own. It is only if they deal unsuccessfully with these that the program coordinator is called in (Schaafsma, 1996).

In support of work experience as part of university education, Ng and Burke (2006) analysed results of a study of 4851 business students across Canada, with regard to job potential. Of these, 1870 were cooperative education (work experience) students and 2785 were not involved in this type of program. The cooperative education students were found to have a better understanding of their own abilities in a working environment. They were also reported to have higher self-confidence and more realistic expectations, and placed greater emphasis on the people and work dimensions of a firm, rather than its reputation. They also highlighted it was these very skills employers were seeking. Employers had expressed a preference for university students who had completed a period of work experience during their degree.

This fact, that work experience enhances future employment prospects, is further supported by Callanan and Benzing (2004) in a study of 163 final-year business students in the USA. The study showed that 58 per cent of students who had completed cooperative education had a job organised on graduation, compared to only 17 per cent of non-cooperative education students. To sum up, the odds of securing a job were 4.43 times higher for those completing work experience than for those who did not. There are many excellent reasons why work experience in industry can enhance the learning experience during the years at university, but the program needs to be managed well and all the activities must be closely monitored. It is important not only to interview the students, but to also give them the opportunity to be anonymous in their responses.

2.6 The student-centred approach
Having discussed the role of the three major stakeholders in property HE and how important all three are to the educational process, the discussion now examines the background behind the concept of student, or customer satisfaction. The title of this research involves expectations and the marketing literature has been grappling with the uncertainties and confusions involving this topic for over 30 years. It is time for HE institutions to take a lead in relationship marketing and form strategies and policy that indicate how important it is to manage the relationships with their stakeholders and particularly with their students.

Customer satisfaction is a marketing concept, and regardless of whether you consider students as customers or not, it is important to visit the marketing literature to determine where the HE sector and the related concept of student satisfaction have their origins. HE is
one of myriad service industries that make up our modern society, and as such the product produced, unlike a manufactured good, has certain unique characteristics. The characteristics of a service have traditionally been seen as comprising four components: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability, commonly known as IHIP (Moeller, 2010). Although there have been criticisms of these characteristics as they apply to non-personal services, they are still very relevant and applicable to the HE sector.

If we examine these concepts one by one, we can see that HE is very intangible; it cannot be touched or tasted. The final reward of graduation leads us to ask: what exactly has the graduate achieved? Although the standardisation of many services has led to a breakdown in heterogeneity (variability), this is not the case in the HE sector. Every lecture and every tutorial is different in some way. The same is true for inseparability: both the teacher and the students (or the online material and the students) need to interact together. Finally, when examining the concept of perishability, the concept can also be seen as being relevant in the HE experience. Learning is usually something that is built on; each interaction is unique and when over, it perishes. It cannot be repeated exactly the same way again and even material on the internet has deadlines. New material is available and synthesised into courses almost on a daily basis (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Moeller (2010) believes the first step to understanding the HE industry is to break the service into the three-stage framework covering the facilities, transformation and usage, commonly known as the FTU framework. Within the HE structure, the facilities include premises and equipment, including lecture and tutorial rooms, the library, computer laboratories and so on. The second stage is transformation, which cannot be completed without the interaction of the client, their possessions and their rights.

Transformation is a process whereby customer resources are combined with the resources of the service provider and in the HE sector, this is usually the interaction between students and staff. The customer, or in this case, the student, then decides whether they want to make use of this transformation and thereby add value for themselves. When HE is examined as a typical service, it fits this model very well – just as it also fits the IHIP model (Moeller, 2010). The service industry includes activities such as retailing, restaurants and other areas, where part of the service encounter usually produces a product of some kind. HE is what is known as a pure service industry, because it meets all the criteria for the definition of a service with no tangible result.
It is proposed, however, that to be able to determine the relative importance of the aspects when HE students in property disciplines within Australia make their decisions about their level of educational satisfaction, a more student-centred methodology that draws on the work undertaken in marketing be adopted. This approach looks at the importance of emotions in forming satisfaction decisions. This is fairly new to the educational sector and involves asking students what they would like their lecturers/institution to know and ask them about their educational experience. It is possible that by incorporating this student view, a clearer picture will emerge of what is most important to them in their educational journey.

2.6.1 What is student engagement/satisfaction?

For many HE students, university is simply a means to a job. This leads to problems in the classroom, including poor attendance, inability to complete tasks, problems meeting group expectations, and not completing set work. In this theme of inevitability, with some students failing and dropping out, the universities are often in a difficult position. Kington (2008) suggests that this may be inevitable and is more a result of poor self-esteem issues, which are related to the individual and often not universities. One challenge for teachers is to engage with students who may be disenchanted from their first-year experience and encourage them to undertake learning options that are absorbing and reflective, rather than cramming information for a test or exam (McLaughlin & Robson, 2007).

A large number of HE institutions are developing student engagement practices within their institutions, and over the last five years there have been several policy documents focusing on actively involving students in day-to-day decision making, with the aim of improving their HE experience. In 2009 in the UK, the Labour Government formed the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and in 2011 it presented a white paper to Parliament entitled *Higher education: Students at the heart of the system*. This paper promotes the partnership between universities and their students with regard to student charters and feedback responses (Robinson, 2012). This process has been in place for several years in the school system and many students entering universities are already familiar with the partnership process (Robinson, 2012). This may be the push from the government, but HE institutions in the UK still tend to place their emphasis on viewing the students as consumers, rather than partners in an education community. There have been some innovative initiatives from some universities, including the University of Exeter, where students are involved in many educational processes. Likewise, Birmingham City University runs a Student Academic
Partners scheme to encourage involvement by students in some of the teaching practices. Robinson (2012) goes on to argue that for student engagement to be effective there need to be four central values in place at the individual HE institution:

- the conception of communication as dialogue;
- the requirements for participation and democracy inclusivity;
- the possibility for change and transformation; and
- the recognition that power relations are unequal and problematic.

As with the student questionnaires for this thesis, very few students, when asked, bothered to have their voices heard. It is the silent majority who need to be heard, not the outspoken and forthright students who will always take part in this type of activity.

The crux of student engagement work is listening to students about their thoughts, views, feelings and experiences. This is only the first step; it is only if something is done with this information that change will occur. HE relationships are complex. It is not just the relationships between the academics and the students that is important, but also the relationships between academics among themselves, and also students between each other. Students may equate the payment of high fees as giving them certain rights, such as successfully completing their degree. HE institutions must handle this situation by encouraging engagement, but not ending up simply pandering to student demands (Robinson, 2012).

In his report on HE in the UK, Gibbs (2010) mentions the fact that the two UK universities with the highest student satisfaction scores are the University of Oxford and Open University. He goes on to say that the funding for the two universities is very different. It is not funding that they have in common, but principles and it is these principles that should be adopted across all institutions of HE in the UK. He uses this example because often a university will use lack of funding as reasons for providing poor student resources, rather than admitting that it is how they chose to use their funds that makes a difference.

In his critique on the quality of HE in the UK, Gibbs (2010) chose to use Biggs’ (1993) 3P model for his discussion. Presage, or everything in the university before the students commences, is an important factor and includes funding. He finds that often the difference between the institutions is how the funding is used, not the total value of the funds. In this
category he also discusses student/staff ratios (SSR), the quality of teaching staff and finally, the quality of the students. The manner in which a university combines these four items is, he believes, one of the secrets of high student satisfaction. If a university has a low SSR, they have the possibility of offering small class sizes. If they use good quality teachers, rather than doctoral students, or lots of sessional teachers, then students will feel they were being taught by experts. If the funding is used to increase student services, and if they are able to recruit high quality students, then they may have a recipe for an improvement in student satisfaction. Also in search of what HE students’ value is the research undertaken by Palmer and Walker (2009). In this research they examined the link between student satisfaction scores and a number of good teaching indicators from the CEQ/AGS. They found very low correlation relationships between most of the key satisfaction indicators with the exceptions of clarity of tasks, feedback, assessment and understanding.

These factors, coupled with changes in the processes, have the ability to improve an institution’s standing in the eyes of its students. This dimension includes items such as student engagement, reputation, peer rating, administration and other support for students, the research environment, and the intellectual challenges of the courses (programs) offered (Gibbs, 2010). His final dimension, product, is all about the student. This section covers their performance, retention rate and employability. He concludes by suggesting that a formal monitoring and auditing process is necessary to ensure the process variables (the ones pertaining to the students) are where the majority of funding is used. If this happens, the focus of the institution will become student focused and there should be a flow-on improvement in satisfaction (Gibbs, 2010).

The level at which HE students engage with their university experience can be positive, non-existent or even negative; for many students, the university experience is a battle. The word ‘engagement’ has become synonymous with the qualities seen as essential to a high quality undergraduate experience. Students are either more or less involved with their university community, and the term refers to the time, energy and resources students apply to their learning experience at university. It is widely accepted in educational research that involvement contributes to a range of outcomes, including persistence, satisfaction, achievement and success (Coffey & Gibbs, 2001). Modern universities are places of great diversity. Mass HE brings with it different abilities, age groups and backgrounds; the old recipe for engagement is no longer relevant. The challenge is how to engage with such a
diverse university population. We need to do more to address adequately the full meaning and implications of student engagement (Krause, 2005a).

Research indicates students are working longer hours in paid employment and generally feel less committed to their tertiary studies. Students often find the transition from secondary school difficult and lonely. Increasing class sizes and flexible course delivery exacerbates this sense of alienation (Kift, 2004). Universities are aware of the lack of engagement felt by many students and academics alike and are challenging their staff to find ways to improve the way learning is delivered. Krause (2008) commented that the effective delivery modes and different learning and teaching styles using technology to achieve the best mix of all the strategies should help to engage HE students. She felt that blended learning should be used to improve the student learning experience and to improve student engagement beyond simply face to face teaching. This is supported by a US Centre of Technology in Learning, (2009) study that found that students doing online courses performed better than those only doing face to face classes. They also found that a combination of online and face to face classes had a greater advantage than pure face to face programs, or pure online ones. Thirdly, students using online learning spent more time on tasks than pure face to face students.

2.6.2 How do you measure engagement/satisfaction?
Douglas and Douglas (2006) maintain that measuring student satisfaction is a difficult concept and the fairest and most accurate manner is by triangulation. They suggest using student feedback surveys, observation and mystery student customers as the fairest method of obtaining a result. Australian universities have traditionally used two main methods of attempting to measure student satisfaction: the national Australian Graduate Survey (AGS), and any internal measures each university has for surveying students.

It was in the 1990s that the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) was first introduced by the federal government as a measure of student satisfaction in Australian universities. Twenty-five years later, educational philosophy has changed and so too has the cohort of students. In 2000 there was a review of the then existing national survey instrument, the CEQ, which had been in operation for seven years (Law, 2010). The CEQ instrument comprised 25 items: one for overall graduate satisfaction with their course (program) and the remaining 24 items distributed across the following five scales: good teaching, clear goals, appropriate workload and assessment, and generic skills. The review in 2000 suggested an additional 25 items to cover the areas of student support, learning resources, learning
community, intellectual motivation, and graduate qualities. It was felt that the instrument would be further enhanced by their inclusion, leading to the development of the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) (McInnes et al., 2000; Law, 2010).

If universities are funded based on the results of these surveys, it is important that the questions reflect the thinking of the cohort they are evaluating (Newell, 2013). The expectations of the current Generation Y students are markedly different from the Generation X students for whom the survey was originally intended. Not only are the questions developed by educational academics, based on the relevant educational literature at the time, but students were not consulted in the process. The questions need to be relevant to the predominant group, which is currently Generation Y. There is also a need to be sure that the characteristics educators find important in HE are the same characteristics that students value.

Educational literature talks at length about HE student satisfaction and the survey instruments administered to students, both at university and afterwards, all attempt to measure this. But are they coming at it from the wrong angle? The assumption is that the questions asked cover the relevant characteristics that determine student satisfaction; things such as feedback, time spent on tasks, effective teaching and so on. But what if these things are not what HE students value the most? Up to 80 per cent of HE students come straight from secondary school; others come from other university programs or the workforce. Wherever they come from, they all have individual expectations and finding common ground may be difficult. It is these expectations that this research will investigate. The marketing literature tells us that expectations are a powerful component of satisfaction. If you learn how to manage customer expectations, you are a long way towards improving their satisfaction levels (Jones, 1989; Costin et al., 1971).

A recently added survey instrument for HE students in Australia is the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) survey, which is an adaption of the National Survey of Student Engagement that has been used in the USA for several years. The AUSSE is being trialled at several Australian universities and a much broader adoption of this tool is anticipated over the coming years. But once again, there are far too many broad and general questions asked in this instrument (see Appendix B). Most research into student satisfaction concentrates on these existing surveys. However, communication is important when asking students to complete course experience surveys (CES) on their course (subject). If students see no changes occurring in response to the problems they raise in these questionnaires, they
become cynical about the purpose of the survey. The university needs to be able to show where improvements in courses have occurred as a direct result of student feedback via questionnaires (King et al., 1999). These observations were made about student surveys in 1999 and it was only 10–15 years later that Australian universities began to report back to students about changes that had occurred around the various universities as a result of previous student feedback surveys.

One of the major objections to the validity of the CEQ/AGS data is that only a small proportion of graduates respond and it may only be those with a grievance who bother to do so. Further, most were filling out similar surveys while they were at university and nothing changed. They may feel that it is not worth the effort to complete the CEQ/AGS questionnaire. It is possible that if the questions related to the things that were important to them, more might take part in the survey. By asking HE students and graduates what is important to them with regard to their university experience, the process becomes an active one, rather than the current passive procedure.

This research has approached the problem of very few voices being heard from property HE students using a mixed methods methodology of interviews, focus groups and a nationwide questionnaire containing open-ended questions. In addition, this research also asks for descriptions of critical incidents concerning their HE experience. This has been an attempt to dig deeply into the student experience and to understand their grievances, with a desire to offer possible solutions to the problems raised. Every effort has been made in this research to find the student voice, despite their general reluctance to engage.

The research into classroom student satisfaction is generally specific in attempting to find reasons as to why some teachers score more highly than others. Are there factors at work outside the control of individual teachers? Is bias involved in student surveys? Do they reward charisma? Does personality matter? Or do they reward lecturers based on their expected grades for the subject (Patrick, 2011)? In a similar vein, Balam and Shannon (2010) examined the relationship between college student ratings and faculty perceptions. Thirty-four faculty teaching staff at a south-east university in the US let their students participate in this survey and 968 students took part. The research set up 16 student rating myths and then tested them. The results indicate all manner of discerning qualities that can affect teacher effectiveness; things from lecturers being funny, to publishing a lot (male students), to being
attractive, and of course, the expectation of high grades. The strongest correlation was between grades and ratings.

It was found that often students tended to blame their teachers for their poor grades (Balam & Shannon, 2010). Therefore, if we want to satisfy HE students, one step is to engage with them. The HE experience is made up of many different components and it is necessary to examine how they are all intertwined before it is possible to determine what the HE stakeholders deem important. There is a danger that if students are viewed only as customers who must be satisfied, this may lead to HE institutions pandering to the students, rather than offering the challenges of intellectual stimulation and improvement. It is important that students do not gain control of what and how they are taught simply so that they feel satisfied (Robinson, 2012; Burne & Flood, 2003).

For a teacher to begin to engage with a cohort of students, they need to understand a little about who their current students are. In this fast technology changing world, even fairly young teachers will have a generation gap with most of their current HE students. Sometimes for older teachers this gap can be very wide. If teachers do not make the effort to understand the characteristics of the generation they teach, then it will be very difficult to engage with them, and consequently hard for students to feel satisfied with those particular learning experiences.

2.6.3 Customer satisfaction in higher education

As well as the students, there are also the other stakeholders to consider: industry, the university and the wider community. All these parties are seeking satisfaction and once the conversation about this very emotive concept has begun, we encroach into the area of marketing theory. The business community – especially the service industry – has long understood the importance of asking their customers for feedback. This is the same in HE, but it is in looking at the questions asked that the difference is apparent. The business community asks their customers for their comments and opinions. This is also what needs to happen with the stakeholders of property HE (Walsch, 1998; Wallace, 1999).

In the HE area, the university sets the questions and asks students to respond. The problem is that the questions chosen by academics for these questionnaires (AUSSE, CEQ/AGS, CES and so on) may have little or no relevance to the HE student, to industry or to the community. Dalton and Denson (2009) found that academics who selected optional questions based on
relevance to their course were more likely to score highly for overall satisfaction than those who did not use this option. They found that this type of question was a better predictor of overall satisfaction than the compulsory questions in student experience surveys. This research proposes not to throw the questionnaires away, but to follow the lead of the business world and ask our stakeholders what they want to tell us. Critically, the research is aimed at achieving strategies which may be implemented to improve the education experience and benefit all stakeholders.

Although a discussion of student satisfaction within HE (university) is focused on education, it also relates to services marketing issues. Since 1989, when Australian HE students began to pay for a substantial proportion of the charges relating to their studies, this relationship to marketing theory has become more relevant. Discussion commenced with the concept of students as customers, or clients. As the fees students pay have increased, so too has the emphasis by students on receiving value for money. Regardless of whether HE students are regarded as customers or stakeholders; there is no argument about the need to be vigilant in the pursuit of overall educational satisfaction. As the product is unpacked, HE can be seen to be one of the unique services marketing experiences.

There are not many other products that take three or more years to mature. The second characteristic of this service is the tiered structure, which sees one section having to be successfully completed before moving on to the next one. The final product, the degree, is not awarded until all the tiers are completed. A third characteristic that is different for this product is the intensity of the experience; up to 15–30 hours a week in blocks of 11 or 15 weeks at a time. Finally, within HE, the producer of the service also assesses the progress of the client and without this assessment the client cannot progress to the next stage. Taken altogether, these four characteristics make an education experience unique from a relationship services marketing perspective.

The term ‘relationship marketing’ was coined during the 1980s and is still an evolving concept. It started in the banking industry and is now firmly entrenched in the HE sector. As well as marketing their products, universities today must also concern themselves with their relationships with their stakeholders and their stakeholder engagement (Payne, 1993). Athiyaman (1997) believes that with regard to HE, each class a student is enrolled in is a transaction or service encounter. Consumer satisfaction is a transaction-specific overall attitude. Therefore, a student’s overall evaluation of perceived service quality at any given
time will be a function of their satisfaction with classes attended up to that particular time. In addition, dissatisfaction with more recent encounters will have a larger impact on overall satisfaction, compared to more distant unsatisfactory encounters. Perceived service quality is an attitude and attitudes are emotive and subject to change. Attitudes are formed largely by our own and others’ experiences. Attitudes are also a consequence and a function of consumer satisfaction. Unless student satisfaction with all service encounters is measured at the time it occurs, we can only assume that perceived quality depends on satisfaction (Athiyaman, 1997).

The literature suggests HE is also unique within the services industry because there is more than one customer in the equation. Secondary beneficiaries include parents, the marketplace and society at large. Regardless, given that students are identified as the primary beneficiaries of education, it is suggested that they be treated as customers (Yeo, 2008; Sax, 2004). This perspective stems from the understanding that educational institutions are highly competitive in the market, with strategies being aggressively developed to satisfy student needs in order to attract a sustainable market share (Yeo, 2008). To take the marketing example further, Conway and Yorke (1991) suggest there are three levels of customers: the primary customers being the students, secondary customers the government, and the tertiary customer being the validating body. This third group includes employers, ex-students and parents.

Emery et al. (2001) make the case for students being the product, not the customer, of a HE experience, as HE institutions produce graduates primarily to be employed in the marketplace. They maintain that if anyone is the customer, it is the academics who have to judge the student (product) and decide if they pass or fail, and industry that then employs them. Many making decisions about HE today see the management of these institutions as a commercial enterprise and the graduate as the end product. In actual fact the process is more like a doctor–patient relationship, because unlike manufacturing, no two student experiences, or results, are the same. Not all patients get better and neither do they follow all the rules; this is similar in HE. Many students are reluctant to complain, either through fear of reprisal because they still have to complete their program, or they find the process daunting. For whatever reason, most endure any poor experience they have in the hope it will improve for the next semester. However, student complaints are on the increase and the individual universities have their own processes for handling complaints. As Naylor (2007, p. 142) states, HE is a participatory product, not a consumer one.
Whether or not students are customers, student satisfaction is important to HE institutions for two major reasons. First, because feedback is necessary to improve educational standards; and second, government funding is largely based on a university’s standing – and one of the important criteria used is student satisfaction. Consequently, student satisfaction surveys have evolved as one way to evaluate a university’s competence, even if students are not the only customers in the HE process. If parents, industry and/or government are also customers, albeit secondary, then this theory assumes students are the product of the education experience (Hwarng & Teo, 2001). Whether you call an HE student a customer or not, concerns about the quality of their educational experience and the resulting level of their satisfaction with this experience, are very important components of the evaluation of an educational institution. This process will continue, regardless of who the customer is, and it is important that the evaluations used in this process are relevant and appropriate to measure the experience of the HE student.

Every class a HE student is enrolled in can be seen or interpreted as a service encounter (Athiyaman, 1997) and so the question, therefore, is how we deliver quality education (Hwarng & Teo 2001). Eagle and Brennan (2007) believe it is the quality movement that is in part responsible for the adoption of the student-as-customer concept. Because the need has arisen for HE institutions to compete with one another for students, improved levels of service is a direct result. Normally, when customers purchase a product or service in the marketplace, they evaluate both the product quality and the supplier. In the educational process the situation is different because the teacher is also involved in the evaluation process in the form of assessment. Without these evaluations students cannot progress to the next stage of their education. It is difficult to come up with a similar situation in industry where the supplier constantly evaluates the customer. The presence of these evaluations creates a unique situation in education, because the fact that a teacher evaluates the student means a teacher is not only a supplier and the student is not just a customer. Their relationship goes beyond these roles and is more intricate and multifaceted. The logical implication is that a student’s satisfaction with a certain course and teacher is influenced by both knowledge-seeking (customer role) and grade-seeking motivation, where the relative weights of each are difficult to measure (Ho & Wearn, 1996). Complementary to the customer role of a student is the supplier role of a teacher. The purpose of this role is to provide the best quality service, and to this end a teacher is engaged in behaviours such as
developing, challenging, sustaining, explaining, encouraging and discussing issues with students.

These teaching behaviours are customer oriented and fit within the scope of total quality management (TQM). Students, who want to gain deeper knowledge and better skills, should demand these and the task of a teacher is to continuously improve the quality of their service. However, student satisfaction taken to an extreme can be counterproductive, because the student’s dual role complicates the situation due to the tension between the grade seeker and customer roles (Ho & Wearn, 1996). The most common understanding of service quality in HE is its association with teacher–student participation in relation to immediate and lifelong learning. However, service quality is far more complex; it is concerned with the physical, institutional and psychological aspects of the HE experience (Yeo, 2008).

In implementing TQM into HE there is a need to recognise that students fulfil multiple roles and they cannot merely be identified as customers (Sirvanci, 2004). TQM in education is multifaceted: it includes within its scope the quality of inputs in the form of students, faculty, support staff and infrastructure; the quality of processes in the form of the learning and teaching activity; and the quality of outputs in the form of the students who graduate into industry (Sahney et al., 2004). It is important that HE institutions actively engage in improving all aspects of their service quality. If they do not, they will lose out to institutions that operate using a student-centred focus, improved customer data and process management, increased student loyalty, retention and satisfaction within their programs and services (Seeman & O’Hara, 2006). Meirovich and Romar (2006) argue that the difficulty of applying marketing concepts such as TQM to the HE experience is due to the dual role of students and teachers: they have complementary and conflicting roles within the HE process.

A student’s overall evaluation of perceived service quality at any given time will be a function of their satisfaction with their educational experience up to that particular time. Perceived service quality is an attitude and attitudes are emotive and subject to change. Attitudes are formed largely by personal experiences and feedback on others’ experiences and can be a consequence or a function of consumer satisfaction. Unless student satisfaction with all service encounters is measured at the time it occurs, we can only assume perceived quality depends on satisfaction and not the effects of other factors (Athiyaman, 1997).
2.6.4 Managing service quality in the higher education process

Within the service industry in general, several instruments have for many years now been used to gauge customer satisfaction. For example, SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), is an instrument designed to determine the quality of a service encounter which compares customer perceptions of the service received with customer expectations of the service. SERVPERF, developed by Cronin and Taylor (1994), focuses on customer perceptions of service quality. Recent research has confirmed that SERVPERF (performance only) results in more reliable estimations, greater convergent and discriminant validity, greater explained variance, and consequently less bias, than SERVQUAL (Firdaus, 2006 p. 32).

It is possible that instruments such as these can be used to determine student satisfaction within HE settings. Based on an analysis of the components of these above services marketing models and then applying them to the arena of tertiary education, HEdPERF (Higher Education PERFORMANCE) was developed by Firdaus (2005; 2006) specifically for the HE sector. HEdPERF is a comprehensive performance-based instrument aimed at capturing the authentic determinants of service quality in the HE sector. He determined that a modified 38 item HEdPERF with underlying five-factor structure scale was better than the others in explaining the variance of service quality levels. Hence, the study concluded that:

Service quality in higher education can be considered as a five-factor structure with conceptually clear and distinct dimensions namely non-academic aspects, academic aspects, reputation, access and programme issues (Firdaus, 2006, p. 43).

The study shows that while SERVPERF was developed and subsequently proven as the superior generic scale to measure service quality in a wide range of service industries, it did not provide a better perspective for the HE setting. In fact, Firdaus reports that ‘SERVPERF performed miserably’. In addition, the study found that the ‘access’ dimension was the most important determinant of service quality in HE. In other words, students perceived access to be more important than any other dimensions in determining the quality of service they received. Access includes the elements of ‘approachability, ease of contact and availability of both the academics and non-academic staff’ (Firdaus, 2006, p. 44).
Therefore, according to Firdaus (2006, p. 44), HE institutions should concentrate their efforts on the dimension perceived to be important (access), rather than focusing their energies on several different attributes which they feel are important determinants of service quality. While the idea of providing adequate service on all dimensions may seem attractive to most service marketers and managers, failure to prioritise these attributes may result in inefficient allocation of resources and a consistent over-surveying of students, which happens in many Australian universities. The other overwhelming problem with using these detailed questionnaires is the length of time required to fill them out. HE students are time poor and they will not spend the time filling out detailed survey questions that they see themselves receiving no benefit from.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) were the first to grapple with a customer satisfaction model that also looked at consumer expectations and perceptions. They identify 10 determinants of service quality: accessibility, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, communication; and credibility, security, understanding the customer; and tangibles, or physical facilities. These 10 factors were condensed into five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) when they developed the SERVQUAL model to measure customer perceptions of service. The definitions of the dimensions are as follows:

- **tangibles**: the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials;
- **reliability**: the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
- **responsiveness**: the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service;
- **assurance**: knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence; and
- **empathy**: caring, individualised attention an organisation provides to its customers.

SERVQUAL uses a scale to rate service expectations and performance by asking customers a set of questions on attributes that reflect the five dimensions of quality. This model places emphasis on the views of customers in defining service quality. Parasuraman et al. (1985) propose that the SERVQUAL model could be extended to measure gaps in quality and could therefore be used as a diagnostic tool to enable management to identify service quality shortfalls. The gap score is calculated by deducting the expectation statements from the
perception statements. If any gap scores turn out to be positive, then this implies expectations are being exceeded, and vice versa (Smith et al., 2007). With regard to HE, the SERVQUAL model has been referenced to develop a 22–26 item instrument for measuring customer expectations and perceptions using the five-quality dimensions. This methodology operates by means of identifying ‘expectations’ and ‘perceptions’, with the aim of closing the gap between the two. They are demonstrated by using the five dimensions in relation to HE institutions:

- **Tangibility**: The challenge for institutions is to ensure the service provided, such as course content, delivery and application, meets the expectations of their students consistently. This category also includes the physical surroundings, including lecture theatres, classrooms and leisure areas.

- **Reliability**: Discrepancy between promise and delivery is largely the result of inaccurate communication from advertisements, word of mouth and notices. Institutions need to ensure that they are able to provide exactly what they promise.

- **Responsiveness**: Institutions should be responsive to the changing needs of their students in providing courses and training programs that are relevant in subject matter and teaching approaches. The learning process is expected to be academically rigorous, yet flexible in areas pertaining to course selection and assessment. With the advent of technology, course design and delivery are expected to be progressive, wherein innovation and creativity should be the by-products (and process) of learning.

- **Assurance**: Judgment of high or low-service quality largely depends on how the students perceive the actual performance of the service based on their expectations. The level of tolerance in service standards differs across all areas; for instance, the more important the area, the smaller the level of tolerance. Students’ willingness to modify expectation of service standards needs to be appropriately managed through the availability of choices. Hence, from a holistic perspective of education, support services and facilities also play a vital role in contributing to the overall service quality in higher education.

- **Empathy**: It is sometimes a challenge for institutions to meet student expectations and demands. For instance, a shortage of teaching staff and the need for optimal
enrolments have seen an increase in class sizes, stretching the teacher:student ratio. This has implications for the level of individual attention and empathy given to each student inside and outside the classroom (Smith et al., 2007).

The advantage of this measure is that it will ask students to consider their expectations as well as experiences, and provides an opportunity for reflection based on personal desires and contextual considerations. This way, rating and feedback provided by students would be more objective and less erratic (Yeo, 2008; Brochado, 2009).

In addition to SERVQUAL, an education-specific measure has been developed called HEdPERF, comprising a set of 41 items. This instrument aims at considering not only the academic components, but also aspects of the total service environment as experienced by the student. HEdPERF identifies five dimensions of the service quality concept:

- non-academic aspects: items that are essential to enable students to fulfil their study obligations and relate to duties carried out by non-academic staff;
- academic aspects: responsibilities of academics;
- reputation: importance of higher learning institutions in projecting a professional image;
- access: includes issues such as approachability, ease of contact, availability and convenience; and
- program issues: importance of offering wide-ranging and reputable academic programs/specialisations with flexible structures and health services (adapted from Firdaus, 2005).

The literature points to a need for establishing a dedicated process of TQM in HE. This means setting in place steps to examine the service experience at this point in time. Whether there is one customer or many in the HE process, all the HE stakeholders need to contribute to the specific university’s understanding of the current quality of the service they are encountering. Since 1985, when Parasuraman et al. first introduced SERVQUAL, there have been a plethora of other models using the same principles to measure service quality, but none is perfect because measuring customer perceptions and expectations is an ever-changing scenario and every customer (student) is different.

Robledo (2001) carried out a very thorough examination of three of the better-known measures (SERQUAL, SERPERF and SERVPEX) and used them in an analysis of service
quality in the airline industry. He concludes that the results from all three measures were not significantly different, but that overall, SERVPEX provided the most appropriate results for that industry. His resulting questionnaire is provided in Appendix E. As Rowley (1997) states, SERVPERF only looks at perception measures and for this reason, this model was dismissed for this research. This is also supported by Robledo (2001), Joseph and Joseph (1998), and O’Neill (2003). Further, all three of these papers discuss the effects of time on service quality analysis of an HE experience. The differences aside, the additional scope of SERVPEX as a services management tool is an improvement on SERQUAL, because it does consider the issue of expectations and it does not ask questions from a negative approach, which can be off-putting. However, it is very long, with 29 questions, compared to only 22 with SERVQUAL.

Johnston et al. (1990) adds an additional two components to Parasuraman et al.’s 1988 service quality determinants, making a total list of 10 components. Their study sought to classify the determinants of service quality into those that are predominantly satisfiers and those that are predominantly dissatisfiers. In a random sample of 10 per cent of the customers of four banks, they received 431 returned questionnaires with a net 323 satisfaction anecdotes and 256 dissatisfied. The most frequently mentioned satisfaction terms were attentiveness, responsiveness, care and friendliness, which accounted for 74 per cent of the positive consumer responses. The main source of dissatisfaction was integrity, alongside reliability, responsiveness and availability.

Students are in a continuous, almost every day, and long-term service encounter. This means any satisfaction analysis needs to take into account this situation. In addition, the fact that students are constantly in one another’s presence, engaging in both negative and hopefully positive word-of-mouth interaction, means their opinions and perceptions are constantly changing (Rowley, 1996; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996). O’Neill (2003) carried out a study surveying 372 HE students using SERVQUAL as his model and found that 21 of the 22 questions asked yielded a lower score from the same cohort when they were tested again at a much later time in their education, attesting to the fact that expectations and perceptions change based on the experiences a customer (student) has. In that particular institution the students tested clearly had higher expectations and perceptions coming into the institution than they had after being there for a period of time.
This study discusses the problem with using a traditional services quality survey for HE students. These questionnaires have been predominantly developed for a one-point-in-time encounter. O’Neill (2003) points out that student satisfaction is dependent on changing circumstances and these traditional measures of service quality fail to take account of the length of a student’s academic career. This point in time gives an artificial picture, because the student may be in a state of flux, have recently had a bad service encounter, or even a particularly successful encounter. A point-in-time measurement of service quality when a HE student is involved in the experience over a three-year period does not give a true picture of their state of mind concerning their overall satisfaction.

To be truly representative as a useable indicator of HE student service quality, the process needs to track student perceptions throughout their entire educational experience. For this reason, Firdaus (2005) developed a services quality model specific for HE, known as HEdPERF, which went beyond the scope of SERVQUAL. This questionnaire asks 41 very appropriate questions adapted to encompass the entire student experience. An example of a SERQUAL education questionnaire can be seen in Appendix F, and an example of HEdPERF is listed in Appendix G. HEdPERF does have the advantage of being developed purely for a testing HE satisfaction; however, 41 questions are too many and it is unlikely students would engage with such a long questionnaire. In addition, to capture the changing situations of a HE student, it would need to be administered many times over their university experience. This would not be acceptable for the majority of HE students. When undertaking a survey, there needs to be an understanding of the expected purpose of the survey and a clear and concise set of questions. It suits no useful purpose to use these general-service quality questionnaires, because all you will receive is very general answers to many different questions. It does not help an understanding of what a student is having particular difficulty with by asking them to answer, for example, whether they agree with the statement, ‘The institution offers highly reputable programs’. Answers to these types of questions are yes/no answers and they will give an idea of where the problems are, but not the degree of detail that is needed to really engage with service quality problems. Only open-ended questionnaires and the discussion of critical incidents can indicate specific problems (Marsh & Roche, 1993; 1997).

2.6.5 Managing expectations

Research into student satisfaction is often about attempting to explain bias by students when completing surveys. What is in their minds when they fill out these survey forms? Do they
reward charisma? Does personality matter? Or expected grades for the subject (Patrick, 2011; Cohen, 1981)? The gap in the literature appears to be around the criteria HE students find important and how they select these criteria. For example, when testing 174 students, Patrick (2011) used the big-five personality traits (low neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experiences, and conscientiousness) to rank lecturers. He found that those lecturers who ranked highly on these personality traits also rated high on good teaching scores. He also found that students who ranked themselves as agreeable also rated their teachers on a higher good teaching score compared to other student personality types. Although interesting, this does not show a causal link between personality traits and good teaching, but may be just a coincidence. This research is supported by the findings of Shelvin et al. (2010), who examined the effect of ‘charisma’ in lecturers against the relevant good teaching scores. Could student satisfaction be as simple as having a positive view of the lecturer as charming, helpful and friendly? In a survey of 199 undergraduates at a UK university, they found this ‘charisma’ effect to be 69 per cent significant. The sample on its own is too small to become significant, but it is clear that being a charismatic lecturer does help your chances of being liked by students. If one of the goals of an academic is to satisfy HE students, it is important to understand what drives satisfaction (Shelvin et al, 2010; Stewart et al, 2007).

One of the issues around stakeholder satisfaction is in managing expectations. If there is a gap between what the stakeholders expect (and in most cases this refers to the students), then there will be a degree of dissatisfaction. But how can you ensure that stakeholder expectations are realistic? Initially, it depends on their experiences in the past and for university students, this is a combination of their experiences in secondary school, coupled with myths they may have gained from friends or family who ‘remember’. Buckley et al. (2004) suggest strategies that consist of running realistic course previews where the lecturer’s and the students’ roles are discussed and embedding some expectation-lowering procedures into the process. Svensson and Wood (2007) maintain that the expectations of students are sometimes unrealistic. Often they are not informed of the level of academic rigour required to successfully achieve a degree. Sometimes, academics feel like they are fighting everybody – the students and the university.

University administrators understand the importance of high student satisfaction figures to support higher funding and academics are urged to please their students, but sometimes this is
an uphill battle. One study even tried incentives for groups of students. They used six separate groups and provided chocolates to three of the groups. All other activities remained the same for the six groups, including the assessors. The three groups that received chocolate rated the educational experience higher than the groups that received none (Youmans & Jee, 2007). Of all the stakeholders, the students dovetail with university governance. Students want high marks, they prefer ease and convenience for as little effort as possible, and this fits with university goals of maximising profits. They are unaware that academics are fighting for the students as they seek to provide developmental education, not capsule education. In a postmodern world, the appeal of a qualification (image) may be more relevant than the reality (knowledge) (McArdle-Clinton, 2008).

A study from the University of Western Australia examined students’ opinions on how they viewed the inclusive nature of particular courses (Santhanam & Hicks, 2004). Their results show that humanities and social science courses scored higher on inclusive teaching than science/maths, and overall, females reported higher inclusiveness than males. Another study examining the correlation of student and staff satisfaction at a US university found, in a study of 750 students, that they noticed a lack of enthusiasm for teaching from lecturers who were engaged in extensive research. They found these academics to be very disinterested in their teaching and reluctant to make any changes that might enhance the student experience (Kroncke, 2006). In a study from RMIT University, Patrick et al (2008) identified distinctly different dimensions of students’ experience within specific disciplines. Their starting point focused attention on the student's experience, rather than the teacher's performance. Their factor analysis enabled the identification of areas where students' experiences varied.

Whether you call a HE student a customer or a client, there is no doubt the concern about the quality of their educational experience, and the resulting level of their satisfaction with this experience, are very important components of the evaluation of an educational institution. Regardless of who the customer is, it is important that the evaluations used in this process are relevant and appropriate to measure the experience of the HE student. Sometimes it is the interaction between the customers themselves that is important. Unlike the customers of most service industry organisations, students spend a lot of time with other customers like themselves. They talk amongst each other and make value judgments about the relativity of their HE experience (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996).
Organisations typically attempt to influence (for example, through advertising and promotions) the student’s pre-service expectations and desires. This really constitutes two separate goals. Not only do we wish to create a desire on the part of the student for our service; we must also try to ensure they have clear expectations about what the university can actually deliver. Although it is frequently stated that customers assess satisfaction and judge overall service quality by comparing their expectations with their perceptions, the process through which this occurs continues to be unclear. Indeed, in many cases, the difference between what a customer desires from the service and what they expect is uncertain (Coye, 2004).

Establishing an effective relationship between students and the university is extremely important and this especially needs to be undertaken at the first-year level. If first-year students feel they are bonding with their university, their program and their teachers, this will help with the remaining time they are at university (Bowden, 2013). Bowden (2013) also found that student expectation had a very strong influence on how they related to their first-year experience. All the students interviewed for this research expected their first year would be customised to their needs and that their experience would be personalised; however, they found themselves adrift to fend for themselves. The tertiary experience created a high level of anxiety and uncertainty in the first-year students. Although this was only a small study, it does highlight the problem of unrealistic expectation for students coming directly from secondary school to HE. It also helps explain why mature-age students often achieve better results at university than secondary school leavers (Bowden, 2013).

Not only is expectation important at this level of commencing students, but all students will have an individual level of expectation about their HE. Some students, for whatever reason, may view their HE experience realistically and others may have an unrealistic view of their experiences. Prior expectation is a forward-looking view of what they think the HE experience will be. If you then add in perceived value of the experience, the relationship becomes extremely complex. You can take one student who may have older siblings who went to university and have briefed them about what to expect. This same student is enthusiastic about the studies they are undertaking and is passionate about the career they are training for. In comparison, a second student is the first member of their family to attend university, they chose any program to do at random and have no idea what career they would like to pursue when they finish. The first student is more likely to hold realistic expectations
about the HE experience and the perceived value of the degree they are studying for, and is more likely to be reasonably satisfied with their HE experience. The second student might understandably be confused and lost at university and completely unsure as to why they are there. The gap between what they initially perceived the experience would be and what they are actually experiencing is wide, and therefore they probably feel dissatisfied with their HE experience (Serenko, 2011).

In their paper on expectation-perception in HE, Yeo and Marquardt (2011) focus on the use of services marketing models such as SERVQUAL and SERVPERF (Firdaus, 2005) (a services quality model adapted from SERVQUAL specifically for HE; Appendix E), within the civil engineering and mathematics schools at a Singapore university. Their methodology consisted of interviews of university staff (24) within the two schools and covered three broad topic areas: customer focus, quality course design, and support services. Although their findings are clinically interesting, it is difficult to draw conclusions from this paper because even the best-intentioned academics may be unaware of their lack of connectedness to the student body, especially with regard to empathy. Many of the qualities students value in university staff are difficult to learn. Factors such as openness, being student focused, friendliness and reliability are behavioural characteristics. They are difficult to adopt if they are not already part of your character. Knowing you need to behave this way, and behaving this way, are two different things. Often, when HE teaching staff are interviewed, they say the expected things and they might think they are behaving this way in the classroom; rarely does this correlate with what students tell us is the reality.

This is supported in the study by Sarrico and Rosa (2014), in which they discuss the two different aspects of the teaching delivered at HE institutions. One is operational teaching and covers the delivery of the service, and the other is the input from the student and their perspective of the service delivery. Because students are not a homogeneous group, the way they will relate to any given experience will be different. Their research used a questionnaire delivered to 50 per cent of Portuguese HE institutions, with 11,600 students completing the survey. Their findings show that significant differences existed between the average scores of expectation and perception levels for all of the variables under analysis. In other words, the prior expectation of the students was significantly higher than their actual perceptions of the quality of their educational experience. In addition, this satisfaction level became lower, the further the students progressed with their studies. These differences between students, and the
fact they are all have different educational experiences, makes measuring their actual satisfaction very difficult. What is true for one student will not be the case for another – just like any other service encounter. There is a gap between prior expectations and the perceived service experience (Sarrico & Rosa, 2014). These are very important findings and the results are taken from a very large sample.

In their discussion of the findings of this research, Sarrico and Rosa (2014) divided the components of a university into six sections: materials, equipment, students, personnel, technology and facilities, in no particular order. These six factors interact together to provide the HE experience and all the accompanying benefits, emotions, judgments and interactions. Their discussion around these items was based on what they perceived the gaps to be in the HE experience. They believe that the student assessed the service they received based on the above six components and a comparison of their perceptions of the service delivered, versus their previous expectations.

Expectations as well as perceptions are components of service quality from a student perspective. They perceived two possible gaps for any given experience. The expectation of what the experience would be, then the actual experience, could create a gap if the experience did not live up to expectations. Then there could be a gap between the given experience and their perceptions of this experience. Based on how the individual student processes their thoughts about these incidents could lead to satisfaction, or non-satisfaction with their overall HE experience. The first gap is a misalignment of expectations and the given experience. The second gap is a misalignment of the processes of the experience and the perception of the experience. It is possible that students’ perceptions of the perceived quality of their HE experience are not the same as the quality of the processes being implemented (operational quality). Overall expectations are higher than perceptions and therefore they feel less satisfied (Sarrico & Rosa, 2014).

Knowing there are gaps in a customer service experience is only part of the solution. If satisfaction is to be improved, there needs to be knowledge about what is wrong with the service experience. Using a critical incident technique (CIT) is another way to obtain this information. Douglas et al (2008, p.22) call these incidents ‘moments of truth’. Each moment of truth impacts on the mind of the receiver and becomes part of the experiences they use to evaluate the service they are receiving. By asking respondents to provide specific negative and positive experiences, either by interview or in questionnaires, is a valid way to discover
what works and what does not work for your customers (students). This technique has been used successfully in research to clarify the type and magnitude of customer satisfaction. Edvardsson has been researching this topic since 1988 and the study by Edvardsson et al. (2014) extended the research to identify what they call the negative critical wave (NCW), which often occurs when an initial negative critical incident is not addressed and the negative experience is compounded. They reflect that the magnitude of the negative critical wave will be a direct reflection of the magnitude of the negative critical incidents over the life of the customer’s relationship with an organisation. This is extremely relevant in the area of HE, where the service experience covers several years. If students continually experience poor educational activities, their anger will most likely grow. This could be a very important determinant in the eventual positive or negative final student feedback in the Australian AGS/CEQ responses after graduation.

Another side of complaint behaviour is a concept known as the justice dimension approach. There are three underlying justice dimensions:

- distributive justice – the customer does not believe they have been compensated sufficiently, through refund or apology;
- procedural justice – the ease of engaging in a process aimed at rectifying the poor service encounter; and
- interactional justice – the fairness of the interpersonal treatment during the recovery period.

If a customer feels badly treated concerning any of these processes, this will reflect on the relationship between them and the service provider, and can be a contributing factor in the size and severity of the critical incident wave (Park et al., 2008).

2.6.5.1 Managing quality in the HE process

Customer satisfaction is often used synonymously with quality, and quality is frequently defined as meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Meirovich and Romar (2006) argue that the difficulty of applying marketing concepts to the HE experience is due to the dual role of students and teachers. They have complementary and conflicting roles within the HE process. Normally, when a customer purchases a product or service in the marketplace, they evaluate both the product quality as well as the supplier. In the educational process, the situation is reversed, because the teacher does the evaluation in the form of assessment.
Without these evaluations, students cannot progress to the next stage of their education. It is difficult to come up with a similar situation in industry where the supplier constantly evaluates the customer. Indeed, the presence of these evaluations creates a truly unique situation in education, because the fact that a teacher evaluates the student means that a teacher is not only a supplier and the student is not just a customer. Their relationship goes beyond these roles and is more intricate and multifaceted. The logical implication of this is that a student’s satisfaction with a certain course and teacher is influenced by both knowledge-seeking (customer role) and grade-seeking motivation, where the relative weights of each are difficult to measure. The motivation to attain high grades, together with the corresponding behaviours discussed above, constitutes the grade-seeking role of a student (Meirovich and Romar, 2006).

Complementary to the customer role of a student is the supplier role of a teacher. The purpose of this role is to provide the best quality service and to this end a teacher is engaged in behaviours such as: developing, challenging, sustaining, explaining, encouraging and discussing issues with students. It is important that HE institutions actively engage in improving their service quality. If they do not, they will lose out to institutions that operate using a student-centred focus, improved customer data and process management, increased student loyalty, retention and satisfaction within their programs and services (Seeman & O’Hara, 2006).

Knowing the role of the student and the role of the academic is not enough. Somewhere in the HE process barriers exist that prevent the necessary improvements to occur. Although a university may support the concepts that can bring about change, the processes may not filter down through the schools or faculties within the institution. Johnston (2008) set out to identify the main internal barriers that prevent improvements in service quality. He found that most obstacles to total quality management (TQM) can be linked to ineffective change management. To shift to a new TQM paradigm requires a new administrative perspective, where the organisation is viewed as an open system. Participation and strategic leadership is advocated to all staff, including lecturers. Johnston (2008) found six main barriers to improvement in a relationship between clients and an organisation:

- inappropriate culture – not student/staff focused;
- lack of customer focus – not staff/student focused;
• lack of resources – shortage of staff/facilities/money/time;
• management issues – poor training and recruitment;
• people issues – poor processes; and
• poor processes – no consistency.

To expand on this, he found the degree of arrogance and self-delusion as to the superiority of many of the parties involved in the relationship to be so high that it was impossible to see how change could occur. A further barrier to change was in terms of the internally focused mindset. The content analysis reveals that many managers and academics viewed their service from an inside-out perspective, adding weight to the lack of student focus as an important barrier for many universities (Johnston, 2008).

2.7 The situation in property higher education

A study of skills and competencies taught at US universities found that although there had been an improvement in general real estate skills taught to HE students than in previous studies, the gap now appeared to be in more general business skills, which employers are requesting (Manning & Epley, 2004). It appears as if there is always going to be a lag between what the property industry requires and what is taught in universities. This may simply be due to the fact that it takes considerable time to change university course (program) content, and such a change in curricula requires a larger study than this particular one. Similar studies have been undertaken in Australia and are discussed in the following section.

2.7.1 The situation in property higher education in Australia

Academic experts have struggled with a name that covers the diversity of the courses offered in a typical HE property program. Consequently, there is no consistent branding across the 10 Australian universities examined in the research. Program names are:

• Bachelor of Property;
• Bachelor of Commerce in Property Development and Valuation;
• Bachelor of Property Economics (2);
• Bachelor of Applied Science (Property Honours);
• Bachelor of Property and Real Estate;
• Bachelor of Commerce;
- Bachelor of Business Management;
- Bachelor of Business Property; and
- Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Property) (see Figure 2).

However, all 10 programs are common in their broad property content and underlying business training, as required by the professional accrediting bodies. It is this very breadth that students and graduates are often critical of, because they go out into employment that is often narrow in focus. Yet it is the breadth industry demands in their graduates, in the hope they have a grounding in whatever focused role in which industry employ graduates. To ensure flexibility on graduation, rather than being pigeonholed into a narrow focus, requires the programs be broad in content coverage (Australian Property Institute, 2015).

Along with problems and changes in the university sector, there has also been a similar situation occurring in the accrediting bodies for property education in Australia. The API, for example, in its accreditation documentation set several prescribed benchmarks which are required to be contained in a university program requesting accreditation for industry practice. These standards relate to education, employability, staffing, and teaching and learning. Within the education category, the knowledge fields are specific and differ on the basis of the membership being applied for. As well as a requirement for education, the API also expects:

- Graduates to have highly developed cognitive, technical and communication skills and to be able to apply this knowledge.

- Teaching staff should have contemporary industry experience and be abreast of industry standards.

- Full-time lecturing staff will be research active and sessional teaching staff will have good industry knowledge and specific industry skills.

- There will be at least one full-time Certified Practising Valuer on staff and at least one member of the API.

- Students will have a high level of satisfaction.
• Property specific Advisory Board aligning industry professionals to the program to provide best practices and future planning into the property program.

• Specific teaching outcomes and assessment to be a combination of exams, assignments and other assessments.

• All members must adhere to stringent Code of Professional Conduct (Australian Property Institute, 2013).

The API requires all its full and provisional members to undertake 20 continuing professional development (CPD) points per annum. A minimum of 10 points must be completed in property topics and 50 per cent of all points must be from ‘structured activities’. All new and returning members must undertake an institute-approved risk management module, and all continuing members must complete this course every three years. Structured activities include conferences, formal qualifications, and keynote address functions. The API has also implemented the Future Professional Program (FPP) to provide graduates with quality property-focused education and training to ensure they have appropriate property professional competency. This step was instigated as a result of several senior members’ concerns about the level of property/valuation knowledge held by the graduates they employed (Australian Property Institute, 2013).

One of the problems for universities is the API requirement for staff to demonstrate close property contacts and yet still meet the university requirements for a doctoral degree. These two requirements are often mutually exclusive and it has been difficult for universities to recruit qualified academics who have significant industry experience. This fact has led to many property lecturers, especially in the field of valuation, being employed on a casual lecturing basis (Baxter, 2013).

Another challenge for universities is the fact that there is a problem encouraging secondary students to choose to enrol in a property degree. Currently, 70 per cent of new property students are related to someone already working in the industry, which means there is still a lot more room for growth with new students (Australian Property Institute, 2015). Over the last 15 years there has been an increasing demand for property trained professionals in Australia. This is partly driven by increases in demand for these services, changes in technology, and the inclusion of property trusts in superannuation funds. These new markets
bring a requirement for a higher level of sophistication and operational management for this class of asset than has previously occurred. In a study by Hefferan (2011), 88 senior property professionals were sent questionnaires and 53 responded. Seven core questions were asked, ranging from the importance of valuers in the industry, the importance of input by property professional in property developments, projects and feasibility studies, and the roles of property professionals in a range of related areas. The response to these questions was overwhelmingly that the role of property professionals was changing and the new area of mediation and expert witness roles will increase, whereas mortgage valuation will see a fall in demand (Hefferan, 2011).

Nationwide CEQ/AGS results for the property HE programs in Australia have traditionally struggled with low response rates from graduates and low satisfaction scores. In 2008, the good teaching score for the Bachelor of Applied Science (Property) at RMIT was 24.3 per cent, and by 2009 this figure had only increased to 27.2 per cent. Figures for the other universities at that time ranged from 34–47 per cent. This figure was slightly higher for other university programs, ranging from a low of 30 per cent to a high of 48.7 per cent. The satisfaction scores for the same period were higher, with RMIT reaching 45 per cent in 2008 and the other universities ranging up to 72 per cent. The range for the satisfaction scores had improved by 2009, from 57 per cent to 79 per cent across all the then public university property programs in Australia (College of Design and Social Context, 2009).

The situation has improved since those years, largely thanks to the introduction of strategies aimed at achieving higher graduate satisfaction by all Australian universities. This effort has largely been in response to the Australian Government (2009) move to reflect student satisfaction results in university funding considerations. Symons (2006) makes the point that it is not sufficient to survey students to find their voice, but HE institutions must be seen to be acting on survey results. In their third study of HE national first-year students, Krause et al. (2005) found that although students blamed a high level of job-related reasons for poor performance, the numbers considering deferring, or withdrawing had fallen to 25 per cent of respondents. Only 50 per cent of students surveyed found their subjects interesting, and only 53 per cent found their teachers to be enthusiastic about the material they were delivering. A further 45 per cent found the standard higher than they expected, and 25 per cent worked in isolation from either their peers or extra-curricular activities.
2.7.2 Studies of Australian student satisfaction with property higher education programs

Studies within the property discipline within HE (Newell, 2013; Boyd, 2010; Bedggood & Donovan, 2012) found that at the specific property education level there were key factors influencing student satisfaction ratings. These included the quality of instruction, the perceived relevance of the instruction, and the difficulty of the task. The most important of these is the quality of instruction, which includes the lecturer personality, perceived knowledge and skill, and friendliness and approachability. This factor can account for 50–80 per cent of the variance in student satisfaction ratings (Bedggood & Donovan, 2012). Cornish et al (2009) found from a questionnaire of 69 Australian HE property students that they felt under pressure to balance study and work due to the high cost of living and university fees.

All Australian universities conduct course (subject) experience surveys of student satisfaction twice a year towards the end of each semester. These surveys remain the property of the individual universities and apart from papers written by staff from various universities, the only across-university satisfaction data has been the graduate data collected annually by the federal government in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS). In a comparison of property and business satisfaction surveys across an Australian university for 12 semesters up to 2011, Newell (2013) found that overall student satisfaction was much higher for property subjects (approximately 80 per cent) compared to overall business subjects, at between 70–80 per cent satisfaction. Assessment feedback was listed as the area of most concern for property students.

Page (2008) conducted interviews with graduates of property programs in three Australian states, all practising in the area of valuation. He interviewed 18 graduates on their perspective of their socialisation into the valuation profession and their reflections on their HE property program. The graduates identified five necessary skills for valuers:

- communication, both written and verbal;
- rational/logical/analytical skills;
- research skills;
- computer literacy; and
- spatial information and analysis skills.
Several of the graduates interviewed who did not undertake formal work experience believed that their socialisation towards becoming a valuer would have been easier if they had completed a work placement, or been provided with an industry mentor during their HE studies.

A study of high relevance to this research is the investigation by Koulizos (2006) into the opinions of the three stakeholders in HE property education in Australia; namely, students, academics and industry. Although only examining the broad issues of curriculum design, delivery and assessment, the research recorded responses from 150 valuation students, 14 industry leaders and 13 academics from across the then seven Australian public universities teaching property programs. Since that date, three additional universities now offer undergraduate property programs: Deakin University, Central Queensland University and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The findings from this research found both industry and academics reluctant to suggest any move towards a student-centred approach to valuation education, despite favour for this mode from the student body.

Although all three stakeholders should be consulted about curricula, it was only the student group who favoured more student involvement. The issues of industry mentors and work experience were also heavily supported by all parties. Yet in the decade since Koulizos (2006) published, work experience does not now feature very much in any of the undergraduate property/valuation degrees. This is largely due to the need for more information to be included in the now often shorter degree programs, the increasing student cohort size, and the difficulty of placing large numbers of students in a fairly small boutique industry.

Historical changes and the academic development of HE property programs have created a situation where the practical element of property education has diminished (Ball, 2014). While it is accepted that ‘work readiness’ for valuation graduates is lacking it is not the sole responsibility of universities to fill this gap the responsibility also falls with industry. In the past, the work experience programs fulfilled this role, but in a new era of property education there needs to be a different model. One possible solution could be greater interaction between industry and educators to address this emerging problem. With the fading out of work experience as an active component of property HE programs, there is a need for increased practical industry experience to form part of the curriculum. Alternatively, employers have to accept a greater training role for new staff.
2.7.3 Studies of student satisfaction from overseas universities

Although not in the property area, a study from Budapest produced some interesting results. Jonas et al. (2013) surveyed groups of students in five different programs and academic years. Nine hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed and 450 completed questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire used Likert scales to ask questions of the students on items of importance in their education and also on performance. Students requested more practical (rather than theoretical) classes and lecturers needed to improve their presentation skills. They further requested detailed and clear feedback and assessable work to be required evenly through the semester, not all at the end. These findings relate exactly to the comments from students in this research from the online questionnaire. In the question asking for the five worst things about their degree, many Australian property students raised the same issues concerning feedback, practical (rather than theoretical) material, and not setting the assignments all due at the same time.

Research authored by Manning and Epley (2004) from the US relating to property programs, which can then be applied to HE property programs in Australia, compared three studies that rank and review the skills and competencies alleged to be required by corporate real estate professionals in the US. It seeks to answer the question: ‘Are the proficiencies most needed by corporate real estate professional taught by universities in the United States?’ The authors used questionnaires completed by industry leaders to determine the base course suggestions they recommend. To examine the academic situation, the authors surveyed 512 university instructors across the US. A total of 222 responded (39.5 per cent) and from this, a total of 214 useable questionnaires were available for the study. They found that while universities teach many of the specialised real estate topics, they were not doing a very good job of teaching the general business skills and proficiencies indicated as essential by industry.
2.8 The research design

The main subjects of the research are the three stakeholder groups; therefore, these are the core groups with which this research seeks to engage. The research initially involved meeting with students in group interviews across property courses at Australian public universities, and in conjunction with them, establishing a series of questions that students suggest are relevant to their experiences were developed. These questions were refined and then asked of all students studying property at Australian public universities. The population is therefore considered to be all current HE property students, capturing as many year levels as possible across several cohorts, to enhance the breadth of responses.

A similar process was undertaken with the other two stakeholders: industry, and university staff involved with running and administering property programs. Undergraduate property programs offered at Australian public universities are between three and four years in duration. It is estimated that there are 2000–2200 undergraduate students currently studying property-related courses in Australia. This population formed the basis of the student stakeholder component for this research. Online questionnaires were sent to all current property/valuation students studying at Australian public universities.

After undertaking the initial discussions with the industry group, it became apparent that there was a dichotomy of interests, depending on their status within the profession. Industry stakeholders appear to fall into two distinct groups: the early career property professionals and the later career property professionals. The early career professional are the ones most closely related to students. It was useful to have them reflect on their university experience after a period of less than five years in the workforce.

The second group, the later career professionals, were examined from the perspective of what they believed property/valuation education needs to contain. Content focus and learning outcomes were found to be critical to this group. Only industry leaders were included in the second industry group. Both of these groups were accessed via the API and the internet. The API is the nationwide accrediting body for all property/valuation practitioners. It is also the body that engages in the most professional development for the property industry. While the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), a UK based internationally focused professional body, has a strong emerging presence in the Australian property professions, the majority of its members are also members of the API and therefore, to interview RICS
members as well was considered to be an unnecessary duplication. Finally, the university stakeholder is represented by property/valuation academics at Australian public universities.

These three groups of stakeholders can be regarded as the primary stakeholders in the HE experience. The researcher asked students what their HE experiences were: what were their good and bad experiences were, and what needed to change to make them satisfied. Responses to these questions needed to be balanced against responses received from academics and industry as to their experiences with students and graduates, and also their own expectations. In many instances, it was found that the literature addressed the issue of why stakeholder satisfaction is important and the methodology sections further examine the question of what stakeholders expect from a property HE experience. The final question of how stakeholder satisfaction might be improved evolved from the answers provided by the stakeholders? By cross-referencing the data with current thinking, achieved through the literature review, tentative answers to the question have been developed.

Mixed methods research methodology was used in this research study, following the lead taken by Krauss (2005). As established above, the study involved all stakeholders of the undergraduate programs in property at Australian public universities and included students, staff and industry representatives. The mixed methods approach adopted utilised qualitative and quantitative data to maximise the understanding of the decisions that stakeholders make about educational satisfaction, and to gain a meaningful understanding of their underlying reasoning. This method was selected because of the ability to cross-validate findings from focus groups and a single Australian-wide study containing both qualitative and quantitative data, and followed the ideas of Creswell (2001). Thus, the researcher used a combination of group interviews, questionnaires and statistical analysis of data pertaining to the stakeholder groups, as well as in-depth interviews, in an effort to answer the research questions.

Rather than ask the respondents to grade various criteria on a graduating scale, this research aimed to ensure the questions asked and the language used elicited the best possible responses from the three stakeholder groups. Questionnaire tools were developed that allowed different cohorts to answer different questions, depending on their grouping. Mass quantitative data was collated and where more in-depth explanations and analysis through the interviews and smaller surveys was required, this was then undertaken. The questions asked included generalised factual data on the one hand and ideas, opinions and even feelings of stakeholders on the other, again following the model utilised by Krauss (2005).
Most student satisfaction surveys comprise a fixed set of predetermined questions that are developed by academics or the institution and contain items that have been validated as proxies for learning, and/or what the academic/institution cares most about. In contrast, the approach advocated here focuses on students identifying the aspects they believe are important to them and will make the most difference to their satisfaction levels (Santhanam & Hicks, 2004). To gain a richer understanding of the data, and in line with the broader concept of mixed methods research, critical incident technique (CIT) analysis, used widely in the area of services marketing, was also built in to the methodology employed. Each critical incident or service encounter impacts on the service user’s overall impression and evaluation of the service. The critical incidents can be positive, negative or neutral, and the student selects which incidents they choose to include in their interview responses (Douglas et al., 2008).

Myriad aspects contribute to the student HE experience, and this research is premised on boldly inviting students to say what they think matters most to them. In that way, it is possible to move closer to ensuring students do indeed leave university reporting a positive educational experience. A mixed-research method is considered the most appropriate to use when researching multiple stakeholders because it allows the different stakeholders to be researched in different manners and ways that suit the specific population. For example, the largest stakeholder group comprises students and it would not be possible to interview them all, so a questionnaire was the most appropriate instrument for this group. Industry stakeholders are the next largest group, and a mix of interview and questionnaire was deemed suitable for use here, This is because unlike students, who can be emailed by their respective university, industry participants must be sourced and approached individually if you wish them to participate in the research. The final stakeholder, academics, were interviewed.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the different areas concerning HE property programs from the extensive literature available on the topic. It also provides a step-by-step discussion of the background to the broad topic of HE and then specific to property HE. The discussion concerning HE begins by working from a model developed from the literature (Figure 3), and then elaborates on the format expressed by Gibbs (2010) in his analysis of HE in the UK. His model was based on the earlier findings of Biggs (1993) and his 3P model of a HE definition being presage, process and product. After an understanding is provided for the content of a
HE experience, the review further discusses the concepts of student satisfaction and student engagement.

It would be difficult to discuss the concept of HE student satisfaction, and the associated role of student expectations, without a discussion of services and relationship marketing. This journey takes the reader through the initial ground-breaking research into SERVQUAL and all the related survey instruments that follow, terminating in a discussion of expectations and the associated gap analysis. The research design sets the scene for Chapter 3, Methodology, where the philosophy behind the data collection for this research is discussed.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This methodology chapter describes the journey of the search for answers to the questions posed in Chapter 1, and enlarged on in Chapter 2. The discussion now turns to the processes adhered to in the collection of data. Like all qualitative research, the data collection processes emerged from the scope of the research and are unique to this research thesis.

3.2 Research aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to find answers to the research questions introduced in Chapter 1. The overarching research question is:

Question 1: Why was student satisfaction with property programs so low?

Secondary research questions are:

Question 2: What has changed to cause an improvement in student satisfaction for property programs?

Question 3: What is higher education in property programs in Australia?

Question 4: What do stakeholders expect from property higher education programs in Australia?

Question 5: Why is stakeholder satisfaction important in higher education?

Question 6: How can stakeholder satisfaction be achieved within property higher education programs?

Question 1 requires an assumption that satisfaction with property programs was low when this research was commenced. The prevailing evidence on student satisfaction at the time of preparing these research questions for ethics approval was the then Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) figures, which were supplied to the researcher by staff at RMIT. These figures are commonly available and are published annually in approximately October of each calendar year. Graduates of all higher education (HE) programs receive the questionnaires in
March the year after graduation. A comparison of the figures for property programs when compared to general business degrees, were found to be on average significantly lower in both good teaching scores and satisfaction scores. This is discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Why the scores are low is the crux of this research, and the evidence and discussion on this question can be found in Chapters 4 and 5. It must also be noted that the response rate for these surveys is very low, often representing only 25 per cent of graduates from the individual universities.

The second and third research questions relate to the importance of satisfaction in HE. Discussion on these questions can be found in Chapter 2 and also in Chapter 5. The fourth and fifth research questions deal directly with the opinions and importance of the stakeholders. A discussion on what stakeholders expect from property HE programs in Australia can be found in Chapter 4. The final research question concerning how stakeholder satisfaction can be achieved within property HE programs, is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

This research collected information about the educational experiences of many HE property students, as well as industry leaders, new graduates of property programs working in the property market in Australia, and academics from the 10 universities in the study. For the student questionnaire no sampling method was adopted and the questionnaire was delivered to the entire population of students in this study. The graduate survey respondents used a purposeful sampling method, because the Young Property Professional (YPP) group from the API is the only known listed group of young graduates in Australia. Using this list was deemed to be the only way to access this group of respondents and although this meant that only graduates who were members of the YPP received the questionnaire, using this method ensured that young property professionals could be included in the research. While this has the potential to introduce bias into the data, if this method had not been used, the valuable voice of recent graduates would not have been heard.

Similarly, with the selection of data for industry leaders, convenience sampling was undertaken. The list of 1000 industry leaders to send the questionnaire to was chosen from the Employers of Choice program at RMIT, API members and industry websites (URLs). It is estimated that the national population of property industry leaders is in the vicinity of 2000 people. The low response rate from using this system has also affected the quality of the research with regard to the voice of industry and is a weakness of the research. However, the
responses received were focused, consistent and allowed a picture of industry concerns to emerge.

Where possible in the research design the questions asked were open-ended to allow respondents to better voice their experiences. This was true both for the interviews used for students, industry and academics and also for the three questionnaires. For the student, graduate and industry questionnaires, all respondents were contacted by email, which included the appropriate plain language letter.

3.3 Research Philosophy

To better understand the results of the data collection, the author chose to combine multiple standard research methods. The best way to understand any phenomenon is to allow the questions to emerge and change, as the researcher gains a greater understanding of the material being investigated (Krauss, 2005). The research paradigm chosen for this research is a combination of interpretivism and critical theory. This paradigm is the best fit methodology for this research taking into account that the author both brings subjective experience to the research, and also adopts the role of a facilitator by encouraging the participation of the subjects in the research. The central aim of this research is to hear the voice of the HE student, as well as the other stakeholders, in the HE experience for property education. The author then used this voice to develop a deep understanding of how each piece of evidence relates to the story. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to work closely with people and collect data with regard to personal experiences and feelings (Levy, 2006).

This research draws on both Constructionism and Objectivism via the different methods used in this research. This is illustrated in the model shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Model of Research Philosophy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epistemology</th>
<th>Constructionism</th>
<th>Objectivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Perspective</td>
<td>Interpretivism</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Focus groups/interviews</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Levy (2007), as adapted from Crotty (1998),
Constructionism allows the researcher to examine the opinions and observations of participants within the study, and recognises they may have different experiences and opinions within the same situation (Levy, 2007).

The author used interviewing and open-ended questionnaires to encourage open dialogue between the researcher and those being questioned. Interpretivism is a view of the world as defined by the people in it, and their actions and reactions to events that happen to them (Voce, 2004). Within this research, the critical incident technique (CIT) is a method of questioning that does not constrain respondents to ticking boxes or circling answers, as is the way with many questionnaires. CIT allows respondents to describe their experiences in relaxed, open-ended response (Denzel & Lincoln, 2005; Douglas et al., 2008). CIT asks participants to reflect and provide the researcher with both positive and negative experiences of their service encounters. This allows the stakeholders to express their experiences, perceptions and feelings in their own words. There are disadvantages with using CIT (as with all data collection methods), including:

- The incident may not have occurred recently and the participants’ perceptions may have been altered;
- more time is required for this type of open-ended question, rather than tick the box, and this may lead to a low response rate;
- sometimes the views collected are at extreme ends of tolerance; and
- processing and analysing is more difficult for this type of data (Douglas et al., 2008).

Within any research paradigm, there is a need to answer three fundamental questions (Voce, 2004):

- What is the form and nature of reality? (Ontological);
- What is the knowledge, what can be known? (Epistemological); and
- How can we go about finding what we want to know? (Methodological).

Researchers’ ideals, beliefs and thoughts affect their views about human nature (ontology), about knowledge (epistemology), and even the process they choose to employ in their search for answers to their research questions (methodology) (Cody, 2002). To elaborate an interpretivist’s methodology, knowledge will be sought in the understanding that it is our
engagement with experiences whereby understanding only comes into existence through how we view the world. To have such an understanding of the research topic only comes from the firsthand knowledge that being in this world brings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The epistemological question for this research is discovering the knowledge that bridges the gap between the different stakeholders in property HE in Australia. Researchers conducting qualitative research focus their attention on one phenomenon. In this research that focus is the stakeholders in property HE in Australia (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). Attitudes to something are intrinsically personal and necessitate a qualitative approach, which is known as phenomenology. Phenomenology looks at the different ways we experience, conceptualise, understand, perceive and apprehend various phenomena in our experiences (Prosser & Trigwell, 2004). The purpose of this research is to explore, describe and attempt to understand this central phenomenon, and the research design for this study drew on phenomenological theory. Within this research process there is a procedure for collecting, analysing and reporting the material being examined. The only true way to hear the voice of the research respondent is through the use of qualitative processes (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). Using a qualitative methodology is particularly appropriate within phenomenology as this allows the researcher to collect data pertinent to the respondents’ personal experiences (Levy, 2006).

There is no single approach or strategy to gain knowledge of the social world. All approaches and strategies involve assumptions, compromises and decisions. Arriving at the ‘truth’ has dogged researchers for centuries. Perhaps there is no truth, or perhaps everything is truth, from one extreme to the other. Blaikie (1993, p. 131) maintains we may never know when a theory is true, but only when it is false. If it is truth, it is only true at the time of the research and for the people and area included in the research. Further, any truth discovered is relative to time and space and cannot be applied to another geographical area or period of time. Such views temper the conclusions within this research.

This research also drew on the concept of mixed methods, making use of existing quantitative data that can support and give credibility to the predominantly qualitative data collected. The researcher uses a concurrent triangulation strategy, one of the mixed methods models, and this has been selected because of the ability to cross-validate findings from a single Australia-wide study (Creswell, 2001).
There is a significant difficulty in attempting to merge the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. It is important to remember the original rationale of using both kinds of data to ensure a richer, more accurate result. The researcher needs to ask: Why conduct an analysis that is integrated? Has the understanding of the findings been enhanced by the use of both types of data? Mixed methods research is not just an exercise in testing findings against one another, but about forging a better result with the use of both data (Bryman, 2007).

In this research, triangulation has been utilised by the use of two or more data sources within the one study. Methodological Triangulation is also known as ‘mixed methods’, and by using this method the author aims to improve the overall validity of the research findings (Thurmond, 2001). This research uses a cross-method triangulation, employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection. In practice, triangulation as a strategy provides a rich and complex picture of some social phenomenon being studied, but rarely does it provide a clear path to a singular view of what is the case (Thurmond, 2001). It is suggested that triangulation as a strategy provides evidence for the researcher to make sense of social phenomena, but that the triangulation strategy does not, in and of itself, do this. The value of triangulation is not a technical solution to a data collection and analysis problem; it is a technique that provides more and better evidence from which researchers can construct meaningful propositions about the social world. So, whether the data converge, are inconsistent or are contradictory, the researcher must attempt to construct explanations for the data and about the data (Blaikie, 2003, p. 267).

For the purposes of this research, the main quantitative data used are the annual Course Experience Questionnaire/Australian Graduate Survey (CEQ/AGS) results. These results were collected from new graduates of HE programs across Australia, and as such they do not compare exactly with the data this researcher has collected from current property HE students. The university programs that both instruments examine are the same, but it is not possible to directly compare graduates with existing students. However, it is interesting to ask the question: What happens between initial university enrolment and graduate employment? Why are the data different? Is it simply because the timing is different? The researcher also sought the opinions of recent graduates via a nationwide questionnaire and these questions are examined in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this research. The quantitative data (CEQ/AGS), and the qualitative data from the student and graduate questionnaires, together give a better understanding of the phenomenon that is student satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2007).
With regard to generalisation, although this is a difficult and contentious topic within qualitative research, the three stakeholders overlap in their information provided in several areas. The most common overlap is the student and the industry graduate questionnaires. Where it may be possible to generalise on the four common questions this has been done. It has been done, however, in the knowledge that:

Generalization can be enhanced by studying the same issue in several research sites, using similar methods of data, collection and analysis (Blaikie, 2003, p. 255).

3.4 Method of data collection

Oiumet et al. (2004) focused on how the design of a national student survey instrument was improved by the use of student focus groups and interviews. They were specifically interested in how students interpreted the questions within student satisfaction surveys. Their results showed that using student focus groups and interviews during the development of questionnaires led to a much better understanding of how HE students interpreted the questions presented to them. For that reason, this research commenced with focus groups, and used four of the five possible types of interview methods in obtaining the data from the four stakeholder groups (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010):

- **Focus group interviews** were used in the initial stages of data collection for the student stakeholders and the graduate stakeholders.

- **One-on-one interviews** were used in the initial stage of the industry stakeholder data collection, and for the academic stakeholders. It was also used for the follow-up student and industry interviews.

- **Telephone interviews** were used for the remaining academic stakeholders who worked at universities in Australia not visited for the research data collection.

- **Open-ended questions** were used as the major component of all three Qualtrics questionnaires – students, graduates and industry leaders (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010).

3.4.1 Research stages

The research was collected in eight stages over a two-year period. (A detailed diagrammatic representation of the data collection process is set out in Figure 10). A major constraint with the data collection was the small window of opportunity to meet with and survey students in
any given semester. Several universities had strict processes for distributing questionnaires and there was a need to consider that the beginning of a semester would find both academics and students more open to data completion at these times, rather than closer to the exam period. For this reason, March and October became the months for data collection from students.

3.4.1.2 Stages 1 and 2 of data collection
Stage 1 of data collection was to develop a set of questions to test on students prior to distributing a nationwide questionnaire to all property students at the 10 designated Australian public universities.

In Stage 2, six of the 10 universities were chosen to test the questions. The universities chosen to run the trials were RMIT and Deakin University in Victoria, the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and University of Western Sydney (UWS) in NSW, and the University of Queensland (UQ) and Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Queensland. The reasoning behind the decision to use these six universities was that they were a representative sample of the 10 universities in the study and only necessitated the researcher visiting three different capital city locations.

Because the researcher was relying on the good faith of other academics at these six universities and the questions were to be asked in class time, it was decided to use printed questions, rather than asking direct questions, to protect the anonymity of the respondents and to maximise the efficiency of the time provided. Instead of focus groups, these data were called focus group interviews. The first university the researcher visited was Deakin University, located in the suburb of Burwood, Melbourne. There were originally 14 questions, with a Likert ranking scale attached to many of the questions (Appendix G). These group interview sheets were administered to students in three different property classes at Deakin University. On examination it was found that none of the students had completed all 14 questions and the question sheet was simplified to nine questions for the remaining focus group sessions for Stage 1, which were conducted at RMIT, UTS and UWS (Appendix H).

Visiting UQ and QUT with this revised group interview form made up the Stage 2 of data collection. A discussion of the findings from this initial investigation can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.
3.4.1.3 Stage 3 of data collection
The responses to all six sets of group interviews were analysed and a nine-question, mainly open-ended, online qualitative questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics. Once the site was established, it was tested using the researcher’s own property students from RMIT. The students who responded formed the first group of student respondents. RMIT was the first university to receive electronically both the student plain language letter required to secure ethics approval, and the link to the questionnaire in March 2014. Other universities followed, with the final student respondent’s completed questionnaire received in March 2015 (Appendix I).

3.4.1.4 Stage 4 of the data collection
A set of group interview questions was developed for young property professionals who had graduated no more than five years earlier. These questions were administered to a pilot group of eight young graduates (Appendix J). The results of this session enabled the creation of a further Qualtrics questionnaire, which was distributed Australia wide to all members of the API’s Young Property Professionals (YPP) group. (Appendix K).

3.4.1.5 Stage 5 of data collection
A set of nine questions was developed to use for interviews with industry leaders (Appendix L). A total of six telephone interviews were conducted with property industry leaders known to the researcher. This group formed the industry focus group.

3.4.1.6 Stage 6 of data collection
These same nine questions were developed into a third online Qualtrics questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent via email to 1000 industry along with the industry plain language letter required under ethics approval for this research. (Appendix M).

3.4.1.7 Stage 7 of data collection
The final stakeholders in the data collection were the property academics. It was decided that a relaxed, informal interview session would suit academics in the property area because the researcher knew many in a professional capacity. The majority of these interviews were conducted, often over coffee, while visiting the various universities for the group interview sessions. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone if interstate, or by visiting if located in Melbourne. See Appendix N for a copy of the questions used for these interviews.
3.4.1.8 Stage 8 of data collection

After all the above seven stages were completed, a series of follow-up interviews was embarked on to tease out more specific information and provide a fuller description of the critical incidents that had occurred in the HE experience, for both students and industry. Thirty of the students who completed the student questionnaire had expressed an interest in providing more information about their HE experience and these students were drawn from five of the 10 universities that participated in the research. These additional student interviews took place during September and October 2015 and were either face-to-face or telephone interviews. Twelve industry leaders were also interviewed in November and December 2015, all by telephone. In all these interviews, the respondents were invited to expand on their initial responses and to provide a fuller description of the critical incidents they had experienced, both positive and negative.
Figure 10: Diagram of stages of data collection

Three stages of contact with stakeholders

- **Students**
  - 10 Universities
  - Focus Group Interviews (two stages)

- **Industry**
  - Two segments
  - 5 year out graduates – focus group interview (Victoria)

- **Universities and Academics**
  - Current interviews suggest they have little interest or control
  - Interviews

- **National Questionnaire**
  - 10 Universities Online
  - Follow-up interviews (30)
  - National Questionnaire Follow-up interviews (12)

- **Leaders of Industry (API etc)**
  - Design their perfect degree
  - Interviews

- **RMIT Uni Deakin UTS, UWS**
  - QUT, UniQ,
3.5 Research instruments

The initial questions for the focus group interviews were developed over a six month period in various meetings with the academic supervisors for this research, and with learning and teaching academics at RMIT University. The initial 14 questions (Appendix G) were used at RMIT and Deakin Universities, and then adjusted to the final 9 questions (Appendix H) for the remaining four universities in the trial (QUT, Uni Q, UWS and SUT). The nine question Qualtrics questionnaire was adapted from these focus group questions (Appendix I).

The graduate and industry interview and questionnaire questions were developed in the same manner through various meeting with the two research supervisors, and learning and teaching staff from RMIT University (Appendices J, K, L, M & N).

3.6 Ethics

Ethical conduct takes place when relationships in a research forum are maintained in a professional and arm’s-length manner. In this process the codes of professional ethics act as prompts by alerting the researcher to important considerations and the appropriate style of behaviour. It is very important to limit the amount of bias associated with data collection to ensure that the findings remain independent (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). At all stages of the study steps were taken to ensure that the research was undertaken in an ethical manner. Participation in the study was voluntary and each participant could withdraw at any time. No person has been identified in this research and the universities and staff that assisted with data collection have been thanked and briefed in broad terms about the overall results from the students at their university. All data collected will be kept in a secure locked place for five years after the publication of this thesis.

Ethics approval was sought and gained from the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (CHEAN A-2000826-01/13) (Appendix R).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the various stages of the methodology used to obtain the data for this research. The following chapter covers the research findings from this data.
Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the findings, from interviews (both group and individual) and questionnaires, of stakeholder expectations of the educational experience in higher education (HE) undergraduate property disciplines in Australian public universities. All property university programs operating in Australia are accredited by the Australian Property Institute (API) (Australian Property Institute, 2015). In 2016 there were in 14 accredited university property programs. Three were postgraduate programs and one, Bond University, is a private institution. These four programs fall outside the scope of this research and were not included for analysis. The 10 Australian public universities offering undergraduate property-related degrees have all been included in this research.

4.2 Findings from CEQ/AGS data

This research was initially created in response to curiosity about low CEQ/AGS (student experience and graduate outcomes) satisfaction and good teaching scores for property programs across Australia compared to other degree programs such as business and communication. For example, in 2008 prior to commencing this research, the good teaching scores for Curtin University were 33.3 per cent; for University of Western Sydney 33.8 per cent; for University of Technology, Sydney 34.3 per cent; for University of Queensland 39.3 per cent; for University of South Australia 46.6 per cent; and RMIT University 24.7 per cent, compared to an average score for a management degree of approximately 65 per cent. Deakin University, Central Queensland University and the University of the Sunshine Coast had not produced any graduates to be surveyed at that time and Queensland University of Technology was not listed.

The overall student satisfaction figures were slightly higher at 38.5 per cent for Curtin University; 65.85 for University of Western Sydney; 54.3 per cent for University of Technology Sydney; 71.45 for the University of Queensland; 59 per cent for the University of South Australia; and 45 per cent for RMIT University. These scores compared to the average satisfaction score for management degrees of more than 80 per cent. It would appear that the property HE students who completed the questionnaires thought the teaching they
received was poor, but when considering overall satisfaction, there were more variables to consider. This was despite graduate employment of 85–100 per cent across all six of these universities, which might have made for higher overall satisfaction (Appendix F). By 2009, some of these figures were even lower, with the good teaching score falling to 30.3 per cent for the University of South Australia and 24.3 per cent for RMIT University. The rate had risen slightly for the other universities in 2009. The good teaching score continued to rise gradually for all 10 universities in the period 2010–13. The figures for 2012 are interesting, because this is the year before most of the universities made a huge leap in scores for the cohort that completed the questionnaires in 2013, when it changed to the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS).

A summary of the results for 2012 are good teaching scores for Curtin University 61 per cent; for University of Western Sydney 69.4 per cent; for University of Technology, Sydney 54.2 per cent; for the University of Queensland the score was 46.1 per cent; for the University of South Australia the score was 57.2 per cent and for RMIT University the score was 39 per cent. The corresponding satisfaction scores are all in the high 80 percentiles, except for the University of Queensland and RMIT University, with just over 63 per cent for both. The corresponding employment rates had dropped into the 80 percentiles for all of the universities, except the University of Western Sydney and RMIT University, with just over 90 per cent employment for each.

By the time the 2013 results were released, many of the universities had made major headway with their good teaching scores; however, Curtin University had slipped in score to 50.7 per cent, as had the University of Western Sydney, with a score of 62.8 per cent. This was the first year for graduates from Deakin University and they registered 73.3 per cent. All the other universities saw an increase in scores. University of Technology, Sydney registered 70.45 per cent; University of Queensland scored 70.1 per cent; and University of South Australia increased slightly to 61.5 per cent. RMIT University increased from 39 per cent the previous year to 63.2 per cent. The satisfaction scores also rose for 2013, with RMIT University being the lowest at 75 per cent and Deakin University registering 100 per cent. The employment rates were a little lower overall for this cohort, but Deakin University registered 100 per cent, which would probably account for its high satisfaction score. On the other hand, Curtin University’s employment rate fell to 68 per cent, which may have
contributed to their low good teaching score, but did not seem to impact on the overall satisfaction score.

Figure 11: Table of CEQ Good Teaching and Student Satisfaction scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>CEQ 2008</th>
<th>AGS/CEQ 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses No.</td>
<td>GTS %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtin</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deakin</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni Q</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni SA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWS</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: Good Teaching score comparisons for Australian universities teaching property programs

Figure 12 indicates that good teaching scores have increased considerably across all universities in the study over the five year period 2008–13. It is also interesting to note that scores for 2013 are on a par with the general Management score of 2008, which was the benchmarking program. Bedggood and Donovan (2012) indicated that the quality of
instruction within HE accounts for up to 50–80% of the variance in student satisfaction scores.

Figure 13: Graph showing Student Satisfaction scores for Australian universities teaching property programs

![Student Satisfaction Graph](image)

Figure 13 indicates that University of South Australia had the highest student satisfaction score of 88.2 in 2013 and also had a very high response rate for the CEQ/AGS that year of approximately 90 graduates. It is interesting to note that this university offers its property program in a blended learning manner (mix of online lectures and face to face) (Lam & Rossini, 2013). Deakin University also offers its program in a blended format, but with only a 5 per cent response rate from graduates in the CEQ/AGS, the score cannot be considered significant.

### 4.3 Findings from research data

As previously stated in Chapter 1, this research grew out of a need to know what it would take to make students in HE property programs satisfied with their educational experience. After examining the CEQ/AGS scores, and their changes and volatility over a period of time, the current research idea evolved. This idea recognised that students were only one of three major stakeholders in the property HE experience in Australia. The expanded analysis has
moved beyond a simple analysis and interpretation of the CEQ/AGS scores, into an examination of all facets of this educational experience. Why is it important? Who benefits from it? What are the trends for the future? These are all questions this research seeks to answer. The journey to answer these questions involved an eight stage process which is set out in a Figure 10 in Chapter 3, and also explained in Chapter 3.

Once the plan was determined, it was a case of moving through the stakeholders and finding the most successful means of reaching as many as possible. Program coordinators from all 10 universities were approached and found to be receptive to releasing a questionnaire to their property students. With regard to the young graduate group, this group was accessed through the API’s Young Property Professionals (YPP) group which gave a cross-sectional representation from across Australia. The Education Officer for the API agreed to distribute this questionnaire via their YPP member emails.

University academics were interviewed face to face during visits to the various universities, or via a telephone conference. Industry representation was sourced by interview through both industry contacts and nominated industry leaders across Australia, including the members of the API National Education Board, and the education representatives of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

4.3.1 Selecting the universities for the focus groups

The collection of data from the student stakeholders drew on the categories developed by the LH Martin Institute and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER, 2013) for grouping Australian universities. The aim of this profiling is to allow the public to understand a university and how it might relate to their needs and wants. These Australian profiles examine five dimensions: learning and teaching, student profile, research involvement, knowledge exchange, and international orientation. The 37 Australian universities currently in Australia were allocated into six groups, by a process of analysis and comparisons with market similarities.

The 10 universities chosen for this research are represented within five of the six university groups. Within Group 1, which tends to contain universities from regional areas, only Central Queensland University (CQU) offered a property degree. The Group 2 universities form the largest group, with 16 institutions included. It is a very mixed group, but all institutions in this group are considered to be reasonably similar in their overall statistical make up. Six of
these universities offer property programs: University of Western Sydney (UWS), University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Deakin University, Curtin University of Technology, and the University of South Australia (UniSA).

There are six universities in Group 3 and only one, University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), offers a property program. These six universities are seen as being unaligned in existing networks. Group 4 consists of five universities and only the University of Queensland (UQ) offers an undergraduate property degree. This group contains research-intensive universities and all are part of the Group of 8 (Go8). Group 5 consists of the remaining Go8 universities, and there are only three located in the smaller capital cities, none of which offer an undergraduate property program. The final group, Group 6, is constituted solely of RMIT University, which was seen to be in a category of its own, based on the significant difference between it and the other HE institutions in Australia (LH Martin Institute & ACER, 2013). RMIT University offers an undergraduate property degree and is the final university to be examined in this research.

Six of these 10 Australian public universities offering undergraduate property degrees were chosen to be part of student group interviews for this research. The six chosen universities for the pilot group focus group interviews contain 85 per cent of all current HE property students and this was considered to be a statistically significant number to use as focus groups. They were also geographically easier for the researcher to visit than the four smaller regional universities. The six chosen universities were located in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

A group interview process was chosen as the most appropriate manner to contact current students when visiting these six universities. This process ensured a representative sample and provided all students in the group the same opportunity to contribute. The group interviews also covered three of the five Australian states offering undergraduate property education. The chosen universities were: Deakin University and RMIT University in Melbourne, Victoria; University of Western Sydney and University of Technology, Sydney, in New South Wales; and Queensland University of Technology and The University of Queensland in Brisbane, Queensland.

These six universities made a representative sample of students for the group interview analysis, and they represented three of the five university groupings where undergraduate property programs are offered. During September and October 2013, the four universities in
Sydney and Melbourne were visited and the researcher met with groups of property students ranging from first to fourth year. Because the visits were to take place during class time, it was decided to use printed sheets of questions, which required open-ended answers. This would allow more students to answer the questions and would protect their anonymity. The group interview questions used at Deakin University are in Appendix G. This original set of questions consisted of 14 questions. There were three Likert-scaled questions and the remainder were open-ended.

The questions started by asking about their expectations before commencement, and then there were two questions on their perceived performance at university. Eleven of the original 14 questions asked about their expectations of, among other items, their peers, lecturers and university. It was clear while watching them fill out the forms that not all students were interested in the questions and neither did they appear to engage with the process. After examining the answers from these 38 students (three separate classes and three separate year groups), it was noted that they had difficulty answering the number of questions in the 20 minute time allocation. This time allocation had been agreed to with the respective universities included in the study. As a result, the questions were condensed and refined into nine questions for the remaining five universities in the student group interview process (Appendix H).

This revised set of group interview questions was delivered face to face in property classes across all year levels during semester times in 2013 and 2014. Property classes were attended at UWS, UTS, RMIT, QUT and UQ. At the completion of this stage of the data collection and based on the success of the revised focus group interviews, a questionnaire was developed using the RMIT licence for Qualtrics, which was delivered to every property undergraduate student in Australia in the period September 2014–April 2015. This eight-month period was necessary because several the universities required a lengthy period of analysis before allowing questionnaires to be delivered to their undergraduate students.

4.3.2 Discussion of the student questionnaire development
The questions asked in the group interviews at the six selected universities formed the basis for developing the final questionnaire that was sent to all property students at the 10 Australian universities. However, when the group interview responses were analysed, it was noted that there were several questions the initial group interview students had often chosen not to complete, and these all asked about expectations. For this reason, the questionnaire
concentrated less on expectations in the hope that all questions would be answered. Although students were asked about their expectations in the group interview process, it may be that either many students did not understand, or that they were unwilling to answer, because many did not respond to these sections. They had responded more consistently to the specific questions asking them for good and bad educational experiences (Critical Incidents). Feedback was provided to the researcher that when filling out questionnaires, students preferred more tick boxes and fewer comments required. For this reason, the comment sections were restricted to material deemed essential to the research, and the rest of the questionnaire was designed for minimum time requirements.

The final questionnaire therefore concentrated on asking students to provide critical incidents, both positive and negative, about their higher educational experience, rather than asking them to think back about their expectations. The students appeared to be happier discussing their experiences, rather than thinking back to what their expectations may have been. In fact, the average completion time for the final questionnaire was less than 10 minutes. Despite this, the initial response rate was low and the researcher was required to visit many of the 10 universities to ensure representation from them all, and to achieve an overall response rate of approximately 16 per cent.

In designing the questionnaire, it was decided to keep the questions that asked for ‘the five best and five worst things about your program’, because the answers provided such a rich source of material on the thinking of property students about their university programs. The results of this questionnaire were expected to mirror and expand on many of the group interview results, but it also provided more quantitative data to enable decisions to be made about groupings by gender or age. Both types of surveys enabled distinctions to be made between the different universities, and the questionnaire specifically asked about important components of their programs, such as work experience, case studies, field trips and other expected activities within their HE experience.

Using the group interview questions as a base, a final student questionnaire was developed on the site http://rmit.asia.qualtrics.com. It was administered to all current property students at the 10 public Australian universities offering HE property programs. This questionnaire was first tested on a group of students chosen at random from the first-year cohort at RMIT, because the author had ready access to these students. This was to ensure that the process was working properly. Twenty-eight property students were sent an email with the plain language
letter attached and an anonymous Qualtrics link enclosed. Twelve students responded and this formed the first group of the student survey. This same email was then sent to the remaining RMIT property students enrolled in 2014. The same email was sent to the nine other universities in the population, via the appropriate program coordinator. Once the process was observed to work, it was delivered nationwide to the 10 universities via their student email accounts (Appendix I).

4.3.3 Discussion of the graduate questionnaire development
The second questionnaire was aimed at young industry professionals with five years or less industry experience in an attempt to discover how they felt about their degree after some time in the workforce. The questions for this questionnaire were also developed in Qualtrics, but were first tested in a group interview process. Twenty of the author’s ex-student contacts from LinkedIn were asked to attend a focus session. Eight of these young graduates responded and this formed the focus group for this collection of data (Appendix J). They attended the focus group interview session and the results from that session enabled the development of the graduate questionnaire in Qualtrics. To reach graduates from across all states, the API offered to post the email, including the plain language letter, to all Young Property Professional (YPP) members.

An important part of the research process was to attempt to understand if a change in thinking occurs once student graduates and enter the workforce. Did they view their university experience differently after they leave and have time for reflection? There are some similar questions in both questionnaires, but the graduate survey calls for more reflection on the part of the respondent and asks them to design their perfect degree. The graduate questionnaire is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data and a copy may be found in Appendix K.

The questionnaire for the graduates took into account the fact that because the respondents were no longer at university, they were able to reflect on their university experience after 1–5 years working in the property industry. For this reason, it was thought that they may be happy to spend a little time providing meaningful feedback. This has been true for those that have completed the questionnaire, but completion numbers overall were low, with only 75 graduates responding from a population of approximately 3000. The API distributed the questionnaire to their entire registered membership of the Young Property Professional group, and in addition posted a link on their Facebook page to support this research. Those
who did respond have provided interesting feedback, but the response rate was too low to provide any meaningful statistical conclusions.

4.3.4 Discussion of the industry questionnaire development
Initially, the data from industry leaders was collected by interview (Appendix L), but given the time taken to do this and the difficulty of obtaining interviews with busy property professionals, the initial nine interview questions were entered into a Qualtrics questionnaire (Appendix M) which was distributed via email to all managers of divisions within Australian property organisations. One thousand emails were sent and 95 people responded. Although this is a response rate of less than a 10 per cent, the data collected contained much information, which is corroborated and interesting from the point of view of property graduates. It also supports the feedback provided when the researcher presented findings from this research to a professional development meeting of senior valuers from the Geelong area of Victoria in October 2014.

Figure 14: Response rates for the three questionnaires

| Number of responses to the three questionnaires |
|-----------------|--------|
| Student         | 364    |
| Graduate        | 75     |
| Industry        | 95     |

4.4 Results from data collection

4.4.1 Results from the group interviews at selected universities
The group interviews at the six selected universities found that common expectations by students for their university career were to:

- achieve high scores;
- network and make new friends;
- create a career in property/valuation;
- be involved in the community;
- understand the property industry;
- have a high-paid property career;
• have site visits and practical application;
• keep up with the workload;
• complete the degree in the minimum time; and
• have lots of field trips and industry involvement.

Although some of these expectations sound unrealistic, they show the inherent enthusiasm of the typical university student. They also expected lots of field trips, site visits and industry experience, which may or may not have happened. If these things do not happen, this can quickly lead to disillusionment and eventually dissatisfaction with their property program.

This research found common good things for the six universities, ranked in order, to be:

• getting a degree;
• social interaction;
• networking;
• access to industry professionals; and
• learning about the property industry.

Specific to the various universities, the property students at Deakin University found the good things to be:

• field trips;
• living on campus;
• approachable lecturers (specific lecturers mentioned); and
• the mentor program through the business faculty.

Specific to RMIT University, the good things were:

• approachable lecturers (specifically named);
• excellent facilities, Wi-Fi and course materials; and
• willingness of peers to assist.

Specific to University of Western Sydney were:
• scholarly activities with industry;
• specific lecturers are approachable;
• relevant subjects; and
• career opportunities.

Specific to University of Technology Sydney were:
• living on campus.

Specific to University of Queensland were:
• approachable lecturers;
• field trips; and
• interactive teaching.

Specific to Queensland University of Technology were:
• guest lectures;
• field trips; and
• advertised job interviews.

With regard to the bad things about the various universities, the general summary, ranked in order, was:
• no formal work experience;
• disinterested and unhelpful lecturers;
• badly thought-out assignments;
• lack of adequate and appropriate feedback;
• assessment work all due at the same time; and
• insufficient practical application.

All these items fit with the five worst things from the online questionnaire and support the later results.
Specific to Deakin University the bad things were:

- poor quality of English spoken by lecturers from overseas;
- core business units;
- online subjects and Cloud Deakin; and
- no work placement.

With regard to the property program at Deakin University, the most commonly occurring bad things were very telling and given the importance placed on work experience by students in the questionnaire, this might account for a great deal of dissatisfaction with the program.

Specific to RMIT University the bad things were:

- degree should be only three years in duration;
- poor valuation teaching at all levels; and
- no longer many work placements (few internships).

Similar to Deakin University, dissatisfaction is also apparent because work experience has diminished. Students at RMIT believe the valuation teaching is poor and they are unhappy about a four-year program. Not only does it take a year longer to complete than all their competitors, but it costs them a lot more money and they will be paying the government back for a longer period than their peers from other universities. Students are often not conscious of these factors when they start their degrees, but as they begin their careers, or network with those who have finished their degrees earlier, they may become dissatisfied when they reflect on their experiences and talk to their work peers.

Specific to the University of Western Sydney the bad things were:

- lack of university amenities;
- parking at $9 a day;
- dislike core business units;
- overseas lecturers with poor English; and
- too few face-to-face classes.
Likewise, here, too, these annoying things were not expected when they commenced their degrees and this could affect their overall satisfaction. However, the student complaints at this university do not touch on work experience, because this has not been a formal part of the program for many years.

Specific to University of Technology, Sydney the bad things were:

- lack of tutorials;
- unmotivated lecturers;
- would like more assignments, not exams; and
- unnecessary subjects.

If you ignore the comments about unnecessary subjects and desiring no exams as wishful thinking on the part of students, the lack of tutorials and the unmotivated lecturers are things this university could rectify to improve its student satisfaction scores.

Specific to The University of Queensland the bad things were:

- too many teachers have not worked in industry;
- no ability to specialise;
- too many night classes; and
- out-of-date information.

The complaints from these students are all valid to their HE experience and it is important that this university address these issues.

Specific to Queensland University of Technology the bad things were:

- only one month work experience;
- too much sustainability; and
- difficult to obtain information needed for assignments.

On the whole, the degree of dissatisfaction at this university was low, except for requesting more work experience and offering more assistance in finding property information for assessments.
4.4.2 Results from the student questionnaire

Of the 364 students who completed the questionnaire, 16 per cent were from first year, 40 per cent from second year, 35 per cent from third year and nine per cent from fourth year. This indicated a reasonable spread of respondents from across all year groups, because only three universities at the time had four-year programs (Figure 15). Similarly, the spread of genders was reasonably representative, because overall it is a traditionally male-dominated program, with 60 per cent male respondents and 40 per cent female. The age groups of the respondents ranged from 23 per cent under 20 years, 53 per cent aged 20–24 years, eight per cent aged 25–29 years, six per cent aged 30–34 years, and a very high 10 per cent of responses from students aged over 35 years. This appears to indicate that mature-aged students, although not making up the bulk of the property student cohort, are concerned to have their say about the program they are undertaking. It is estimated that the population of property students across these 10 universities was approximately 2200 students and the response of 350 students is approximately 16 per cent of the 2014 total Australian cohort.

Figure 15: Year group of respondents

Figure 16: Satisfaction levels by age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction by Age – Number</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>20–24</th>
<th>25–29</th>
<th>Over 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 80% satisfied</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60–79% satisfied</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–59% satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 40% satisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examining satisfaction scores by age group indicates that the levels of satisfaction are fairly uniformly consistent with the overall proportion of the age groups completing the student questionnaire. Very few respondents were completely dissatisfied with their programs, and the few that were came from two groups: the under 20s and the over 30s. Surprisingly, 51 per cent of the respondents were over 80 per cent satisfied with their programs, and a further 40 per cent were 60–79 per cent satisfied. This does not tally with the CEQ/AGS scores from graduates for property program satisfaction, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Of the remaining respondents, eight per cent were 40–69 per cent satisfied with their programs and only one per cent was less than 39 per cent satisfied with their property programs. Overall, approximately 58 per cent males and 42 per cent females completed the student questionnaire, and the following table and graph (Figures 19 and 20) illustrate the numbers for student satisfaction by gender. These figures show us that student satisfaction for Australian HE property programs has improved since 2008, but it is only by examining the literature is it possible to answer why the satisfaction figures have improved? They have improved because Australian universities are making concerted efforts to address HE student satisfaction. The major impetus has come from increased funding by the federal government for improvement in student satisfaction scores, but the push from students themselves over high fees and lack of service and the general increase internationally for improved student satisfaction have also contributed (Australian Government, 2015).
Figures 18 and 19 indicate that the degree of satisfaction with property programs by gender. The figures for over 80 per cent satisfied and 60-79 per cent satisfied are consistent with the overall proportion of gender for the sample. However, the results show that females were slightly less satisfied than males at the lower bands of satisfaction.

The students were then asked to give reasons for their dissatisfaction if they were less than 80 per cent satisfied with their program, and 34 per cent of respondents gave feedback on what they felt would make their satisfaction levels higher. The majority of these comments concerned poor quality of teaching, using phrases and words from boring, ill prepared, badly organised, no practical experience and confusing assignments. Some examples of the comments follow:

I find the online only subjects are a bit slack, as things like the discussion board are not checked by staff regularly and this leaves you waiting often days for
answers – second, I feel that the course could be improved if it incorporated some practical work experience into it.

Although it is a business degree I feel there is too much emphasis on core business subjects instead of subjects that relate directly to property.

More property focused.

Less useless subjects like professional communication, data analysis, professional property practice and more subjects like valuation, planning and property development

Source: Student feedback from Qualtrics student questionnaire.

With regard to practical experience, there were 10 comments specifically complaining about the lack of this activity, and a further five noted the curriculum was poor with little choice and no chance to specialise. Four respondents made mention of how hard it was for external students who received very little support from their respective universities, and another four students admitted that the dissatisfaction was due to their lack of interest, or effort.

Figure 20: Satisfaction level of students

Not knowing the mean of the population of property HE students in Australia (approximately N=2200), we can make an inference calculation that can provide a 95 per cent confidence interval for the hypothetical value of the population mean (µ). This calculation will evaluate how likely it is that the population mean is the same as the sample mean (69.5) for the student
satisfaction scores in Figure 20, where the sample mean is 69.5, the sample standard Deviation (S) equals 0.05, and the Standard Error is 0.03.

\[ \text{CI}_{99} = \bar{X} \pm (t_{99}) (S_x) \]

\[ \text{CI}_{99} = 69.5 \pm (2.576) (0.03) \]

\[ \text{CI}_{99} = 69.5 \pm 0.08 \]

We can therefore be 99 per cent confident that the true mean for property HE students falls in the interval 69.42–69.58 per cent. The inference being that this sample of 364 students is a good representation of the overall population with regard to student satisfaction.

4.5.2.1 Negative critical incidents for property HE students

With reference to the question that asked the five best things about their property program, 79 respondents gave one reason, 66 two reasons, 51 three reasons, 36 four, and 27 gave the full five reasons. Similar results were recorded for the next question, which asked for the five worst things about their property program: 170 respondents gave one reason, 85 gave two, 32 recorded three, 20 respondents provided four comments, and 13 gave the full five worst things in their university experience.

Figure 21 provides a summary of the student comments on each of the worst experiences. For a full list of the students’ best and worst property education experiences, see Appendix P.
Figure 21: Summary of negative critical incidents developed by author from the data

Question 7 asked students to rank the importance of four specific things in their property programs. With regard to the importance of formal work experience in their degree, 48 per cent of respondents stated it was extremely important, and a further 30 per cent found it to be very important. The use of field trips and practical work was considered extremely important by 31 per cent of the respondents, and a further 45 per cent found them to be very important. The importance of case studies found 28 per cent students who thought they were extremely important, and a further 55 per cent who thought that they were very important. The ability to
specialise was also rated highly, with 32 per cent finding this option to be extremely important, and a further 52 per cent finding it to be very important. By far the most important of the four activities was formal work experience, with 160 students stating that it was extremely important, and a further 110 believing that it was very important. The ability to specialise was the next highest ranked activity.

**Figure 22: Students favouring formal work experience, field trips/practical work, case studies**

Eighteen per cent of the respondents were part-time students, and 82 per cent were full time. Eighty-one per cent of students were working during their study, with 20 per cent working full-time and the rest part-time. Approximately 40 per cent of respondents who worked were working in the property industry, and the remaining 60 per cent worked in a non-property industry. Eighty-three per cent of the students responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they would join a professional body such as the API or RICS, and of the students who replied ‘no’, most were unsure what role this type of organisation played in the industry, or were already members of the API.

The final question in this questionnaire asked students if there was anything else they wished to say about their property programs, and 30 per cent responded with, on the whole, negative comments. The main concentration was on poor teaching, no work experience, and what they thought was boring unnecessary and material that is often covered. One student stated that four years was one year too long:
This course does not need to be four years you could easily remove unnecessary subjects and condense it into three years with a further fourth honours year being optional.

Lecturers being willing to accommodate more for online students with tutorials and so on. Outside business hours make me happy!!

Subjects that are focused in actual practice are very important and provide insight into real world situations. Studying property law was very important. Lecturers who try and trick students into learning all of the course content and not being specific about actual topics covered in examinations create massive amounts of unnecessary stress for students.

Compulsory exposure to the working property industry would be excellent.

Administrative tasks such as timetabling are now completed online and there is very little choice and tutorial times are often far apart.

Lack of structure in many property courses is frustrating.

Academic staff that give us good feedback and guidance.

Inconsistencies with teaching, For example, lecture stated a fact and in tutorial the guest lecturer contradicted this. This has happened many times.

Source: Student comments from Qualtrics student questionnaire.

The 30 follow-up interviews conducted at the end of 2015 were undertaken to allow students who had requested more opportunity to air their views, the chance to describe their HE experiences in greater detail. The interviewer asked them to describe several critical incidents, both positive and negative, and these results also fed into Figure 21. The stories that emerged were the same as those provided in the student questionnaire, but this group provided more specific information about the critical incidents that were occurring during their HE experience. The findings from the 30 follow-up student interviews were with students from UniSA, RMIT, UWS, Deakin and CQU. All respondents had provided a telephone contact on their interview sheets, or emailed the researcher asking to talk in more detail. The interviews were not recorded but the researcher took extensive notes of the respondents’ answers. The intent of these follow-up interviews was to further identify specific positive and negative service incidents students may have experienced during their
university studies. Although they did have some positive things to say about their HE experience, most of their critical incidents were negative. Examples of these experiences are:

I have one of my lecturers who gives me the same mark whatever the standard of work I hand in. It is as if he has already decided my rating and does not even bother to read my work. There are no feedback comments on the returned work, only a mark. When I asked for a meeting to determine how I could improve my grades he was unable to suggest anything, simply stating that no one gets full marks, no matter how good their work is. This is very frustrating, unhelpful and unmotivating.

One of my lecturers consistently provides assessment with unclear outcomes and objectives.

One administrator insists on personal meetings rather than email to handle queries.

One administrator shrugged and said it was not their responsibility when asked for help.

One lecturer used a guest speaker who spoke about their political orientation which gave a very biased opinion of the topic.

One lecturer used a PhD student to mark the assessments and they had no knowledge of the course content or the assessment objectives and guidelines.

One lecturer speaks very poor English and is almost impossible to understand.

One online course had only PowerPoint slides and no Pod or audio casting and some of the course materials were out of date and full of mistakes.

Many of the subjects rely too much on rote learning of facts, rather than looking at the big picture.

One lecturer always gives misleading and inaccurate direction.

More than one of my lecturers does not respond to my emails.

One lecturer simply reads the lecture slides softly and finishes a two hour lecture in 40 minutes.
One lecturer was new and presented the course material very badly

The timetabling system is a disgrace. The system is prone to crashing which means you often miss your preferred options.

*Source: Student responses from researcher interviews.*

These incidents were not isolated and they mirror exactly the results found in the group interviews and the student questionnaires. It would appear that a few negative incidents can colour the overall student experience. The negative experience is remembered, even though it may only occur within a few of the students’ academic relationships during their HE degree.

### 4.4.3 Results from the graduate questionnaire

The questionnaire for the graduates was longer: 25 questions versus only 14 for the students. The reasoning behind this was an attempt to keep the student survey shorter and ensure a higher completion rate. There was an expectation that graduates might reflect a little more on their experiences now that they had the time to be objective. The philosophy behind the graduate questionnaire was to get a feel for what, in retrospect, they would have preferred their degree to contain. When asked what they thought the level of study for property should be, they overwhelmingly felt it should be a bachelor degree, with 90 per cent of the respondents marking this. Seven per cent of people felt it should be both undergraduate and postgraduate and only three per cent felt it should be a vocational education advanced diploma. In answer to the question about what length of time the program should be, 60 per cent stated three years, 25 per cent preferred four years, 10 per cent of respondents were in favour of two years, and only five per cent favoured three and a half years.

Moving on to the mode of delivery, the results were a surprising: 70 per cent in favour of blended learning (a mixture of online and face-to-face delivery), with 28 per cent of respondents favouring face-to-face delivery and the remaining two per cent in favour of online delivery. The type of delivery created an interesting picture because respondents could nominate multiple modes of delivery. Ninety per cent of respondents still favoured lectures and 94 per cent tutorials, which are the two more traditional modes of delivery; however, 84 per cent of the respondents favoured field exercises, 90 per cent workshops, and 33 per cent were in favour of lectorial type workshops (short lecture type delivery and then class activity, repeated at roughly 45 minute intervals). In other words, they all seemed to like a mixture of
delivery modes. In the ‘other’ section, 10 per cent of respondents offered work experience and case studies as the preferred methods of course delivery.

The question, ‘How frequently would you like your classes?’, saw the traditional weekly sessions receive the most preference, with 47 per cent of respondents, followed by 43 per cent for a mixture of weekly and intensively, with only five per cent of respondents favouring the ‘intensely over two weeks’ option, and five per cent wishing to do intensely over weekends. The final question in this first section asked about the type of contact they would prefer. Not one respondent wanted three-hour classes. The range was spread between 47 per cent of respondents preferring a two-hour lecture and one hour tutorial, 15 per cent in favour of 1.5 hours for each, 21 per cent favouring a one-hour lecture and two-hour tutorial, and 17 per cent opting for frequent field trips with supporting classroom activity.

The questionnaire then asked who would teach into the program. Once again, the respondents could have multiple choices. Overwhelmingly, the preference was for teaching to be done by senior, industry experienced people with many industry contacts. Eighty-six per cent of respondents preferred this type of instructor, followed by 52 per cent desiring academic qualifications relevant to property, and 43 per cent for older industry experienced people. Interestingly, only 10 per cent of people suggested that doctoral qualifications were necessary. Only six per cent of respondents wanted new graduates, and another 10 per cent wanted tertiary teaching qualifications. Ninety-three per cent of respondents thought an ideal property program would allow them to specialise in particular subject areas, rather than be forced to complete all the same units.

The suggested content for the program also allowed for multiple choices, and 95 per cent of respondents wanted general property subjects, while 89 per cent opted for general valuation subjects. Eighty-four per cent were in favour of core business subjects and 68 per cent were in favour of property-related study. Only 32 per cent wanted elective studies and a research component. Within the core business units, 100 per cent of respondents chose property law and 84 per cent economics. Both accounting and management were suggested by 68 per cent of respondents, and commercial law was favoured by 58 per cent. Statistics was favoured by 53 per cent of respondents, and marketing by 47 per cent. Communication studies were only suggested by 32 per cent of respondents, and advanced statistics and finance by 16 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.
With regard to general property subjects, there was a consistently high response rate for most of the areas offered and, once again, respondents could choose multiple answers. Ninety-five per cent of respondents favoured property investment, and financial and feasibility studies, as the most important property subjects that needed to be offered, closely followed by planning and property development at 89 per cent. Property studies were chosen by 80 per cent of respondents, and 63 per cent opted for property management and planning and urban studies. Urban studies alone were favoured by 65 per cent of respondents, and capital markets by 53 per cent.

Results for valuation units were 100 per cent were in favour of valuation principles and 84 per cent for advanced valuation. The percentage for both residential valuation and statutory valuation dropped to 68 per cent, and urban valuation was favoured by 58 per cent of respondents. This left rural valuation at 47 per cent, valuation following compulsory acquisition at 37 per cent, and rating valuation at 26 per cent. Interestingly, the study of valuation subjects is still rated highly by young members of the property profession. With reference to the property-related subjects (courses), 90 per cent favoured commercial construction and 74 per cent residential construction. Engineering principles, sustainability, geographic information systems, and surveying as subject suggestions, scored 47 per cent, 42 per cent, 42 per cent and 37 per cent respectively. Given that research did not achieve a very high satisfaction score in Question 9, it is understandable these subjects rate lower than those previously covered. Seventy-four per cent of respondents were in favour of professional writing, but only 63 per cent valued research methods and only 16 per cent were in favour of a minor thesis.

With regard to assessment, respondents were only able to choose one option, which, in hindsight, was probably too restrictive. Bearing this in mind, 36 per cent favoured individual assignments and exams as their preferred assessment choice, and 37 per cent opted for presentations, assignments and exams. A further 12 per cent favoured individual and group assignments, leaving group assignments and exams and other non-specified, at five per cent each.

Question 16 was similar to Question 7 in the student questionnaire, and the responses were even more definite. Sixty per cent found formal work experience to be extremely important, and a further 24 per cent found it to be very important. The entire sample found field trips/practical work to be either extremely important or very important, and the same went for
case studies. This cohort was also asked to comment on the importance of these practical components of study, and 60 per cent chose to do so. A selection of the responses is listed below:

Learning at university (for me) was greatly assisted when I started learning at work (ie it all began to make more sense). Too much text book and not enough working examples result in students not fully grasping the tasks at hand.

I think students need a better understanding of what they are training to do. It is all good and well to choose subjects and think they know what they are in for but I don’t think there is enough explanation as to what that means for the student’s career and what areas they are targeting by default.

Formal work experience provides opportunities with professional networking, mentoring and putting into practice theory learnt from the program into real life situations. It also provides entry level opportunities, which I believe is critical.

Experience in the field is the most important part when deciding if this industry is where you want to be. Understanding the time pressures and work involved is essential for people not to get shocked and leave the industry on graduating.

Property people are practical and therefore they would get more from doing rather than being shown.

Formal work experience is a must to be able to find traction within the industry.

Practical work and case studies bring the theory to life and are vital for students to experience.

Source: A selection of comments from the graduate questionnaire.
Figure 23: Graduates favouring work experience, field trips/practical work, and case studies

Comparing Figure 22 and Figure 23, it can be seen that both students and graduates heavily favour all types of practical experiences in their property degree, but just as formal work experience ranked highest with students, so too was it ranked highest in importance by graduates. The comments from graduates, and the results shown in Figure 23, indicate recent graduates appreciated and benefitted from the opportunity to work in the property industry while they were studying. They felt that as property was a very practical area, studying the theory while applying the practice made the learning more meaningful and worthwhile.

Sixty-eight per cent of the graduates who completed the questionnaire were male and 32 per cent were female. Eighty per cent of the respondents were aged 25–34 years, 12 per cent were over 34 years, and only eight per cent were under 25 years. With regard to which university they attended, 35 per cent of respondents completed their qualifications at RMIT, 25 per cent at the University of Melbourne, approximately eight per cent each at Queensland University of Technology, the University of Queensland, Curtin University, University of Western Sydney and Deakin University, and one respondent from University of Reading (UK).

Question 21 asks respondents about their work, and 37 per cent worked in the property development-related area, with another 37 per cent working in valuation. A further 11 per cent worked in property management and funds management, four per cent worked in areas unrelated to the property industry, and the remaining respondents did not elaborate on the area they worked in. In response to the question about working during their study, 100 per
cent answered ‘yes’, with 84 per cent working in the property industry, and almost half of these respondents working full time.

The remaining two questions asked the respondents to reflect on their university experience. First, they were asked whether they are more or less critical of their property program now, compared to what they were at the time of experiencing it. Surprisingly, 56 per cent said they were now more critical, 33 per cent felt much the same, and 11 per cent felt less critical now than when they were studying. The second and final question in the survey asked whether there is anything more they wished to share about their university experience. More than 50 per cent of the respondents provided a range of comments, a selection of which is included below:

Case studies, field trips, industry guests, exposure to software are all things that I got a lot out of in my course. The administration was/is significantly worse at RMIT than at Victoria University. My experience has felt like a cash cow for the uni with very little focus on education or the future of their students.

I don’t believe our lecturers had enough recent industry experience. I don’t believe we got value for money in our course. I also think that you should be provided with access to management subjects because 80 per cent of what I do is managing people.

The course needs more people with industry experience to explain where the students are heading……It is great to have people qualified to teach, but if most of what they are teaching is purely book knowledge and they haven’t practised in years it is somewhat outdated before we even leave the classroom.

Contact hours need to be limited and the work experience component is highly valuable to both students and prospective employers.

Practical learning, exposure to industry, help with careers.

Often subjects are very repetitive and many of them could have been condensed.

Linking coursework to actual job requirements is essential. Knowledge of how the industry works on a day to day level is assumed, where it should be its own class.

*Source: A selection of comments from the graduate questionnaire.*
These comments are all extensions of the material already mentioned and they speak to the items marked in the questionnaires. Over and again, they mentioned the importance of industry experience and the fact that somehow this needs to be woven into HE property programs. A second theme to emerge from the graduate questionnaire was the lack of industry experience from their lecturers. This was also a criticism from the students and is a real problem that needs to be addressed if students are requiring practical skills as well as property specific theory. It is possible that now that these graduates are working, they are being affected in their more critical opinions, from listening to their employers?

4.4.4 The opinion of industry leaders

As distinct from the graduate group, industry leaders were seen as major employers of graduates, and as people who are instrumental in making decisions in their respective organisations and in the industry in general. They had valid opinions and expectations of the graduates they employ. The questions for the industry interviews were developed by the researcher in conjunction with supervisors and academics experienced in conducting interviews. The following is a summary of their expectations as gathered through a series of six interviews with several employers. In order of importance, they felt that graduates should:

- display a willingness to learn and become engaged;
- be up to date with industry knowledge and development;
- understand how the knowledge translates to their work;
- show initiative and have a desire to succeed;
- be able to make reasoned and logical conclusions from material provided;
- be able to compile a thorough and logical report;
- be able to research and find information;
- be able to critique and test information; and
- have a good understanding of Microsoft Office and Estatemaster or Cougar.

When asked about the graduates they had employed they responded:

- overall, they exceeded expectations;
- enthusiasm and readiness to take things on;
• ability to ask questions;
• good knowledge on related topics;
• sometimes saying things that make you think; and
• bright and capable.

On the other hand, the worst things about them included:

• get bored quickly;
• want to move up the ladder too quickly;
• work and leisure conflicts; and
• some have no pride in, or responsibility to, their work.

What they learned from experience is that they were quick to learn and had high levels of energy, but often thought they knew more than they actually did. In the future, it is likely that employees will need to take more responsibility and work longer hours if they wish to move up the corporate ladder. They felt it would be useful if industry leaders could become involved as mentors for young property students and invite them into the workforce if formal work experience is no longer viable. They should at least be completing practical exercises and case studies in the programs, and they heavily supported formal work experience as part of the degree.

Using the questions asked in the interviews, this research surveyed 95 property industry employers from across Australia to ascertain whether they believed Australian universities were adequately preparing graduates to be work ready. Appendix L has a copy of the industry questionnaire. Question 1 asked what their expectations of graduates were and there was a high degree of similarity in the responses. Seventy per cent stated they expected graduates to have a good property knowledge base, and 30 per cent expected them to be enthusiastic and eager to learn. Other things, such as loyalty, computer knowledge and being willing to listen, were mentioned, but all employers mentioned one of the first two as well.

Question 2 asked how they performed and Figure 24 illustrates their views.
Figure 24: How do they perform?

Question 3 asked for the best things about recent graduates and once again, enthusiasm, a good attitude, and keenness to learn, were mentioned by 80 per cent of respondents. A further 20 per cent of employers praised their technical skills. Question 4 then asked for the worst things about graduates and the list that emerged was more detailed. Figure 25 gives an indication of the results from this question.

Figure 25: What are the worst things about them?

Question 5 asked how they described their satisfaction with the level of university teaching for property subjects, and once again, the responses were mixed, as seen in Figure 26.
With only 50 per cent of industry employers being satisfied with the graduates they employed, the situation is not supportive of the universities and their graduates. The comments ranged from poor valuation skills, a shallow grasp of knowledge, and disjointed teaching. Question 6 received the most responses and the range of suggestions is too varied to graph, but they give a very clear indication that the majority of the respondents were not impressed with the lack of practical application in the courses and suggested more case studies, problem solving, site visits, a major project tying everything together, and many comments on the usefulness of work experience.

With Question 7, 95 per cent of respondents had not noted any differences between graduates from different universities. However, the sample size of 98 is statistically small and often property firms may only employ one or two new graduates a year. This would make a comparison between universities difficult. Question 8 asked about the future employment landscape and here too, there was a lot of repetition, ranging from the employment market becoming more competitive, to the industry becoming more specialised with greater reliance on computers and virtual meetings. The final question asked respondents about industry involvement with universities, and here the response was overwhelmingly in favour of more industry involvement in property education, but there were no suggestions for how this could be achieved.

The follow-up interviews were with 12 industry leaders who were all employers with RMIT University’s Employer of Choice program. They discussed their various experiences with property graduates, both positive and negative. Once again, this material supports the previous results and adds a depth of understanding of the situation. They all talked about their

Figure 26: Satisfaction with university teaching of property subjects

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different graduates, and their strengths and weaknesses, with candour. All felt that, although there were gaps in the education of many of these graduates, whether they succeeded or not in their career was really down to them, their confidence levels, their ‘get up and go’ and their personal drive, ambition, energy and so on. They all felt the universities could not be blamed if the graduates did not succeed. They felt graduates were a success, or not, based on their own initiative and enthusiasm for the work. If they did not enjoy what they were doing, it was rare for them to be successful. Examples of their comments follow:

The work integrated learning program known as work experience and involving three days a week full-time in a trainee capacity in industry was a great way to test graduates. With this program virtually inactive now this has created real problems for graduate employment in the property industry.

Just looking at their university results does not necessarily yield the best graduate. Smarter is not necessarily better. Communication skills are more valuable than book learning. Attitude is more important than high grades at university.

There is often a lot of pressure in property positions and not everyone can handle this.

They have to be flexible, self-motivated and engaged.

One graduate we employed had no industry knowledge at all and had just commenced property studies and they could not hit the ground running, but required a lot of attention which is not cost effective.

Many of the graduates are self-motivated and enthusiastic and this more than makes up for any lack of industry knowledge they may have.

It is sometime difficult to tell from interview and marks whether a graduate will be self-motivated, a good communicator and exhibit confidence and a willingness to learn. An aptitude for this work is more important than high university marks.

Whether a graduate performs successfully in industry depends very much on them taking the initiative and their individual personality.

*Source: A selection of comments from industry leader interviews.*
4.4.5 Comments from academics

The three preliminary studies and the three questionnaires directed at students and industry have provided a rich landscape of opinion. Interviews with academics from property programs across Australia paint much the same picture, whatever the university. Student numbers are constantly increasing and class sizes are so large there is little chance of remembering names and forming relationships with all students. Once, where an academic could often arrange jobs for graduates with their network of employers, there are now too many students for this to occur. The property industry is a small, boutique industry and more often students need to be creative to engage work positions. Nowadays, many other professionals (such as accountants, banks and project advisers) look to employ property graduates and students need to be flexible in their job-searching efforts.

Despite the best efforts of academics from universities across Australia, it is becoming more difficult to deliver a program with a high degree of practical components. As student fees increase, so do the numbers. Students are aware that their university education is costing a lot of money; and like all customers, they are demanding value for the fees they pay. The majority of the academics interviewed, from program managers to lecturers, felt helpless in their efforts to satisfy their students. The more strategies they employed to engage their audience, the more exhausted they became. They often felt frustrated by the large classes of predominantly male students, who may not even attend classes regularly due to heavy work commitments.

Three property academics were interviewed from each university in the study, making a sample of 30 interviews. All academics interviewed were very experienced and had been teaching in the property area for many years. If it is argued that property discipline undergraduate HE programs are very similar to one another, then the same can be said for the comments from the property academics themselves. They all spoke of the frustration of dealing with students who would not buy the set textbook, used their phones and went online in class, and attended irregularly. They all spoke about the demanding Generation Y students who have been spoon-fed at secondary school, but admitted they did have some focused and committed students. The more critical academics interviewed called the students lazy, and the more generous called them time poor.

Many of the academics felt the needs of students, as against academics, were moving further and further apart. They felt most students simply wanted a degree that would lead on to a
good paying job, and that there were too few students who really wanted to extend their capabilities and challenge the learning experience. Many of the academics interviewed still enjoyed teaching and the challenge of the new educational age, but others were jaded and becoming frustrated with what they saw as the dumbing down of universities as places of higher learning. A few academics in management roles talked about moving towards blended delivery modes, as found at Deakin University, UWS and CQU. Some academics also told me that often students were not respectful and their assignments were completed at the last minute, yet they expected high marks. They found an indirect correlation between effort and marks, and this frustrated and angered them, because they could see no solution. They put extra time into ensuring assessment requirements were clear and appropriate, but most times students simply took no notice. Because the groups were large, it was very difficult to know all students’ names and this added to the poor communication between students and academics. It is difficult to call a student to task in class if you do not know their name. Finally, the academics all spoke of the added stress of doing research, mostly in their own time, due to high teaching loads and student/staff commitments.

4.5 Conclusion

The data provided by the stakeholder groups is rich, interesting and full of emotion. This is the benefit of open-ended questions. If the respondents chose to answer these questions, then the data source is much richer than a simple tick box set of questions. It is probably true that the low response rates to all three of the online questionnaires might be due to the fact that answering the questions required the respondents to discuss their experiences, and this can be far more time consuming than simply ticking a box. Although tick-box questionnaires are preferred by respondents for their ease of completion, the data source becomes simply about numbers.

The findings from the data have been discussed in this chapter beginning with the external CEQ/AGS scores for good teaching and student satisfaction in the property HE programs, which have shown a gradual improvement in the GTS and SS since this research commenced in 2008 until the last set of statistics for 2013. Three questionnaires and a number of interviews with students, recent graduates, industry leaders and academics, provided the data for this research. Students on the whole appear to be satisfied with their property programs, with approximately 50 per cent of them being over 80 per cent satisfied, and a further 43 per
cent more than 60 per cent satisfied. When analysed, there appears to be very little variance in these results between age groups and by gender. Although 93 per cent of the student respondents were more than 60 per cent satisfied with their programs, there were a number of likes and dislikes when asked for examples of critical incidents. On a positive note, they enjoyed the practical aspects of the courses and praised many lectures and their classes. However, many complained about boring lecturers, out of date material, and the lack of site visits and work experience.

Although a smaller proportion responded to the graduate survey, their opinions almost mirrored those of the students. Industry leaders raised issues such as graduate enthusiasm, lack of property specific knowledge, and a perception that graduates were easily bored. Academics also commented on the easily bored nature of current students and were struggling with this issue in very large classes. It would appear to be stalemate, with students and young graduates complaining about poor learning experiences and boring disinterested lectures and academics bemoaning disengaged students, supported by industry who finds they have little property knowledge. And yet it is this very conflict which can provides a possible solution.

The next chapter analyses and synthesises these conflicts from the four groups of respondents, and develops a picture of property HE undergraduate programs in Australia today.
Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the results of all sources of data, both primary and secondary, and offers possible reasons why expectations might be low for many of the stakeholders involved in higher education (HE) property programs in Australia. The chapter begins by discussing the results of the evaluation of the student data, moves onto the graduate results, then examines the general industry opinions, and finishes with expectations of the academics who teach into these HE property programs.

5.2 Discussion of CEQ/AGS data

The major problem with using the CEQ/AGS data is the overall low response rates. When the scores are examined in detail over many years, there are often responses from less than half a particular cohort for the different universities. In fact, when the responses are totalled for any given year, the average number of responses from graduates of property programs is approximately 300. This is 50 less than the national questionnaire for current property students carried out in this research, which was undertaken by an individual researcher, not the federal government. If a federal government funded questionnaire receives such a low response rate, the question must be asked if this is the best way to request graduate satisfaction information. Statistically, it could be argued that the results are not significant. It might be only graduates who experienced negative educational experiences who felt strongly enough to complete the questionnaire. For example, in 2008, when the scores were very low, the response rate for Curtin was only 21 respondents; whereas it had been 45 in 2007 and 67 in 2009. The response rate for Curtin fell to only 29 respondents in 2013 – another year when their scores were low. This pattern can also be seen for RMIT and UQ. Low responses giving a high score are also a problem, with Deakin only having six respondents in 2013, the first year that there were graduates from that university and the scores registered were 73 per cent for good teaching and 100 per cent for overall satisfaction. But if these scores truly reflect the situation, what happens after graduates leave university to produce the low CEQ/AGS responses from graduates? What has happened to disillusion them to such a degree that levels of satisfaction can go from 60 per cent to 100 per cent with their property programs during their degree, to below 70 per cent satisfaction as graduates? It is difficult to know why the
response rates on the CEQ/AGS questionnaires was low, and they were, with less than 50 per cent of the cohort completing the forms in many cases. We know graduates are time poor; perhaps they cannot see the purpose of completing a long questionnaire which offers them no benefit?

The University of South Australia had a high response rate of around 60 students, as did the University of Technology, Sydney, with 78 responses in 2013; but RMIT, for example, only received 28 responses, which is less than 50 per cent of the graduating group. It is possible that only the disgruntled graduates bothered to complete the questionnaire. Universities are being partially funded based on these figures, so it is no wonder they also run their own course, or subject experience, surveys in an effort to offset this possibly misleading data.

5.3 Discussion of student responses

This leads to the question: What happened in property programs across universities in Australia after 2010 to cause steady increases in the overall results? Four things may have contributed to higher scores for most of the universities in the study after this period, and the first is the introduction of the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) added to the CEQ. This has added several open-ended questions and is a more sensitive research instrument than the CEQ on its own. The second factor is that the Australian federal government funding process has changed to take into account the university scores for good teaching and overall satisfaction, in addition to research output, as a result of the Bradley report findings (2008). Thirdly, many universities are placing considerable emphasis on good teaching within their university programs and often make high good teaching scores a necessity for promotion. They also often mandate that new academic staff acquire a teaching qualification. Finally, alumni activity has increased at most Australian universities over the last decade and there has been a general improvement in relations between graduates and their respective universities.

Three hundred and sixty-four student questionnaires were completed from a population of approximately 2200 students in these niche market property programs. Due to the small size of the cohort at all 10 universities, property studies usually forms part of a larger grouping of disciplines. This larger discipline group follows either the US model of being part of a business school, or the UK model, where it forms part of a built environment school. At the time of commencing this research, there were three universities offering four-year programs: QUT, UTS and RMIT. By the time the questionnaires were launched this had changed as a
result of federal government stipulations, and only RMIT offered a four-year honours degree to all their enrolled students. Other changes included UTS offering a three-year degree, with optional honours in fourth year for selected students, and QUT offering a three-year undergraduate program for property education like the other seven universities (Australian Government, 2010).

The representation of student responses from year groups was predominantly from second and third years. At the time questionnaires were distributed to students, RMIT was the only one of the 10 universities that had kept its property degree as four years in length, with an embedded honours year. The other nine universities in this study were all offering three-year undergraduate property degrees. This would explain the low response rate for fourth-year students and it is possible many first-year students felt unable to comment on many of the questions through lack of experience. Their degrees may also be undertaken in a business school, where they may have enrolled in core business units in first year, and therefore the questions might not have seemed relevant to them. The mix of responses from males and females was fairly representative of the mixed cohorts at the various universities.

When asked about satisfaction for their program, the results were surprisingly positive, with more than 90 per cent of student respondents being more than 60 per cent satisfied with their property program over the 10 universities in the research group. It is true that students from some universities were more satisfied than others, but it is not in the scope of this research to statistically identify particular universities; instead the scope is limited to examining the entire cohort as one body. As the respondents of the CEQ/AGS are recent graduates and the questionnaire for this research was administered to current students, it is not possible to closely compare the two sets of results. In 2013 the CEQ/AGS overall satisfaction result was the highest it had ever been, with an approximate average of 82 per cent for the seven universities reported in the data. Data were not provided to the researcher for CQU or QUT, and USC still had no recorded graduates.

The difference between the data results may be due to the fact that this research deals with existing students and the CEQ/AGS was filled out by new graduates who may have felt differently about their HE experience after a period in the workforce and were from a different university cohort. Human nature is such that people can change their opinion on reflection once something is completed, and perhaps a fairer time to capture satisfaction and good teaching score information nationwide might be while respondents are still students, as
is done in the UK with the National Student Survey (NSS) (Robinson, 2012). Another difference may be due to the fact that the CEQ/AGS scores were derived from graduate responses to several different questions and this research simply asked current students how satisfied they were with their property programs.

Question 4 asked for comments by students who were less than 80 per cent satisfied with their property program, and 34 per cent of these respondents set out how they would like things to change. These were set out in Chapter 4. In a way, this is a wish list and while most of the requests are reasonable, the reality is that the types of things that upset the students are still likely to occur from time to time. HE is not just one service encounter, but a continuing service encounter over three or four years. These same students who are angry about things while filling out this questionnaire, may feel differently six months later because they were having a good service encounter with their university studies in that particular semester. The recorded results are for one moment in time only. Having an occasional boring lecture is annoying but acceptable; having boring lectures all the time is not acceptable. However, very few of the comments could be construed in this light. Several students were clearly unhappy about several issues and this questionnaire gave them the opportunity to vent their anger.

With regard to the five best things about the students’ property programs, the responses were extremely positive. They mentioned particular lecturers from their universities; they talked about the small cohort, the links with industry, the job opportunities, the relevant material provided and timetables organised so they could work. On the other hand, their five worst things often mentioned the same things, so although one can assume that some universities are tracking better than others with regard to student satisfaction; most have similar problems with the students’ service encounters. A comparison of the total student completions for the five best things about their property program found that 180 students responded to that question, compared to 270 students who responded to the five worst things. As mentioned in Chapter 4, a list of these can be found in Appendix P. This question was also asked as specific critical incidents in the individual student follow-up interviews at the end of the data collection. Because the responses to these two different sections are so similar, they are discussed at the end of this section.

Question 7 asked students to select a point on a Likert scale which aligned with the importance they attributed to formal work experience, field trips/practical work, case studies and the ability to specialise. These four items had traditionally been part of a HE property
experience. These four items (work experience, field trips/practical work, case studies and the ability to specialise) were the main concerns of both industry leaders and the API, and obviously also the student body, as shown in their responses to these questions. Students also want social activities and work experience. If we look at results for Question 7, this is a very telling set of responses. Work experience is sometimes an optional elective, but most of the time it no longer exists in the curricula of Australian HE property programs. Yet in response to Question 7, 85 per cent of students found it to be extremely, or very, important. This alone will make them dissatisfied when they fill out their CEQ/AGS on graduation. Moving on to the second part of that question, 80 per cent of respondents found this was also extremely, or very, important and yet because of the size of the large student cohorts, field trips rarely happen. These findings are similar to those outlined by Younes and Asay (2003) and Snyder (2003), as discussed in Chapter 2.

The third part of this question was the importance of case studies, and 90 per cent of respondents found them to be either extremely, or very, important. There is no easy way of knowing exactly how many case studies are covered in property subject across the different universities, but if few are used, this is something that could very easily be rectified. The final part of this question asks about the ability to specialise within the program and once again, the respondents were 85 per cent in favour of the ability to do this by marking it either extremely, or very, important.

All four of these activities used to be pivotal components of HE property programs and it is important that property programs reflect this preference for practical application in the design of their curricula. Using sophisticated IT programs can provide site visit simulation and other interactive learning materials. It is highly likely that this might lead to greater satisfaction from students because they would find these activities more interesting and useful than always sitting in a lecture.

Until the 2000s, when the university student bodies began to grow, these four items were essential components of most of the HE property degrees. Due to increased student numbers and the implications that this has, the ability to specialise, undertake work experience and field trips have virtually disappeared from HE property programs. It is possible to develop creative curricula which contain simulation and virtual reality type activities to assist students with practical experience (Yam and Rossini, 2013). Students can be encouraged to find their own holiday work placements and many Australian universities have industry mentoring
programs in operation to help students make contacts in the property industry (Ng & Burke, 2006).

With regard to increased class size, the distribution of funds from university management means most schools or faculties can no longer financially support small classes of specialised study. Every year an element of choice disappears from one or more of the Australian property programs. This can be seen by visiting university websites and examining their property program structures. For example, 10 years ago, when there may have been only 30 to 50 students in a year group, it was not difficult to organise a site visit to a high-rise commercial building. Currently, with year groups being over 100 students, this type of activity becomes very difficult and to take account of this change, practical teaching needs to be much more creative than previously. Likewise, it would be very difficult to arrange work experience places for over 100 students, let alone be able to visit and monitor their progress.

Although many universities actively encourage work integrated learning, the reality is that without additional funding, and given the large student cohorts, this type of activity is no longer possible (McDonald, 2013). The 60 per cent male, 40 per cent female completion rate for the student questionnaire is similar to the distribution of the two sexes in the university cohorts and is therefore fairly representative; as too are the age groupings of the respondents, with over 75 per cent being under 25 years of age. Over 80 per cent of the student respondents are full-time students and the same percentage are working during their study years. This is another factor that differs from a traditional university student of 30-plus years ago. For most students at university today it is a part-time existence. Most are not part of a university community, but simply come in for classes – or not – and then rush to leave for work or sporting commitments. They want it simple and easy to understand, so they can do the work as quickly as possible. Most university students today have no time to pursue an idea simply because it interests them. They are usually job and career driven, not studying at university to further their knowledge (Davis, 2012).

With regard to the second last question, whether they would join a professional body, over 80 per cent said they planned to, which is an indication of how important the accrediting bodies are viewed in the property arena. All the universities work closely with the API and RICS and encourage their students to become student members. Both professional bodies accredit the universities’ educational programs and both play an important part in the registration of professionals within the property industry.
For the final question in the student questionnaire, 34 per cent of respondents chose to give comments about how they felt their program could be improved. Although they did not suggest fundamental changes to the structure of the programs, their comments were valid in that they asked for passion and experience in the people who taught them. These are not unreasonable requests and it is very sad, if it is true, that students often have to suffer being bored and confused in silence. During the student interview process, it was revealed that they often worry that if they complain they may be targeted and discriminated against in their later assessment marks by the teachers they complain about. As graduates, they may be worldlier and realise that what they accepted as okay would not be acceptable in the world of business. This concept is supported by this research’s graduate questionnaire results from Question 24, where 56 per cent of respondents said they were more critical of their property university experience now they had left university. It is possible university students are not able to be objective about their experiences because they have very little to judge them by, or are fearful of recriminations and are using all their energy to survive (Youmans & Jee, 2007).

Despite being reasonably satisfied with their property programs, many students complained about the quality of teaching and the teaching materials provided by their lecturers. They complained about the lack of practical fieldwork and the lack of formal work experience. They complained about poor IT services, cancelled classes and poor timetabling, and yet there is the feeling that they thought this was normal because overall they were not dissatisfied. The responses indicated they were dissatisfied; they just did not know how it could be better. For example, the comments for the five good things about the program included: the university is easy to get to; I will gain a degree; the timetable fits into three days; it is preparing us for industry; friendly lecturers; study abroad program; I can complete it in two years; and subjects are relevant to my career. Interestingly, very few of the comments in this list were about their actual programs.

But the story changes with the five worst things about the property program: no workshop notes; lecture notes placed on system late; many teachers have no industry experience; too many words on the lecture slides; unnecessary subjects; unsuitable classrooms; student concerns ignored; repetition of content; lack of rigour in assignments; unorganised teachers with poor preparation; classes only go for a short time; no development course; boring lecturers; teachers not being in the real workforce; IT issues; poor administration and timetabling processes; too many core business units; inflexibility; not much practical work;
and so on. All these items are supported by the literature on HE student satisfaction (Duque & Weeks, 2010; O'Driscoll, 2012; Petruzzellis et al. 2006). These do not sound like the comments of satisfied students. Despite the best efforts of well-meaning academics, the current cohort of students would like changes. Each of the 364 students who completed the questionnaire had the opportunity to give five positive and five negative comments. Although the 244 negative statements are too many to provide within the body of this thesis, a few have been included below, as examples to give the reader a feel for the student frustration. The full list is provided in Appendix P. With only 244 overall negative comments, it can be seen that many students did not complete this section, or only provided one or two comments.

If you are not studying full time or externally you feel very much second class.

Degree does not need to be four years in length, often little variation in knowledge between subjects.

No variety in 2nd year class timetable and timetable very inflexible.

There should be more opportunity to complete work experience.

Some lecturers drone on.

Lack of work placements.

Lecturers try to trick students in exams.

Tutorial sizes.

Need practical learning to be able to understand better.

Lack of engagement.

Course content is dated or relates to overseas situations.

Source: Examples of negative comments taken from the student questionnaire.

RMIT University was the only university in the survey sample with a four-year degree. Previously most of the fourth year was taken up by work experience, but now comprises traditional courses (subjects). When talking to students at RMIT University, length of program was a very common complaint, but usually only by fourth year students who know their friends from other universities have already completed their degrees. They are left
juggling full-time work and full-time university. RMIT is maintaining its suite of built environment degrees, one of which is property, all of four years duration. The fourth year is an honours year and students undertake strenuous and individual research. Many RMIT property students might prefer a three-year degree like the other nine Australian universities. At the very worst, they would accept embedded work experience as the model used to be, rather than extra units of research.

As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, to provide a richer understanding of student complaints, a further 30 face-to-face or telephone interviews were undertaken at the end of the data collection with students who expressed an interest to contribute further. These interviews asked the students to recount specific critical incidents, both positive and negative, that they could recall occurring during their HE experience. The negative critical incidents far outweighed the positive incidents. Also, many of the negative critical incidents recounted occurred to multiple respondents, all in slightly different situations; but overall, the descriptions given fell into the following seven areas:

- administration;
- curricula;
- teaching (individual styles, motivation and experience);
- program/course design;
- subject/course design;
- learning materials used; and
- problems specific to distance/online study.

Along with the negative responses from the student questionnaires, the incidents were used to develop Figure 21 in Chapter 4. Several of the more common incidents are also recounted in this chapter. They offer an explanation of why there probably always will be an element of dissatisfaction in the service encounters of many students during their HE experience. In fact, it may be impossible for any student to complete a three- or four-year degree without having any service complaints. Differences about how seriously these are regarded may depend on the emotional makeup of the individual student and how they usually respond to negative experiences.
A university is usually a large bureaucratic organisation with little coordination between divisions, or continuity between those who teach, their teaching styles and materials, and their personalities overall. It is unrealistic to think everyone in a service encounter in a university is going interact positively together all the time. Negative experiences will happen. The solution to this is to mediate, manage and smooth the experience. Often, all the student needs to do is to talk to someone. All the interviewed students thanked me for listening and admitted the experience was very cathartic; they felt as if someone cared (Davis, 2012).

While Australian universities insist that teaching in the property discipline is done by academics who have doctorates, very few have extensive high-level practical industry experience. It is commonly accepted that property professionals are well paid, but they also usually work long hours. It is not common for property professionals to embark on completing a PhD or to think of becoming an academic. Some may take a few classes or teach part time, but it does leave a lot of universities having to recruit academics from overseas (Parker, 2012). This may lead to the many complaints from students about academics speaking ‘poor English’, or with ‘no understanding of industry practice’. Also, many are researchers and they are not often employed because they are good teachers, or even because they enjoy teaching. For many, teaching gets in the way of their research and the HE student is often left with very poor service (Boyd, 2010). Are students really there to learn, or to receive a qualification? It can be argued that making the most of educational opportunities is really up to the student and that has always been the case. Examining the results from the data in this research leads to the questions, ‘What are the teachers of property subjects doing?’; and ‘Why are they so boring, disorganised and lacking in knowledge?’ Is it because they are not really teachers, but have been recruited primarily as researchers? Or is it that traditional teaching methods are no longer relevant to our current students (Boydell, 2007)?

The Bradley report (2008) declared that Australian academics should have a doctorate and this has meant a lot of recruitment from overseas. Not only are many of these academics not teachers but, for many, English is a second language and most Australian students find them difficult to understand. This came across in a lot of the student and graduate comments. If this is the case, how can the teaching system change? The universities are trying hard. Many insist that new recruits undertake a graduate diploma in teaching and often this imparts knowledge of what should be done and improvements may occur in tasks set and feedback
and the like, but you cannot teach passion. Universities all have learning and teaching divisions and these groups are there to help and advice on teaching matters (RMIT University, 2017).

As discussed in Chapter 2, HE is a relationship marketing encounter within the services marketing area. Because the product is intangible, emotions play a much bigger part than in a traditional marketing encounter where a tangible product (such as a car) is involved. For a start, you can test drive a car and therefore feel you have more control over the process (Lovelock & Wright, 1999). It is taking universities a long time to catch up to other service industries with regard to customer/client expectations. Very little is being done to ensure prospective students have realistic expectations about an experience they are going to embark on for at least three years. All sorts of advertising is fired at the public, all aimed at acquiring new students. They glamorise the experience, yet nowhere are they told what to really expect (Douglas et al., 2008).

Relationship marketing theory emphasises the importance of expectations and customer perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The present research reinforces this because it is clear universities are not managing student expectations. Prospective student expectations need to be managed and current student expectations also need to be understood. For this reason, the researcher has created a model of HE gap analysis to illustrate the different stages of this situation and to reinforce how important this concept is.

**5.3.1 Developing a model of gap analysis**

This model relates specifically to HE and has been adapted by the researcher from marketing theory. The model identifies five possible gaps in experiences compared to individual expectations of a typical HE student. Figure 27 indicates where the gaps might fall in a HE experience.
Sarrico and Rosa (2014) discuss the typical marketing theory model with two traditional gaps. However, the intricate and ongoing nature of a HE experience demands a more detailed understanding of the relationships that occur on a daily basis for a student over approximately a three-year period. It is possible that any given student may only have experiences from one or two gaps in their academic career, but it is also feasible they will have experience of all five gaps, and possibly more than once. The level of a HE student’s satisfaction with their university experience will be related to the gaps they have experienced between their expectations and experiences over their university career, and in particular, those they have experienced in their final period of study. For this reason, the HE experience will usually involve many more both positive and negative experiences than most other service experiences (Coye, 2004).
Gap 1 is a misalignment of their expectation of what the HE experience would be like, and then students’ perception of the actual learning and teaching experience. Examples of this could be that expectations are unreasonable or flawed, and the university is unaware of what the student expected. It includes what they expect after marketing, word-of-mouth promotion, career advice and so on. This is known as the expectation/perception gap.

Gap 2 deals with the perception of the experience as seen through the learning and teaching specifications and covers things such as: administration, program content and length, course guides, assessment criteria, timetabling, contact hours, class size and classroom experience and so on. This gap is titled the specification gap.

Gap 3 covers service performance inconsistencies with regard to the delivery of the learning and teaching materials. Delivery refers to items such as: lecturer problems, IT mishaps, and presented poorly material. This gap is titled the delivery gap.

Gap 4 this is the gap where the problems are compounded. The communication gap covers how the institution handles all communication with the student, including any resolution of previous problems. It asks whether the communication is clear, confusing and contradictory and so on. This gap is titled the communication gap.

Gap 5 is the gap between communication experiences and students’ overall perceived education experience. This is where they reflect on and remember the good and bad experiences and make their final judgment on their satisfaction levels. The final gap is titled the experience gap.

To illustrate how this works, let us use the property student critical incidents as recounted to the researcher during the follow-up process. A Gap 1 experience, where expectations do not meet a student’s perception of their experience, could be the student who says, ‘I expected that I would have things personally explained to me’; and ‘When asked for help, one administrator shrugged and told me that this was not their responsibility’. This may be the only negative experiences this student has, or they could go on to have a Gap 2 experience. A typical Gap 2 experience, or specification gap, is very common. For example, ‘When I went online to complete my timetabling my password would not work and by the time this was rectified by the helpdesk there were no places left in the classes that suited my work commitments’. Another example of this type of gap is:
I thought I was completing all my subjects this year, but when I applied to graduate I was told that the program had changed and I still needed to complete one more core subject. I had the correct number of points, but not the right subjects. I had completed one subject that I did not need. This was very upsetting as nobody had warned me about this. I paid for a subject I did not need and had to wait a whole year longer to graduate, as the subject I needed was only offered in second semester. I also had to wait a whole year for a pay increase as a result of this error.

*Source: Comment from the student interview process.*

This complaint could also fit within Gap 4, the communication gap. This type of gap is the most common negative incident recounted during the interviews, and also the most common in the worst experiences of a HE experience as reported in student questionnaire responses.

An example of Gap 3, the delivery gap is, ‘A lot of the online material is out-dated and full or errors’; or ‘One lecturer has just completed their PhD and they presented the material very poorly’; or ‘One lecturer simply read the lecture slides very slowly with no other explanation and completed the two-hour lecture in 40 minutes’.

With regard to Gap 4, the communication gap, this type of negative incident can often occur along with one of the other gap experiences. If one of the other incidents is reported and no compensation, restitution or apology happens, then the student will also suffer a communication gap incident. An example of this could be: ‘One lecturer gives me the same mark for all my assessments no matter how much effort I have made. They also give no feedback and when I asked how I could improve my work they could offer no suggestions and I was told no one ever gets full marks, no matter how good their work is’.

The final gap in this model is Gap 5, the experience gap. It exists after the communication occurs and the student is left remembering the experience. If the communication experience was frustrating, unhelpful and not motivating, as the experience just recounted, then that student will feel very dissatisfied. If the communication experience had suggested a solution to a student’s problem, rather than compound the problem with negativity, then that student could leave the experience feeling reasonably satisfied with a solution and a direction to follow.
During the data collection period, 170 positive critical incidents were provided to the researcher and this was offset by 244 negative critical incidents. All of these critical incidents were coded into the respective experience gaps that related to the specifications of the incident. The specific total of incidents for each gap was then calculated as a proportion of the overall total to show the relative importance of each gap in the overall experience of a property HE student. This was completed for both the positive and negative critical incidents.

Of the 170 positive critical incidents, 21 per cent related to Gap 1, which was the expectation gap and referred to items that reinforced the students’ original expectation about their university experience. Gap 2 which referred to the specification gap and covered the course and program outlines, learning materials and assessment, administration, timetabling, class size and classrooms and so on, received 53 per cent of the positive comments. Gap 3 was the delivery gap and referred to lecturers and the presentations of the learning materials and this section received 15 per cent of the positive comments. Gap 4, the communication gap received 11 per cent.

Gap 5 is the culmination of both positive and negative experiences for a student during their university experience. This was discussed in a separate question in the survey which asked about their level of satisfaction overall. This was covered in section 5.3, but cannot be inserted into the model as 364 students answered this question and a lesser proportion of students answered the section recording the positive and negative critical incidents. As a consequence, the two sets of data are not comparable and the student satisfaction data from the questionnaire cannot be included in the model.

The situation for the negative critical incidents shows a similar pattern to the one given for the positive critical incidents, but in this case there are 244 negative critical incidents. Seventeen per cent of complaints refer to Gap 1 experiences; 46 per cent to Gap 2; 21 per cent to Gap 3; and 16 per cent to Gap 4. These proportions, shown in Figure 28, indicate the area in which most complaints were identified, and the areas universities need to address if they wish to improve property HE student satisfaction.
Figure 28: Proportions of positive and negative CI by Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Positive CI</th>
<th>Negative CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Misalignment between student expectation and the actual higher education experience</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student perceptions of L+T specifics</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Student perceptions of delivery of L+T materials</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The communication gap. Student perceptions of how all communication is handled by the university.</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table identifies the areas where the most complaints are being generated. The proportions of the positive and negative comments are also shown in the model in Figure 29.
It can be seen that by far the most important gap, for both positive and negative critical incidents, is Gap 2, with .53 and .46 proportions respectively. It is the area of the perception gap where most complaints were found, and this is the area universities need to improve if they wish to see an increase in student satisfaction. Almost half student complaints concern this area of their HE experience: program and course content, program and course design, timetable, administration, and the class frequency and size. This is what the property HE students complain about. It may be different for other groups of HE students, but for the cohort of property students that contributed to this research; these are the things that upset them. On the other hand, many students were very supportive of these factors. Although there
were many less positive comments expressed by students than negative comments, many students mentioned specific excellent teachers and programs at their respective universities.

Gap 2 covered almost half of the complaints about property students’ university experiences. This is the area that needs improvement and one of the major reasons for this is the generally poor IT support offered by universities. The universities are very large and bureaucratic, and all course work, assignments, timetables and other elements are now online. They have thousands of clients (students), all requiring efficient internet services 24 hours every day of the year (The Good Universities Guide, 2018).

Just as with learning and teaching specifications, improvements have been made by universities with regard to student engagement and teaching delivery. This is reflected in the improved CEQ/AGS good teaching scores, and the fact that Gap 3 only represents 21 per cent of complaints. However faced with funding constraints and the fact that most Australian universities are large organisations where the individual faculties or schools very much run themselves, it will be very difficult for improvements to be made. Instead it would probably be possible for the individual universities to take one mentioned problem area at a time and set in place monitoring and improving steps for that chosen area. For example a total quality Management (TQM) could be put in place for timetabling etc.

5.4 Discussion of graduate responses

Responses from the graduate questionnaire add support and depth to the material gathered from the student questionnaire, particularly regarding practical components of property education. Graduates’ comments on the lack of practical application in their property programs were very appropriate and interesting. Property studies are practical, and for this reason students learn better when material is presented to them in a practical manner. There need to be more field trips in property education – even if the cohorts are large. This is a difficulty, but it should not be an excuse to not do it. Frequently, students and industry state that the only real way to learn this complicated discipline is by interacting with the sites and the processes. It would be appropriate to partner with industry and break students into smaller groups with different assignments that mirror what the industry partner can offer in the way of a site visit (Boyd, 2010).
Interestingly, the largest group of respondents favoured delivery by blended learning, and yet of the 10 universities only Deakin University, University of South Australia and Central Queensland University, offer their property programs in this delivery mode. Despite favouring a blended delivery mode, when it came to the next two questions about how frequently they would like contact and what type of contact they would like, the majority opted for the traditional format of weekly classes of lectures and tutorials. None of the respondents favoured a three-hour class, and yet that is how many property programs are structured. This merges well with the student responses to their questionnaire. There were many requests for more tutorials and fewer three-hour classes, both of which featured in the ‘worst things’ about their programs.

Regarding attributes graduates valued most in those teaching them, the response was overwhelmingly in favour of industry experience. Doctoral qualifications rated very low on the requirements list, which is contrary to expectations of academics as per the Bradley report (2008). In response to Question 8, graduate respondents were also strongly in favour of being able to specialise in their studies. This characteristic was virtually non-existent in undergraduate property programs at the time the research was conducted.

With regard to subjects that should be offered, basic business subjects were requested often, especially economics and management. Basic statistics was reasonably popular, along with accounting and marketing, but communication studies and advanced statistics were rated very lowly. This does not match the research findings in respect of industry requirements. Many students and new graduates think they are communicators, but industry stated it requires professional-level communicators. It desires professional written and verbal skills, and few students or graduates were regarded as having these strengths.

Four of the suggested valuation units were favoured by more than 70 per cent of respondents, and the other four were requested by 50 per cent. Interestingly, very few property degrees have even four valuation units in their programs. There was strong support for property development, property investment, commercial construction and financial analysis. There was less interest in urban economics, sustainability, geographic information systems and planning subjects. Although there was strong support for professional writing, there was an overwhelmingly low response to research methods and a minor thesis. It appears that, on the whole, graduates understand and appreciate why the courses (subjects) they undertook were offered and there is not much that they would change. It would appear that the accrediting
bodies do understand what industry requires a graduate to be knowledgeable about, and in stipulating the minimum requirements for the universities to teach they have satisfied both industry and graduates with the program content. Industry feels there is a need for graduates to also be “street smart” as well as having the required business and property skills.

When it came to assessment type, very few respondents favoured group reports. Yet once again, this was often the type of assignment offered. The favoured package was presentations, assignments and exams, closely followed by individual assignment and exams. Eighty per cent of respondents felt formal work experience was either extremely important (60 per cent) or very important (20 per cent), and similar numbers found field trips/practical work and case studies to be extremely important or very important. This is very interesting when we realise that this is the last group that experienced formal work experience in the old form. For this group to support the system is praise indeed for work-based learning as part of property HE programs.

5.5 Similarities between the student and graduate responses

Although two different questionnaires were administered to property students and property graduates, there are similar questions in each instrument:

- Both questionnaires asked the respondent to comment on what would have made them satisfied with their property degree.
- Both questionnaires asked about the importance of practical elements in the degree formal work experience, field trips/practical work and, finally, the use of case studies, and asked them to comment on the reasons for their answer.
- Both questionnaires asked whether respondents worked during their studies.
- Both questionnaires asked about their level of satisfaction, but the graduate questionnaire asked them to reflect on whether they now felt more satisfied with their property program or less so.

In all cases, answers from both groups were very similar and appear to support the same ideas. Graduates, however, are now more critical of their HE experience than they were as students.
5.6 Discussion of industry responses

The purpose of splitting the industry data into two groups (young graduates and industry leaders) was to get the perspective of both groups on property education. The younger group still remembers their university degree and the questionnaire offered them the opportunity to reflect on and critique it. The older group knows what they look for in a graduate, and what they expect from them when they employ them. Examining the responses to the industry questionnaire, it appears employers on the whole may not have unrealistic expectations of graduates. Even so, more than 50 per cent thought they performed badly. Another five per cent thought they were inconsistent. Only 45 per cent felt satisfied with graduate performance.

When asked to comment on graduates’ good qualities, almost all admired as positive traits their enthusiasm, willingness to learn, their attitudes and vibrant energy. Approximately 20 per cent commented on their technical and computer skills. This similar group of responses contrasts with the results from Question 4, which asked for the worst things. There are six separate areas where the graduates did not perform well. The most mentioned area was poor basic property skills, which was noted in 45 per cent of responses, followed by being easily distracted and consumed by social media reported by 25 per cent of the respondents.

Almost half the complaints about graduates dealt with their lack of a knowledge base, which could be rectified. Many employers were unhappy that previous work experience programs, where students worked for up to three days a week in industry during their final year, were no longer being offered. They felt the beauty of this program had been that because the salary was low, there was more incentive to spend time training the students. Now that work placements are often of a very short duration, or the students have none at all, they finish as graduates expecting a graduate salary, with little or no knowledge of how the property industry operates. This enthusiasm for formal work experience supports the evidence found in the literature (Garavan & Murphy, 2001). However, it is interesting that none of the employers wanted to take responsibility for training their graduates, or offered any alternative scenarios. Given that graduates who have had no work experience will not be industry trained, it would be reasonable for employers to negotiate a lower commencing salary with a trial period built into the contract. Clearly, salary and the training issues need to be addressed by employers, perhaps working closely with the API to ensure a consistent policy across the
property industry. If all employers offered a lower graduate salary due to lack of training and experience, then there would be an incentive for graduates to work hard at gaining the extra knowledge. This, coupled with compulsory professional development units gained through API, should help new graduates gain the knowledge and experience they need to progress in the industry.

None of the employers mentioned communication skills, the skills that the literature believed are the most sought-after skills in a graduate (Manning, & Epley, 2004). It may be a weakness of this research that communication skills were not specifically raised as a possible issue. We can assume graduate communication skills were not as bad as their lack of knowledge and other behaviour. Remaining complaints might be attributed to differences between Generation X and Baby Boomers, compared to Generation Y and beyond. Question 5 asked about satisfaction with university teaching, and once again, at 50 per cent satisfied, this is very low. There appears to be general dissatisfaction with materials taught and the graduates who emerge from universities in the property area in Australia. These negative comments by members of the property industry were made without any real knowledge of the syllabus current at the time, or other details of the content of material universities actually cover in their property programs. Property industry leaders are often very high achievers. It is sometimes difficult for them to understand how confusing and difficult it can be for a young graduate just commencing their career. No matter what skills they have learnt during their university years, applying them in a practical manner is always going to take a period of adjustment. Overall, industry leaders’ comments and criticisms may be a little harsh. Industry has been critical of graduate work ready skills and the API has been active in addressing this issue in its suite of compulsory Professional Development units in all the areas that industry has found graduates to be lacking. Graduates must complete the relevant units in their particular specialist property field, prior to receiving accreditation to practice.

The Pacific Rim Real Estate Society is the major platform for academic discussion on property education in Australia and at its annual conference in Adelaide in January 2011, a symposium on property HE was held. When this body reported the problems and rifts with the Property Council of Australia (PCA) regarding research opportunities, and as a direct result of the Bradley report (2008), they verbalised a very real problem, and yet no changes have since been made within property education in Australia to attempt to improve the situation. It would be unfair, however, solely to blame the PCA. There are many others –
such as the Real Estate Institute of Australia, the API, and RICS, as well as mainstream players within industry – who could all do a lot more to foster property research and to take a far more active role in securing a future for quality and meaningful education for the next generation of leaders within the property professions. The problems outlined by Parker (2012) are not limited just to research; there are many additional opportunities where the wider profession and its key groups could be expected to assist. Property is, after all, the cornerstone of business and investment, and a major wealth creation driver in Western economies. While it is a major wealth and tax revenue provider, it requires unique skills within its related professions to achieve the maximum outputs and success (Parker 2012).

HE property students continue to increase in number; academic positions are filled on the basis of a qualification rather than industry experience; industry continues to bemoan the property graduate; and funded research is very difficult to find. Being aware of the problems is not the same as creating solutions to help solve them. Perhaps current property programs need to be more robust and contain more interactive learning materials; perhaps research opportunities can be sourced overseas; or perhaps HE property education should only be offered at postgraduate level after completing an undergraduate business degree. These are all valid suggestions that have been addressed in various research papers, and ultimately these decisions need to be made by the industry representative (API) and the individual Australian universities (Boyd, 2010; Boydell, 2007; Parker, 2012; Newell, 2015).

5.7 Discussion of academic responses

No one can doubt the sincerity of the academics interviewed for this research. Many are program directors of property HE programs across Australia. Most have been educators for many years and are feeling justifiably frustrated with many of the changes that have become necessary for their programs. One lecturer told me that he took time to make the work interesting for large cohorts and developed interesting activities to occupy the students in class, only to find that only half turn up because it is scheduled at 8.30 am and it is raining. Being an academic today can be a very stressful experience; as well as large classes and heavy teaching loads, academics also have a research output to maintain and manage, have work plans to follow, and must deal with myriad administrative tasks that have now fallen to academics to complete. The very diligent academics suffer and work very long hours in their
own time to fit research, teaching and administration into a reasonable week; others might take shortcuts (Boyd, 2010).

With all the information available, you might wonder why everyone is not a great teacher. Literature is plentiful on how to become a better teacher, and Australian universities actively promote additional professional development in teaching methods (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005). The reality is that being a great teacher is often very hard to achieve. It goes against some people’s personalities, and their deeply embedded values. Add to this the large class sizes and the difficulty of getting to know the students, and the task becomes even more daunting. It is also possible that some people do not want to become better teachers because their emphasis is on research and promotion. Another group just want everything to stay the same. It is the lecturers with this attitude that students mainly complain about. If you are honest with students and treat them with respect and consistency they will value you as a teacher. The alternative is a lack of appropriate dialogue between staff and students which continues until they part, to be replaced by new students and perhaps new teachers, hopefully with a more tolerant and less competitive attitude towards their students (Douglas & Douglas, 2006).

5.7.1. If there are to be new universities, what should they be like?
Although academics can see the merit of a broad-based liberal education which then leads to specific disciplines via postgraduate education, this is not how most prospective students view it. Many want the shortest path to a job; others may want to pursue research; and yet again others wish to study overseas. We need a university system that gives students more choice. It must be the government who creates this choice by allowing new institutions to have a different model from that of the existing public university model:

We should be encouraging more dual-sector vocational and HE institutions and more specialised universities, liberal arts schools and small colleges committed to their own subject area, their own vision of higher education. We need to create opportunities for those scholars who are at their best in the classroom with students and who keep up with the literature without themselves researching (Davis, 2010, p. 120).

Although these ideas run counter to the recommendations contained in the Bradley report (2008), the suggestions made by Davis (2010) make more sense for practical programs such as property and have links with the ideas expressed by the students, graduates and industry in this research thesis. This is also supported by the Executive Director of the Group of Eight
universities who believes that the ‘demand driven system’ for entry into universities has seen undergraduate enrolments grow by 26 per cent from 2009 to 2014. Over the same period only 69 per cent of graduates found employment during 2015, compared to 85 per cent in 2008. She further stated that many employers were requesting graduates for positions that did not warrant this level of education and felt industry should take more responsibility for training and mentoring their employees (Knott, 2016).

5.8 Conclusion

It is impossible to satisfy all stakeholders all the time, and it may be impossible to satisfy some at all. There are things, however, that can be done, not only to improve the student experience, but to also embrace industry into the education sphere. The survey of industry leaders found that although they expected graduates to have a good knowledge of property areas, on the whole, they were disappointed. Only 45 per cent were completely happy with their property graduates, and 50 per cent were not satisfied with the teaching at universities. Taken with the findings from the academic symposium in 2011, this indicates a degree of dissatisfaction from both industry and property academics.

The major accrediting body for property professionals in Australia, the API, has reacted to complaints from their members about poor property skills in graduates by introducing the Future Property Professionals (FPP) program, rather than direct the complaints to the universities for rectification. Graduates wishing to be registered with the API must complete the appropriate modules in the FPP. The API accredits university courses, and supposedly accepts what they teach is appropriate, but API still feels the need to impose additional learning on graduates. Despite leading Australian academics recognising and discussing the problems facing university property programs in 2011, no steps have been taken towards seeking any solutions. It may be time to change the way property education is delivered. Perhaps a HE degree should not be the only pathway, and a return to cadetships or other industry training might be investigated in conjunction with formal studies? This might go some way to address industry concerns about the lack of practical abilities in recent graduates.

Students will still be queuing up for entry into all HE property programs, and much as industry would like to return to the times when they had students in their final year being paid a very low wage to learn as they work, the reality is there are too many to place. As student
numbers grow, property positions will become very competitive, and although they may not get the opportunity to train them as they study, only the best graduates will be chosen for positions in the workplace. This may go some way to appease industry, but unless the programs return to more practical applications and problem-solving activities, there will still be a rift between what is taught and what industry would like to see taught. There is no doubt that involving industry in the university process will go a long way to creating a situation of cooperation that would be beneficial to all the stakeholders in property education.

You cannot easily make someone be a passionate teacher, but you can create different learning experiences that do not rely solely on a lecturer. If stakeholders really care about the quality of HE property programs, changes can be made gradually that can bring about improved satisfaction for all stakeholders. This cannot happen overnight and it will be hard work, but a combination of greater industry involvement, innovative teaching materials and methods, and formal work experience, will bring greater credibility to the programs and restore the faith of students, industry and academics in HE property teaching. On the other hand, it is highly likely nothing will change. Students will still be queuing up for entry into all the programs. Acceptances are just a small percentage of the students who apply for property programs across Australia.

Property studies are seen by the community as leading to an interesting and lucrative career, and parents are keen for their children to embark on such a pathway. This was not always the case, and it is sad that the lack of competition will mean universities can continue to offer second-rate curricula and poor teaching, yet still attract all the students they can handle. Only action by the federal government can cause any change in the structure of property education, but program leaders can introduce changes to teaching material and methods, for property HE programs.
Chapter 6 – Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

It is time to reflect on the discoveries and discuss the conclusions which can be drawn from the material presented earlier, and make suggestions for changes to property higher education (HE) in Australia for the future. To conclude this study, this chapter reflects on earlier chapters and links them together. This of course, leaves the door open for future research efforts in this field.

This research began by chasing the elusive character of property HE student satisfaction in Australia. Within a year of commencing, the project grew to include the other two major stakeholders – industry and the universities – and an examination of their expectations, rather than simply looking at the end product, satisfaction. The title of this research is: ‘Stakeholder expectations of the educational experience in HE property disciplines in Australia’. Each of these concepts must be analysed and discussed in a manner that will enable the research questions introduced in Chapter 1 to be answered. Research question 1 is the primary question to be answered. Material related to it has been covered in chapters 4 and 5, and it is revisited and concluded in this chapter. Research question 2 is answered in chapters 2, 4 and 5, and question 3 is answered in chapters 1 and 2. Questions 4 and 5 are answered in chapters 4 and 5, and revisited in this chapter. The final question is discussed in this concluding chapter.

6.2 Who are the stakeholders?

The story begins with the experience. Take a typical Australian university in one of the five mainland states and property education may very well be one of the degrees that can be undertaken. Whether it offers property studies or not, the experience will be very similar. As Davis (2012) states, there is very little differentiation between the experiences at Australian universities. Very few Australian universities have residential colleges, and most students still live at home with their parents or in rented accommodation and commute to university to attend their classes, work in the library or simply hang out.
6.2.1 The student

A typical property student at an Australian university will most likely be working, usually part-time, to pay for their lifestyle. On the days they are at university they will often have a very heavy timetable of different classes and they may work with their groups or in the library between classes. They usually schedule their work around their study, but it is very usual for them to be busy. The reality is the way university timetables are structured is around a 12-week semester, twice or three times a year. For this reason, students need to be extremely organised, and the ones who are succeed far better than the ones who take a while to become motivated. Students learn to handle the stress and they usually survive, but their worry and anxiety is real and they need to manage a large amount of pressure. This is not really a situation where you would expect to find a high level of satisfaction. For the students it is probably more a relief when they successfully complete a semester, rather than a joy.

After analysing the data generated in this research project, the statements that students made can be summarised as follows:

- Most university and government-based questionnaires do not ask the questions that students find relevant.

- Most questionnaires have been developed by academics and deal with learning and teaching. Students have said that most of the instruments take too much time to complete (Robson, 2009).

- Students do not believe anything changes as a result of these questionnaires. They do not see the problems they mention being fixed.

- The traditional presentation format of lectures and tutorials are not what students wish to attend. They expect innovation and creative approaches to learning to take place.

- Students would like to see consistencies in the day-to-day activities they are involved with, rather than some subjects (courses) being well run and interesting, and others that are disorganised and boring. They want to be able to rely on the materials and presentations that form part of their program.

- Students would like to feel valued as members of the university, rather than being bombarded with marketing material that has no follow-up and often leads to cynicism.
• Students would like their degree to be three years or less and to contain everything they need to be work ready for the property industry. Many property HE students believe a lot of their subjects (courses) are not relevant to industry needs.

• Overall, property HE students do not feel valued as clients in this educational experience they feel they are paying for.

• As property students, they would like to see more practical case studies, site visits and formal work experience as part of their HE experience.

The federal government appears to have placed the emphasis on research rather than training, and the universities are attempting to provide the desired effect. The work experience system was a very successful scheme for property education and the trend appears to be moving further away from this, due to the ever-increasing numbers of students enrolled in property programs, and the difficulty of finding industry placements for this increased student cohort. If we accept that there are approximately 2200 undergraduate property students across Australia, this means approximately 800 will graduate every year and be seeking employment. This number places a huge strain on a tight-knit group that may only be 10,000 strong across the country.

6.2.2 Industry
Compose of two sectors, mature industry leaders aged 30 and above, and new industry entrants aged 21–30, this stakeholder group is very important in the HE process. Not only are these component two groups completely different in their generational outlook, but also in their property experience. The younger group are mostly comprised of Generation Z people, while the second group will be a mix of Generations X and Y and Baby Boomers. The younger, recent graduate group will be still feeling their way in their careers and may not even have decided exactly which area they wish to specialise in. University will be fairly fresh in their minds and they may often compare their new work life with their freer study time. On the other hand, the industry leader group is firmly entrenched in their careers and usually have become experts in their field of specialisation. For these reasons, different questions and questionnaires were developed for these two distinct groups. One group is closer to the student and their experiences, and the industry leader group includes those who employ new graduates and handle their early days in industry.
Looking at the results from the graduate questionnaire, some questions were the same as in the student questionnaire. In addition, their responses were almost the same. Many of the graduates were involved in a work experience component in their final year, so for them to support this program is an indication of how important they view it. In fact, the degree of support from the graduates was higher than for the students, at 84 per cent compared to 78 per cent. Overall, graduates did not ask for much to be changed within the content of the programs, and this might be due to the short duration of their industry experience. However, 56 per cent of graduates believed they were more critical of their degree now than they were while they were students. It is impossible to link these results with the CEQ/AGS results, because both this research and the federal government questionnaire have a low response rate. There is no way of discovering whether any respondents are the same for both questionnaires.

Just as the students have changed in outlook and expectations over the years, so too have the industry leaders. A new group is emerging which is younger and fresher than the Baby Boomer generation; they may be tied less to how things were done in the past and may be looking to accept changes into the future. This will be reflected in the membership of the two accrediting bodies for property education in Australia, the API and RICS. These are the two bodies which work closely with universities with regard to course content and even mode of delivery. It is important that universities maintain an ongoing conversation concerning the future of HE property programs with these two groups of industry representatives. Industry leaders need to be involved in the activities of the property programs in an advisory and even a participatory manner. If the two groups work together, it will be possible to create changes that will benefit all the stakeholders in this property HE process. Employers must also take a measure of responsibility for training graduates to work in their industry and not just expect universities to do this task for them. If the graduate is enthusiastic, reasonably knowledgeable, intelligent and hardworking, any other expectation by employers is unrealistic.

6.2.3 The university

There are two parts to the university stakeholder: the academics who deal with the students on a daily basis; and the university policy makers who set the scene within which the HE experience unfolds. There are currently 37 public universities in Australia and only 10 offer undergraduate property degrees.
The university is responsible for everything that happens in the HE experience. To return to the model of HE introduced in Chapter 1, there are several different criteria that make up the HE experience. This research used the format outlined by Gibbs (2010), first developed by Biggs (1993), which outlines the 3P structure: presage, processes and product.

The university hierarchy is responsible for the presage components of HE: the facilities, the IT capabilities, the student selection and enrolment; and often some of the process components, such as timetabling and program approval. The remaining process components are managed by the schools or faculties and involve the curricula, teaching styles and methods, class size and format, assessment and feedback, and administration. The final component of the HE experience is the product and this is the result of all the other factors. This is where the specific property experience lies, because this involves industry participation, the final graduates, and the degree of research the university generates. The federal government bases its funding (graduate satisfaction and research outputs) on the product and, as a result, this determines how much money there is available for improvements to be made in any particular university system. Not one of the 10 universities rate in the highest groupings for universities offering excellence in teaching and student support (The Good University Guide, 2018). These are areas that these 10 universities can improve upon. It is also important that universities are not led by industry to simply turn out the type of graduate industry prefers. Universities are places of higher learning, not vocational institutions, and internationally HE is about teaching students to question and think for themselves (Biggs, 1993; Gibbs, 2010).

6.3 Why was student satisfaction with property programs so low?

Yes, property HE student satisfaction was very low when this research was commenced. But this is a longitudinal study and there has been some improvement over recent years. It is still low compared to many other university programs and this is due to several factors:

- Cohort sizes are much larger than other boutique degrees, such as communication, journalism, visual arts and so on;

- Property students are keen to learn about their discipline and often do not see the need for what they think are filler subjects, but in fact are business courses which the accrediting bodies feel they need to understand;
• Students often do not feel valued and treated with respect while they are students at university;

• Students often find the assessment requirements are confusing and inconsistent;

• Students find their subjects (courses) are taught in an inconsistent manner, with some being interesting and challenging, but most being boring and difficult to engage with;

• Property students would like to see more practical exercises, work experience and site visits in their course work than at there are at present; and

• Given that they are in an ongoing relationship marketing experience, it is probably unrealistic to expect all students’ experiences will be satisfying. Considering the number of different people and activities they have to interact with over a three- or four-year period, it is unlikely students will experience 100 per cent satisfaction. Perhaps 70–80 per cent overall satisfaction is a realistic expectation for this type of program at Australian universities in the current environment, and this is now beginning to be achieved.

6.3.1 What can be recommended to achieve satisfaction?
Changing a HE program is not an easy task, takes a very long time, and is a lot of hard work for all the parties concerned. Because the federal government funds universities, there are many complicated procedures that must be followed. Logic would suggest that you throw away the current structure and move back towards formal work experience; however, the growing size of the student cohort would indicate this could be difficult to achieve. At the moment there are options, sanctioned by the API, whereby students complete the traditional three or four years of academic life and graduate with a degree, and then are either already in the workforce or they attempt to enter the workforce. Once in the workforce they need to complete the essential additional Future Property Professional (FPP) units prior to achieving registration to practise as individuals in their particular specialisation. As a result of industry complaints about a lack of property knowledge in graduates, the API has already attempted to combat this by introducing this compulsory suite of professional development units (FPP). The relevant units must be undertaken before registration of the graduate for professional practice can occur.
An alternative might be that some students may choose to complete their studies via an internship overseen by the respective university, and including visits from the controlling academics to ensure students are having a worthwhile learning experience. If students are to be believed, much of the teaching in property HE programs is of a very poor standard. Most people respond to on-the-job training far better than being trapped in a lecture theatre for up to three hours. Clearly, there needs to be a formal curricula and appropriate assessments to test that the student is progressing in all the required skill sets. Of course, this would be returning to how the industry operated prior to property becoming a university program. Although this might be the preferred model for many industry leaders, this is unlikely to be acceptable to the federal government, the universities or the two major accrediting bodies, the API and RICS.

Given that the role of a university is predominantly to educate and train people to problem solve, it is probably unreasonable for industry to expect universities to train students for the workplace. This has traditionally been the role of vocational institutions. The reality of teaching property at university is a very broad overview of myriad career areas, which range from all the valuation specialities to urban issues, property sales and management, property development, facilities management, property investment and so on. Most students do not feel qualified to choose their career speciality while still at university and this is why HE property programs aim for such a broad overview. Historically, property education was a technical qualification and students had practical experience within their studies. It is now considered a profession and has professional accreditation for all aspects of the industry. The professions closest to property are accountancy and law, and both require graduates to undertake further study after graduation before they can practice independently. Prospective lawyers and accountants must continue their studies with the respective professional bodies if they wish to be qualified to practice in industry. Likewise, the API has introduced its own units of study to be completed before graduates can achieve professional registration. Perhaps this needs to be expanded in a way similar to law which has articled clerks training and a more formal program where graduates have a chance to try employment in different property areas with appropriate training involved. Any problems in the development of prospective graduates for the property industry are problems the three major stakeholders need to grapple with, and it is not only universities that must find solutions.
6.3.1.1 *Do we need more industry involvement?*

Academics are sometimes afraid to ask, but industry people will help if it can be shown that their time is valued. Perhaps there is something that can be done for them in return. If academics do not have industry experience, bringing in someone who does as a guest speaker lends credibility to the activity. It only needs to be 30–60 minutes and it will make all the difference to the perceptions of the students, and possibly to the academics. Another strategy to compensate for academics with little industry experience could be to set up cooperative learning teams where these academics team up with one or more industry leaders in the curriculum area under discussion and team teach. An extension of this idea is for academics to spend one or more days a week in industry, learning the skills they currently may not have. The problem with both of these ideas is finding industry people who can devote the time to such activities.

Using industry mentors for property students is a system that a number of the universities already have in place, and students who are lucky enough to be involved in such a system are highly supportive of the process. If the industry mentor is interviewed by the relevant academic and then regular visits occur, the student is in a safe environment where they are learning how to survive in the workplace without the usual stress of commencing a job with no support. This scheme can work if it is accepted that there will not be such places for all students. Not everybody will be able to find such a placement and many may not even want to follow this process. It works very well for less academic students who know exactly what work they would like to do when they finish their degree (Blake & Susilawati, 2015). A brave and adventurous property group within one of the Australian universities might embark on a program that seeks to reintroduce some measure of formal industry interaction into their property program. It might start in a small way with a few students who are keen to be involved, and if successful expand from there. There is no doubt students value help at the beginning of their careers. If formal work experience is not possible given the large cohort sizes, then some form of industry mentoring may be possible. Students expect to find well paid and interesting jobs as a result of completing their property degree. Offering to assist them in this step will lead to greater satisfaction as their final university time will be marked by a perception of caring, of empathy, on the part of the university. They are not being thrust into an unknown workforce, but being encouraged and guided on this journey.
A more realistic solution is to accept that overall, little may change within the process, but power can be taken away from the individual teacher by designing innovative teaching materials that can be delivered in a blended mode and which can simulate real-life property experiences. One strategy to counterbalance boring presenters might be to make them purely assessors and develop cutting-edge, exciting teaching materials that contain all the content necessary for a student to work their way through the process, with occasional help from an academic.

6.3.1.2 Do we need more interactive courses (subjects)?

Yes; if lecturers cannot be passionate and interesting then they need programs that will do this for them. Virtual sites, simulation, role playing and case studies are all activities students enjoy and learn from. The best modern option is to opt for a blended learning approach with face-to-face classes at regular intervals. The time saved here can be effectively used in improving feedback and visiting students in their work based learning positions. If lecturers are time poor and are not passionate presenters, perhaps using blended learning could be a way of improving what is provided to students. If students are complaining about ‘having to come to class every week to listen to boring lecturers’, then prepare some YouTube or video material using experts in whatever area is under discussion and allow the students to watch this in their own time. The class could then be an online discussion forum. There is really no excuse to use boring and outdated classroom activities given the abundance of modern technology. However, if this type of learning is to be introduced it needs to be carefully managed and be of a high standard of presentation. Using blended learning should not simply be a money saving enterprise. It needs to follow very careful and stringent guidelines (Lee & Mallik, 2015; Cornish et al, 2015; Yam, 2012).

The Bradley report (2008) found that the quality of educational experiences was declining in HE in Australia and that the quality control processes were poor. It also found student/staff ratios were too high and the government funding methods favouring research outputs adversely affected the quality of the student experience. The government responded by allocating funding for improvement in good teaching and satisfaction scores (Australian Government, 2010). However, this does not really address the problem; it is a stick to beat poor performing academics, but offers no solutions for them as to how to improve their scores. Students are often kind and do not rate an academic as badly as they should; it is not until you read the comments that you find out what they really think (Zepke et al, 2013).
Grading someone on a Likert scale does not capture the essence of their feelings. This all points to change being essential but it is difficult to see how this will be possible while the student cohort size grows and the emphasis on academics holding higher degrees continues (Newell, 2007).

6.3.2 Do we need to shorten the degree, especially the four-year one and add more active work experience?

From the data available from the students, this is essential. The only four-year degree at present is at RMIT University, and students complain about that extra year because their competitors for positions at Deakin University are completing a three-year degree and they can fast track in two years if they are really keen. This is half the time that RMIT University students take, and costs a lot less money. Students valued formal work experience; it is an easier orientation to the workplace, and often it means a long-term career if they want it.

Formal work experience was usually organised during the third year of a program and the students were not thrown out in December to compete with all the other graduates for work positions. Formal work experience also gives them the opportunity to try an option and to walk away from the choice when the program is over if it does not suit; this is much harder to do with a formal work position. Most of the 10 universities in this study had some measure of work integrated learning and this ranged from working in industry in the vacation or up to three days a week during their final year of study. However, now that formal work experience has been replaced by more subjects (courses) many students no longer understand why an undergraduate degree needs to be four years in length. Most students see very little benefit in completing an honours degree, because most have no intention of completing a higher research degree, such as a PhD. Only time will tell if students really resent this and if so it will be reflected in the future CEQ/AGS scores for RMIT University graduates. If universities are to become places for research, perhaps there is a different path for property education. If students were to pay organisations what they pay universities for their degrees, they might be more satisfied with their educational experience. Perhaps the three years need only be two years, with the third being a partnership between business, the universities and the API. Students could do a controlled internship and everyone will get what they want.
6.4 What do stakeholders expect?

Overall, stakeholders want the same thing. They want work-ready graduates who are capable, keen and motivated, or to be these graduates. If this does not happen, then they look to the HE experience for answers. The major industry representative is the Australian Property Institute (API) and because it accredits all 10 public undergraduate property programs operating in Australia, it is a major stakeholder. It listens to members and then reports to the universities; its major complaint is the fact that many graduates are not work ready. There are gaps in their property knowledge, particularly in the area of valuation. The API believes students are not being given sufficient training in practical matters, and it is for this reason that API has established compulsory professional development units for all property graduates seeking practising certifications.

The students would also like to see more practical components in their degrees: formal work experience and site visits. However, their grievances go a lot further than this and the main focus of their complaints is their total experience. They are the stakeholders who are experiencing a relationship, and therefore their grievances are much wider and far reaching than just the program content and delivery mode. As explained in detail in Chapters 4 and 5, they cover every detail of their day-to-day activities on their journey to graduation. The students who responded to the questionnaire would like things to change, but probably most of all they would like recognition of the fact that changes need to be made.

Finally, the universities: they would like to have satisfied students and with the help of their academics, they make every effort to ensure this. However, they are constrained by the bureaucratic framework of the university system: the fact that they answer to the federal government and appropriate accrediting bodies. Universities are huge businesses and have very large hierarchies. Each school or faculty is usually reasonably autonomous. The activities within a university are really business-to-business activities and different divisions have no control over the action of other groups. For example, the individual faculties often have no control over timetables because they are handled by central administration, and yet they have a large impact on a students’ HE experience. The student experience is only as good as the weakest link in the process. The universities employ administrators and academics who they hope will behave professionally and also provide students with meaningful activities and services, delivered in a passionate and caring manner. However, it
is clear this will not be the case all the time. It is impossible to maintain a perfect business relationship and all the stakeholders know this. What universities must ensure is that they have a process to monitor and moderate for students that is proactive and involved, and is made up of staff who students believe will fight for the changes they would like to see.

6.5 Why is stakeholder satisfaction important?

There are three major stakeholders for property HE and it is important that not only students, but also industry and academics, are satisfied with the HE experience. If students are dissatisfied then they will register low good teaching and overall satisfaction scores on graduation. The universities affected by this will achieve less funding for their property programs, and this could become a vicious downward spiral with funding diminishing along with falling satisfaction. Although student numbers will probably not fall, the quality of the student applying to those universities may hold lower entrance marks. This will probably be reflected in the quality of their graduates and may lead to dissatisfaction from employers and disillusionment from academics. All three stakeholders are linked and the actions of one group affect the others.

6.6 How can stakeholder satisfaction be achieved?

Stakeholders need to work together, talk and listen to one another. This way, stakeholder satisfaction can be improved. There have been large shifts in stakeholder satisfaction over the last five years in listening to students and moving toward better learning and teaching outcomes (Curtis et al, 2014; Poon, 2016). Although nothing may be done in the short term about program delivery and course content, it is possible that even these can change given time. The data collected in this research from property HE students enabled the development of a specific services marketing model. The model identified critical incidents that occurred during students’ HE experiences (figures 28, 29 and 30). These incidents, both positive and negative, led to changes in student expectation towards, either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, with regard to their HE experience, at the time of completing the questionnaire.

Expectation is extremely important in service delivery, and like all other service encounters the three major stakeholders for property HE come to the arena already holding their expectations (Lovelock & Wright, 1999). With regard to the student stakeholder, the area of learning and teaching is where they have most of their HE experiences. The model identifies
five gaps in a typical HE experience and the specific gaps and their relative importance in the students’ experiences is discussed in chapter 5. When data from students was analysed, it showed the most important gap for both positive and negative incidents to be Gap 2. This is the gap between the perceptions of the HE experience, and the learning and teaching specifications. Fifty-three per cent of positive comments and 46 per cent of negative comments, from students fell into this gap. On the surface this may seem a contradiction, but the data comes from 10 universities and service experiences differ from person to person and university to university; that is the nature of a service. If a university is keen to improve its student satisfaction scores, not only should it look to the delivery of learning and teaching (Gap 3), but it needs to address the inconsistencies in the delivery of Gap 2 services: learning and teaching specifications. This is the area most commented about in the data, and it is also the area where students first come in contact with their HE experience. Administrative obstacles belong in this category, such as: rude and unhelpful staff; poor enrolment and timetabling processes; out-dated facilities, IT and program outlines; inappropriate and out-of-date course materials and assessment; and class size. It is in this area that universities can start to make a difference to the HE student experience.

6.6.1 What can be done to improve stakeholder expectations?

It may be that too little effort has been made in this area in the past. A large part of the problem is that the three stakeholders are operating in a vacuum and only see their own points of view. On the whole, students commence university with unrealistic expectations, and this could be handled very early in their learning experience so that they gain a more realistic idea of what university really entails. Academics may have unrealistic expectations of students because they live in the past and expect them to behave at university as they did. People in industry generally have unrealistic expectations of graduates and property programs in general, mainly because they have forgotten what it is like to be new at something. They have forgotten the time when they knew nothing about the property industry and they constantly hark back to when they were at university, instead of accepting that all things change. Regular gatherings of all parties might help with these situations, but perhaps some people will always have unrealistic expectations about things and there is nothing that we can do about that but work on the majority.
6.7 What is the role of property education, past, present and future?

Property education in Australia developed in the latter half of the twentieth century. The first group of academics were largely practitioners, and through them not only were university-level programs developed, but also close links to the key professional bodies, now the Australian Property Institute (API) and later The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Academics have been, over time, well represented as committee members and board members of the API. Graeme Martin, from what is now the University of South Australia was a National President, as was Graheme Kroll from the University of Queensland; James Baxter from RMIT was a Divisional President. Academics across the country have traditionally been active on almost all of the Institute’s committees. Since the establishment of RICS in Oceania, academics have similarly played an active role in its committee and governance structure. The nature of academic involvement in the professional body life, and the appreciation of that, is reflected in the awards presented to academics. Many academics have received the API’s SF Whittington Award for meritorious and significant contribution to the Valuation and Land Economy professions; many have been honoured with Life Fellowships. Likewise RICS have a Lifetime Achievement Award recently presented to Professor Deborah Levy in Auckland, NZ.

There has, however, been a generational shift over the last two decades as most of the pioneers have retired and been replaced by younger people with higher level qualifications and different experience, and at the same time universities have changed their own focus in terms of staff recruitment and development. Doctoral degrees have become the norm, as has a strong research profile and the capacity to attract or bring solid research grants (Boydell, 2007). This became very clear during the data gathering for this research, where the focus on meaningful research had a much stronger emphasis than professional body involvement. Some of the research finds its way to presentations at various Real Estate Society forums around the globe; other research may have a more practical focus and is published in various places. To a large extent the paradigm shift has also meant that the practical programs run at universities and placement programs have now devolved to the professional bodies and practitioners, with various rates of success. This became very clear in terms of past and present student responses, and also in the feedback from senior practitioners.

This history has not been a key focus for this research, nor has the matter of how future property professionals will gain the key practical attributes needed for professional
designations within property professional bodies. The field provides a rich area of potential future research, to capture not only the broader history of property education, but importantly how professional bodies might approach the question of practical experience, and what it might mean for those graduating with a property degree.

This is not a particularly different scenario from that already faced by other disciplines, such as accounting or law, during the course of the twentieth century. What has made property programs different is the manner in which the academic programs developed, late in the twentieth century. Also the group of long serving academics that developed them, and who also had very strong ties with the professional body. The practical focus favoured by the pioneering academics has now been replaced by more academic structures for various reasons, including cost. Whether or not the professional bodies have proactively reacted to the change, and whether the universities have properly capitalised on what was once a strong relationship with both professional bodies and employers is a moot point. A number of senior Australian academics have written papers and given keynote addresses concerning the conflicts underlying current HE property education in Australia particularly between two of the stakeholders (industry and the universities) and there is no doubt that change needs to occur, if these degree programs can grow and develop (Boyd, 2010; Boydell, 2007; Newell, 2007; Parker, 2012; Hefferan, 2011).

6.7.1 Strategies for the future
A summary of the recommendation and strategies these senior academics have outlined for the future are:

- Many property professional have little ongoing contact with property professionals and this must change, as the curricula are vocationally focused and students expect practical components within their studies.
- Academics need to take advantage of technology and especially the opportunities available via blended learning and virtual spaces (Boyd, 2010).
- There is a need for more flexibility of employment for academics with fractional appointments to overcome the lack of current industry experience within current property staff.
- Salary supplementation needs to occur for property academics to compete with industry and to attract new academic staff from industry.
More flexibility from universities with regard to consulting and other outside work undertaken by academics.

Naming rights to industry for joint programs.

Emphasis is switching from applied research to funded research and there are a limited number of recognized property research journals.

There is a mismatch in expectation between universities and accrediting bodies as the focus switches to research, rather than professional experience.

Academics must be careful that they do not simply teach what advisory boards and accrediting bodies require (Newell, 2007; Boydell, 2007; Parker, 2012; Hefferan, 2011).

At the same time Boyd (2010) chose to develop an appropriate framework for property students moving into the future:

- There must be professional, sound theoretical knowledge and professional practice standards.
- A high level of engagement by both students and academics
- Extended use of blended learning and
- The learning environment to be supported by enabling systems, practice and partnership.

The reassuring factor for HE property education is that the stakeholders are talking to each other and are aware of changes that need to occur. It is likely that through improved communication the programs will grow and flourish and continue to provide well rounded graduates for the property industry.

6.8 Limitations to the research

This research is positioned to give a cameo of one HE discipline area in Australia, over one specific period of time. However, it encapsulates a situation that could be applied to similar HE programs across Australia, perhaps even in the Western world. There is no argument that the CEQ/AGS census figures are accurate — however, the response rates are often very low and differ widely from university to university, making it very difficult to find accurate statistics concerning student satisfaction for HE property programs in Australia.
This current research involved a population that contained approximately 2200 students; a survey response of 364 students is therefore statistically significant. The survey did not purport to set definitive measures, but was mainly designed to inform a qualitative analysis of what students think of their property programs. The comments respondents gave in the questionnaire are valid across the discipline and represent reasons consistent with similar surveys, conducted on similar groups of students in other disciplines (Douglas & Douglas, 2006; Koulizos, 2006), as mentioned in chapter 2.

Two questionnaires were directed at industry. The first was for those who had graduated five or fewer years ago, and the second was for industry leaders. Although relatively small in size (75 and 95 respondents respectively), both come from a nationwide population. Although the responses to these two questionnaires are interesting and thought provoking, across a population of approximately 10,000 property professionals, the results cannot be considered indicative of the opinions of the industry in general. The selection of respondents for both the graduate questionnaire and the industry questionnaire were not selected using random sampling techniques and therefore the results may be biased. To adequately capture meaningful data concerning industry and graduate feelings towards property HE programs across Australia, a much wider study would be needed. This type of research would also need funding and general industry support to ensure a high participation rate.

6.9 Future Research

HE property education is a topic that will support large quantities of research and as discussed in the previous section, limitations of the research, there is scope for the expansion of many of the areas covered by this research. For example, it would be worthwhile to undertake significant research on the opinions and expectations of the property industry. To do this effectively it needs to be driven by the API and RICS to ensure that there is sufficient support for such an idea.

This research discusses the concepts and identifies a relationship between service failure and student satisfaction, but does not compute a value or determine a causal relationship. This would be possible with future research, but was outside the scope of this research. There is no doubt that there is merit for future research into HE property education, however any meaning research would need to be government or industry funded.
This research has highlighted a view from students, graduates and employers that current teaching and program structures do not necessarily reflect what they want from the universities. How the universities respond to the criticism is an interesting point of research and debate within itself, well worthy of further research.

6.10 Summary

Understandably, the 10 universities studied were probably as concerned as the researcher with the low CEQ/AGS scores, given that federal government funding is now linked to these results. There is no doubt action was taken at the coalface of teaching to bring about the steady improvement in CEQ/AGS scores over recent years. Despite the fact that the majority of graduates are now more than 70 per cent satisfied with their property education, compared to an average of 35 per cent when this research commenced, the responses revealed a mine of information and suggestions for how property HE programs could be improved. Likewise, the student data collected in this research presents a wealth of comments about problems students would like to see resolved.

When customer (student) satisfaction is examined and gaps are found in the reported experiences, the individual problems may be addressed and even rectified or the client compensated; but rarely does the intrinsic process change and the errors in service delivery (the negative critical incidents) continue. The same problems continue to be raised as each successive group of students is questioned. Over a three- or four-year period, and at 10 different universities, much the same problems recur. Much research has been undertaken in an attempt to determine the level of satisfaction for HE students with their educational experience. Longitudinally, very little has changed over the last 20 years. Various strategies have been adopted and student satisfaction has improved over this period, but never by very much. Without proactive work on identification and rectification of the services gaps at each institution, it probably never will. One hundred per cent student satisfaction may be possible for individual classes and individual academics; however, this is a rarity. Satisfaction is not the primary focus of students; their focus is on gaining a degree. This is their reason for attending university. Students persist not so the experience improves, but so they achieve the qualification they signed up for. They have become cynical about surveys and questionnaires. They fill them out, give their opinions and they believe very little changes (Douglas & Douglas, 2006).
HE is more than just services marketing, it is relationship marketing. Although there are classrooms, online materials, textbooks and so on, the predominant experience is between the students, their administrators and lecturers. Like all interactions between humans, some is positive and some is negative. Students may relate well to one lecturer and not another. Lecturers may have an excellent group of students to work with one semester and not the next. It is possible that we have reached the limits of how student satisfaction can be managed and improved without intrinsic changes to the way the programs are delivered. It may be time to evaluate the process and accept that despite the best efforts of well-intentioned university personnel, this is as good as it is going to get. The strategies that many universities put in place such as peer review for promotion, student satisfaction surveys and teaching awards, need to be continued, but perhaps this is realistically a maintenance program, rather than an ever-improving phenomenon.

A new slant on the student satisfaction issue would be to accept that student dissatisfaction is always present and instead of asking what students need, spend time offering strategic suggestions to improve the student experience and accept that:

- some lecturers are boring and administrative staff abrupt and try to offset this;
- some assessment and course content is inappropriate, vague and full of errors, and try and manage this; and
- human error occurs and enable strategies to combat this.

We may learn from the data the following:

- Students appreciate lecturers who care, are passionate about their subject matter, are organised and clear in their information, and are friendly and approachable;
- Students appreciate the opportunity to network with other students and industry;
- Students expect and enjoy industry involvement, site visits and practical application;
- Students want to engage with industry and get a good, high-paying job in the property industry;
- Students expect to undertake work experience and are extremely disappointed if this does not eventuate;
- Students want no irrelevant filler subjects, because they are very aware they are paying a lot of money for their education; and
• Students want to complete their degree in three years or less.

These are all grievances that could be discussed between all three stakeholder groups. However, it is very important that universities develop strategies for addressing the often unrealistic expectations held by both students and industry. The relationship model developed in this research highlighted the first gap in a student experience as an expectation gap. Perhaps one of the solutions to the low student satisfaction problem might be minimised by addressing prospective students’ expectations and ensuring they are realistic. Many universities try to address this during Orientation, but often this is too late. Programs that have higher student satisfaction than property programs, such as communications, journalism and industrial design, have interviews and folio requirements. Perhaps some introductory experiences could be beneficial while prospective students are still at secondary school. Such a program is being trialled during 2018 with students from a small selection of secondary schools in Melbourne undertaking a university subject (course). Other similar schemes need to be discussed and trialled in an effort to ensure prospective students are better informed and hold realistic expectations of what they are embarking on.

There is also no doubt that employment rates for graduates contribute to the overall satisfaction scores in the CEQ/AGS. The first of the higher numbers of enrolled students will graduate at the end of 2016, and only then will it be seen if industry can absorb increased graduate numbers. It is probably true that as university fees grow higher, student demands will grow along with them. It is a normal expectation that you will receive value for money and when there are no fees, or very low fees, students may have been prepared to accept flexibility in delivery and conditions. Likewise, as students’ work requirements increase and we see the large student numbers for HE, demands from the students could change. Undergraduate university is often no longer a place where academics and students debate important topics. This has become the realm of postgraduate education, where the student will undertake the extra reading and be prepared to discuss and formulate. The modern HE student, on the whole, has no time for this and they value academics who make it clear what they expect and who make their teaching relevant and interesting.

If we compare what students are saying with graduate responses, there is not a lot of difference. On the whole, both groups are critical of property HE programs in Australia. Students across all universities decry boring and disorganised lecturers, negative administrative experiences, and other poor process factors; rarely do they mention the good
ones. This may be because people are more likely to remember negative experiences before positive ones. Universities must listen to their stakeholders if they wish to compete and stay viable as HE institutions in the increasingly competitive HE arena. In the pursuit of stakeholder satisfaction, it is important to look at both sides of the situation. Rather than place all the effort on trying to increase satisfaction, energy might be better spent trying to remove dissatisfaction. A strategy is needed by the universities that includes both dissatisfaction removal and satisfaction increase.

For their part, students appear to be more interested in a ‘capsule education’ – meeting the holistic objectives outlined by program coordinators (Davis, 2012). Universities implementing Commonwealth funding strategies have become process driven, with learning and teaching becoming important parts of overall expectations of academic staff. A looming problem for HE property programs is the difficulty of obtaining high quality research opportunities which is also a necessary component of Commonwealth funding. Research for disciplines such as property often struggle to find meaningful research because much that is undertaken is produced by the industry itself, as a necessary component of their respective business portfolios. Without a substantial research base, property disciplines will struggle to survive in this new industry age, and it is possible property programs in HE will be absorbed into other disciplines and that higher degrees, such as Masters, may become the delivery platform of the future.

The future of property HE can only be improved if stakeholders work together and talk through all viable options. A start would be for the 10 universities to individually examine their Gap 2 learning and teaching specifications, and also Gap 4, communication, in an endeavour to improve the student experience. Most universities have steps in place to improve Gap 3 components of learning and teaching delivery. However, teachers come and go, and some of the delivery experiences for students are rewarding while others are not; this will probably always be the case. By making improvements to the other processes, discussed in Gaps 2 and 4, permanent improvements in stakeholder satisfaction can be achieved.
References


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Appendix A Course Experience Survey
Appendix B Student Engagement Questionnaire (AUSSE)

Item stem Response options

In your experience at your institution during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?
- Asked questions or contributed to discussions in class or online
- Sought advice from academic staff
- Made a class or online presentation
- Worked hard to master difficult content
- Prepared two or more drafts of an assignment before handing it in
- Used library resources on campus or online
- Worked on an essay or assignment that required integrating ideas or information from various sources
- Used student learning support services
- Blended academic learning with workplace experience
- Included diverse perspectives (e.g. different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or written assignments
- Came to class having completed readings or assignments
- Kept up to date with your studies
- Worked with other students on projects during class
- Worked with other students outside class to prepare assignments
- Put together ideas or concepts from different subjects when completing assignments or during class discussions
- Tutored or taught other university students (paid or voluntary)
- Participated in a community-based project (e.g. volunteering) as part of your study
- Used an online learning system to discuss or complete an assignment
- Used email or a forum to communicate with teaching staff
- Discussed your grades or assignments with teaching staff
- Talked about your career plans with teaching staff or advisors
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with teaching staff outside class
- Received prompt written or oral feedback from teachers/tutors on your academic performance
- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet a teacher's/tutor's standards or expectations
- Worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework (e.g. students, family members, co-workers, etc.)
- Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside class (e.g. students, family members, co-workers, etc.)
- Had conversations with students of a different ethnic group than your own
- Had conversations with students who are very different to you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values

1 Never  
2 Sometimes  
3 Often  
4 Very often

During the current academic year, how much has your coursework emphasised the following intellectual activities?

- **Memorising** facts, ideas or methods from your subjects and readings
- **Analysing** the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components
- **Synthesising and organising** ideas, information or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
- **Making judgements** about the value of information, arguments or methods, such as examining how other gather and interpret data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions
- **Applying** theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations

1 Very little  
2 Some  
3 Quite a bit  
4 Very much

In a typical week, how many exercises, lab reports, problem sets and tutorial questions do you complete?

- Number of pieces of work that take one hour or less to complete
- Number of pieces of work that take more than one hour to complete

1 None
During the current academic year, about how much reading and writing have you done?

- Number of assigned textbooks, books or book-length packs of subject readings
- Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment
- Number of written assignments of fewer than 1,000 words
- Number of written assignments of between 1,000 and 5,000 words
- Number of written assignments of more than 5,000 words

1 None
2 1 to 4
3 5 to 10
4 11 to 20
5 More than 20

Which box best represents the extent to which your examinations during the current academic year have challenged you to do your best work?

1 Very little
2 2
3 3
4 4
5 5
6 6
7 Very much

During the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?

- Attended an art exhibition, play, dance, music, theatre or other performance
- Exercised or participated in physical fitness activities
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- Improved knowledge and skills that will contribute to your
employability
- Developed communication skills relevant to your discipline
- Explored how to apply your learning in the workplace
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
- Spent time keeping your resume up-to-date
- Thought about how present yourself to potential employers
- Explored where to look for jobs relevant to your interests
- Used networking to source information on job opportunities
- Set career development goals and plans
1 Never
2 Sometimes
3 Often
4 Very often
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?
- Practicum, internship, fieldwork or clinical placement
- Industry placement or work experience
- Community service or volunteer work
- Participate in a study group or learning community
- Work on a research project with a staff member outside of coursework requirements
- Study a foreign language
- Study abroad or student exchange
- Culminating final-year experience (e.g. honours thesis, capstone project, comprehensive exam, etc.)
- Independent study or self-designed major
- Consult a university careers service for advice
- Hold a leadership position in a university group or the community
1 Do not know about
2 Have not decided
3 Do not plan to do
4 Plan to do
5 Done
Which of these boxes best represent the quality of your relationships with people at your institution?
- Relationships with other students
  1 Unfriendly, unsupportive, sense of alienation
  2 2
  3 3
  4 4
  5 5
  6 6
  7 Friendly, supportive, sense of belonging

Which of these boxes best represent the quality of your relationships with people at your institution?
- Relationships with teaching staff
  1 Unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic
  2 2
  3 3
  4 4

Item stem Response options
  5 5
  6 6
  7 Available, helpful, sympathetic

Which of these boxes best represent the quality of your relationships with people at your institution?
- Relationships with administrative personnel
  1 Unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid
  2 2
  3 3
  4 4
  5 5
  6 6
  7 Helpful, considerate, flexible

Which of these boxes best represent the quality of your relationships with people at your institution?
- Relationships with student support services
  1 Unfriendly, unavailable, unsympathetic
  2 2
  3 3
  4 4
  5 5
  6 6
  7 Friendly, available, sympathetic

About how many hours do you spend in a typical seven-day week doing each of the following? Leave blank if the item does not apply.
- Preparing for class (e.g. studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, analysing data, rehearsing and other academic activities)
- Working for pay on campus
- Working for pay off campus
- Participating in extracurricular activities (e.g. organisations, campus publications, student associations, clubs and societies, sports, etc.)
- Relaxing and socialising (e.g. watching TV, partying, etc.)
- Providing care for dependents living with you (e.g. parents, children, spouse, etc.)
- Managing personal business (e.g. housework, shopping exercise, health needs, etc.)
- Travelling to campus (e.g. driving, walking, etc.)
- Being on campus, including time spent in class
- Being on campus, excluding time spent in class
  1 None
  2 1 to 5
  3 6 to 10
  4 11 to 15
  5 16 to 20
  6 21 to 25
  7 26 to 30
  8 Over 30

If you are working for pay, how much is this work related to your field of study? 1 Not at all
  2 Very little
  3 Some
To what extent does your institution emphasise each of the following?
- Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work
- Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social and ethnic backgrounds
- Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work, family, etc.)
- Providing the support you need to socialise
- Attending campus events and activities (e.g. special speakers, cultural performances, sporting events, etc.)
- Using computers in academic work

1 Very little
2 Some
3 Quite a bit
4 Very much

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?
- Acquiring a broad general education
- Acquiring job-related or work-related knowledge and skills
- Writing clearly and effectively
- Speaking clearly and effectively
- Thinking critically and analytically
- Analysing quantitative problems
- Using computing and information technology
- Working effectively with others
- Voting informedly in local, state or national elections
- Learning effectively on your own
- Understanding yourself
- Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds

1 Very little
2 Some
3 Quite a bit
4 Very much
Item stem Response options
- Solving complex, real-world problems
- Developing a personal code of values and ethics
- Contributing to the welfare of your community
- Securing relevant work after graduation

In this academic year have you seriously considered leaving your current institution? Mark all that apply.
- No, I have not considered a change
- Yes, please select reason
  1 Selected
  2 Not selected
- Academic exchange
- Academic support
- Administrative support
- Boredom/lack of interest
- Career prospects
- Change of direction
- Commuting difficulties
- Difficulty paying fees
- Difficulty with workload
- Family responsibilities
- Financial difficulties
- Gap year/deferral
- Government assistance
- Graduating
- Health or stress
- Institution reputation
- Moving residence
- Need a break
- Need to do paid work
- Other opportunities
- Paid work responsibilities
- Personal reasons
- Quality concerns
- Received other offer
- Social reasons
- Standards too high
- Study/life balance
- Travel or tourism
- Other: Please specify
  1 Selected
  2 Not selected

<ONLY SHOWN IF STUDENT SELECTED 'Yes, please select reason' IN PREVIOUS ITEM>
What are your plans for next year? Mark all that apply.
- Continue with current study
- Shift to another university
- Move to vocational education and training
- Leave before finishing qualification
- Change to another qualification
- Leave having completed qualification
- Leave to do paid work
- Leave to take time off
  1 Selected
  2 Not selected

Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advice that you have received at your institution?
  1 Poor
  2 Fair
  3 Good
  4 Excellent

How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? 1 Poor
  2 Fair
  3 Good
  4 Excellent

If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?
  1 Definitely no
  2 Probably no
  3 Probably yes
  4 Definitely yes
Are you male or female? 
1 Male
2 Female
Where has your study been mainly based in the current academic year? 
1 On one or more campuses
2 Mix of external/distance and oncampus
3 External/distance

Item stem Response options
In what year did you first start university? 
0 Before 2007
1 2007
2 2008
3 2009
4 2010
5 2011
How many years of your qualification have you completed? 
1 None, in first year
2 One year
3 Two years
4 Three years
5 More than three years
Since starting at university, have you been enrolled mainly part time or full time?
1 Part time
2 Full time
What is your major area of study (e.g. accounting, primary education; psychology, law)?
Open-ended
What is your student identification number? Please write in the following box.
No individual is identified in any analyses or reports.
Open-ended
Do you have a government funded university place (e.g. HECS, CSP, NZ Student Loan Scheme)?
1 No
2 Yes
In the current academic year have you received any direct financial payments from the government?
1 No
2 Yes
In the current academic year, have you received any financial assistance from
your university (e.g. scholarships, loans, stipends, etc.)?
1 No
2 Yes
Which category best represents your average overall grade so far? 1 No results
2 0 to 49
3 50 to 54
4 55 to 59
5 60 to 64
6 65 to 69
7 70 to 74
8 75 to 79
9 80 to 84
10 85 to 89
11 90 to 94
12 95 to 100
Are you a permanent resident or citizen of either Australia or New Zealand? 1 No
2 Yes
What is your country of permanent residence? Open-ended
What is the main language you speak in your home? 1 English
2 Language other than English
What is the highest level of education completed by your parents? Mark one box per row.
- Father
- Mother
1 No school or primary school
2 Some or all of secondary school
3 Vocational certificate or diploma
4 Undergraduate university degree or diploma
5 Postgraduate university degree or diploma
6 Not sure
What is your home postcode and locality/suburb? Write postcode opposite and locality/suburb below.
Open-ended
Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin? 1 No
Are you of Maori descent? 1 No
2 Yes

Are you of Pasifika (Pacific Island) descent? 1 No
2 Yes

How old are you in years? Open-ended

Do you consider yourself to have a disability, impairment or long-term condition?
1 No
2 Yes

How much of your study do you do online? 1 None
2 About a quarter
3 About half
4 All or nearly all

Which of the following describes your current living arrangement? Select the option that best applies to you.
1 On campus in a university college or hall of residence
2 Off campus student accommodation
3 Living with friends or in a share house
4 Living with parents or guardians
5 Living by yourself
6 Living with a partner or children
7 Other

What are the BEST ASPECTS of how your university engages students in learning?
Open-ended

What could be done to IMPROVE how your university engages students? Open-ended
Appendix C SERVPEX Questionnaire

Table AI Questionnaire items

1. Modern appeal of the aircraft
2. Visual attractiveness of aircraft
3. Appearance of the employees
4. Visual attractiveness of the materials related to the airline's services (tickets, in-flight magazines, security instructions)
5. Fulfilment of promises
6. Employees' interest in solving passenger problems
7. Flight's punctuality
8. Assurance that the luggage will reach the destination
9. Handling of the luggage
10. Speed of the service offered
11. Willingness of employees to attend passengers
12. Willingness of the employees to respond to the passengers' questions
13. Level of communication to the passengers regarding unusual circumstances and unexpected occurrences on flight
14. Degree of trust transmitted to the passengers by employees
15. Kindness of employees
16. Level of knowledge of employees in responding to questions of the clients
17. Communication of security procedures
18. Clear identification of the emergency equipment
19. Individualized attention provided to passengers
20. Convenience of flight schedules
21. Cordiality and kindness of employees
22. Searching for the best for the passenger
23. Understanding of the specific needs of the passengers
24. Utilization of an understandable terminology whenever attending the passenger
26. Comfort of airplanes (seats, corridors, hand luggage set)
27. Overall level of satisfaction
28. Assessment of the service received in relation to expectations
29. Comparison with ideal company
(Source: Robledo, 2001)
Appendix D SERVQUAL Education Questionnaire

B1 The institution has up-to-date equipment
B2 The institution’s physical facilities are visually appealing
B3 The institution’s employees are well dressed and appear neat
B4 The appearance of the physical facilities of the institution is in line with the type of service provided
B5 When the institution promises to do something by certain time, it does so
B6 The institution is sympathetic and reassuring
B7 When you have problems, the institution is dependable
B8 The institution provides its services at the time it promises to do so
B9 The institution keeps its records accurately
B10 The institution does not tell its students exactly when services will be performed
B11 You do not receive prompt service from the institution’s employees
B12 Employees of the institution are not always willing to help students
B13 Employees of the institution are too busy to respond to student requests promptly
B14 You can trust employees of the institution
B15 You can feel safe in your transaction with the institution’s employees
B16 Employees of the institution are polite
B17 Employees get adequate support from the institution to do their jobs well
B18 The institution does not give you individual attention
B19 Employees of the institution do not give you personal attention
B20 Employees of the institution do not know what your needs are
B21 The institution does not have your best interests at heart
B22 The institution does not have operating hours convenient to all

(Source: Firdaus Abdullah, 2005)
Appendix E HEdPERF Questionnaire

C1 Academic staff have the knowledge to answer my questions relating to the course content
C2 Academic staff deal with me in a caring and courteous manner
C3 Academic staff are never too busy to respond to my request for assistance
C4 When I have a problem, academic staff show a sincere interest in solving it
C5 Academic staff show positive attitude towards students
C6 Academic staff communicate well in the classroom
C7 Academic staff provide feedback about my progress
C8 Academic staff allocate sufficient and convenient time for consultation
C9 The institution has a professional appearance/image
C10 The hostel facilities and equipment are adequate and necessary
C11 Academic facilities are adequate and necessary
C12 The institution runs excellent quality programmes
C13 Recreational facilities are adequate and necessary
C14 Class sizes are kept to minimum to allow personal attention
C15 The institution offers a wide range of programmes with various specialisations
C16 The institution offers programmes with flexible syllabus and structure
C17 The institution has an ideal location with excellent campus layout and appearance
C18 The institution offers highly reputable programmes
C19 Academic staff are highly educated and experienced in their respective field
C20 The institution’s graduates are easily employable
C21 When I have a problem, administrative staff show a sincere interest in solving it
C22 Administrative staff provide caring and individual attention
C23 Inquiries/complaints are dealt with efficiently and promptly
C24 Administrative staff are never too busy to respond to a request for assistance
C25 Administration offices keep accurate and retrievable records
C26 When the staff promise to do something by a certain time, they do so
C27 The opening hours of administrative offices are personally convenient for me
C28 Administrative staff show positive work attitude towards students
C29 Administrative staff communicate well with students
C30 Administrative staff have good knowledge of the systems/procedures
C31 I feel secure and confident in my dealings with this institution
C32 The institution provides services within reasonable/expected time frame
C33 Students are treated equally and with respect by the staff
C34 Students are given fair amount of freedom
C35 The staff respect my confidentiality when I disclosed information to them
C36 The staff ensure that they are easily contacted by telephone
C37 The institution operates an excellent counselling services
C38 Health services are adequate and necessary
C39 The institution encourages and promotes the setting up of Student’s Union
C40 The institution values feedback from students to improve service performance
C41 The institution has a standardised and simple
(Source: Firdaus Abdullah, 2006)
Appendix F Ten Years of Course Experience Questionnaires

Ten Years of Course Experience Questionnaires (CEQ/AGS) for Australian Public Universities teaching Property Undergraduate Programs

**Good teaching Score (GTS)** (expressed as a percentage)

Ten year CEQ/AGS Property HE programs in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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Ten Years of Property HE programs CEQ/AGS

**Overall Graduate Satisfaction** (expressed as a percentage)

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### Ten years CEQ/AGS Property HE programs

#### Percentage Full-time Employment of graduates

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Ten years of CEQ/AGS property HE programs

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Appendix G Focus Group sheets for Property undergraduate students

With regard to the Property degree you are undertaking and your university experience please answer the following questions.

1. **What were your expectations of yourself at the start of your degree?**
   List as many items as you wish in the space provided and then rank it in degree of importance to you, from 1 being of low importance, to 5 being very important. Any order for your answers are fine.

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   3  4  5

2. **If you were brutally honest with yourself, how have you performed against these expectations?**

3. **Why have you over/under achieved on these expectations?**

4a. **What did you expect from your peers (other students)?**

4b. **How has your experience measured up to your expectations (give examples)?**
5a. What did you expect from your lecturers?

5b. How has your experience measured up to your expectations (give examples)?

6a. What did you expect from your university course (program)?

6b. How has your experience measured up to your expectations (give examples)?

7a. What did you expect from the University?

7b. How has your experience measured up to your expectations (give examples)?

8. What have been the five (5) best things about your university experience?
   Rank them in order of importance to you, with 1 not important, to 5 very important.
   .........................................................................................................................1  2
   3  4  5
   .........................................................................................................................1
   2  3  4  5
   .........................................................................................................................1
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   .........................................................................................................................1
   2  3  4  5
   .........................................................................................................................1
   2  3  4  5

9. What have been the five worst things about your university experience?
   Rank them in order of importance to you, with 1 not important to 5 very important.
Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your Property Course (Program)?

Thank you for responding to my questions.
Appendix H Focus Group sheets for Property undergraduate students

With regard to the Property degree you are undertaking and your university experience please answer the following questions.

4. **What were your expectations of yourself at the start of your degree?**
   List as many items as you wish in the space provided and then rank it in importance to you, from 1 being of low importance, to 5 being very important. Any order for your answers are fine.

   …………………………………………………………………………….. 1 2
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   …………………………………………………………………………….. 1 2

5. **If you were brutally honest with yourself, how have you performed against these expectations and what experiences contributed to your performance?**

3a. What did you expect from your peers (other students)?

3b. How has your experience measured up to your expectations (give examples)?

4a. What did you expect from your lecturers?

4b. How has your experience measured up to your expectations (give examples)?
5. What have been the five (5) best things about your university experience?
   Rank them in order of importance to you, with 1 not important, to 5 very important.
   .........................................................................................................................1  2
   3  4  5
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   2  3  4  5
   .........................................................................................................................1
   2  3  4  5
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6. What have been the five worst things about your university experience?
   Rank them in order of importance to you, with 1 not important to 5 very important.
   .........................................................................................................................1  2
   3  4  5
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7. What would it take for you to be satisfied with your Property degree?

   Thank you for responding to my questions
Appendix I Student Questionnaire

This research aims to better understand what makes students satisfied with their study programs. It is expected that the results will assist in improving program quality in the future. In this exercise I am asking you to evaluate your property/valuation university program that you are currently enrolled in. This survey forms part of a PhD study being undertaken into an examination of Property education in Australia.

What year level are you currently enrolled in?
Which University are you attending?
How satisfied are you with your property/Valuation program?
If you answered any level less than over 80% satisfied for the above question, is there anything you can tell me that will make you more satisfied with your program?
Feel free to make as many suggestions as you like.
Qualtrics Survey Software
https://rmit.asia.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurvey...

1 of 3 27/06/2014 7:01

What are the five best things about your Property program?

What are the five worst things about your Property program?

How important is it for you that you Property program contains the following components? (This is regardless of whether these things are currently in your Property program.)

- Formal Work Experience
- Field trips/Practical Work
- Case Studies
- Ability to specialise

Extremely Important
Very Important
Neither Important nor Unimportant
Very unimportant
Not at all important

Please tell me a little about yourself.
Qualtrics Survey Software
https://rmit.asia.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurvey...

2 of 3 27/06/2014 7:01

Under 20
20 - 24
25 - 29
30 - 34
Over 35
Part-time
Full-time
Yes
No
Property Industry
Non-property industry
Part-time
Full-time
Yes
No

What age group do you belong to?
Are you a Part-time or Full-time student?
Are you working during your study?
If Yes, please indicate the area and amount of time in the section below.
Is it your intention to join a Property professional body such as API, RICS or other? If not, please explain why not?
Is there anything that you could share that you think might provide me with a better understanding of what makes students really happy – or conversely, really unhappy – with their property and valuation studies?

Qualtrics Survey Software
https://rmit.asia.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurvey...
3 of 3 27/06/2014 7:01
Appendix J Questionnaires for Property Graduates

I am undertaking my PhD into stakeholder satisfaction with Property programs in Australia and as past students you are in the best place to be able to tell me what worked and what did not work. I would be very grateful if you could fill out the following questionnaire. It should only take you 10 – 15 minutes and returning it to me by email will make me very happy and may if create some changes for future students.

With regard to the Property degree you completed within the last five years and your university experience please answer the following questions.

6. What were your expectations of yourself at the start of your degree?
   List as many items as you wish in the space provided and then rank it in importance to you, from 1 being of low importance, to 5 being very important. Any order for your answers are fine.
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 1  2
   3  4  5
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   3  4  5
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 1  2
   3  4  5
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 1  2
   3  4  5

7. If you were brutally honest with yourself, how did you performed against these expectations and what experiences contributed to your performance?

8. What were the five (5) best things about your university experience?
   Rank them in order of importance to you, with 1 not important, to 5 very important.
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………1  2
   3  4  5
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………1
   2  3  4  5
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………1
   2  3  4  5
9. What were the five worst things about your university experience?  
Rank them in order of importance to you, with 1 not important to 5 very important.

2 3 4 5

10. How satisfied were you with your Property Degree? Circle the percentage that most suits your experience.
   
i) 50% or below
   ii) 51 - 60%
   iii) 61 – 70%
   iv) 71 – 80%
   v) 81 – 90%
   vi) 91 – 100%

11. If you circled 80% or less satisfaction, what would it have taken for you to be completely satisfied with your Property degree?

12. How useful has your degree been for your employment?

Thank you for responding to my questions.
Appendix K Graduate Questionnaire

This research is aiming to better understand what makes students satisfied with their study programs. It is expected that the results will assist in improving program quality in the future. In this exercise I am asking you to design a property/valuation program, that you would have been really satisfied with had it been the one in place at the university you studied at.

If you were designing your perfect property program there are a number of variables you could choose.

The first decision to be made is whether Property programs in Australia stay as undergraduate degrees or whether they should be offered via the TAFE institutes or even be postgraduate, after a generic Business, TAFE Advanced Diploma or Degree? The first question addresses this issue and the remaining questions build the rest of the tertiary qualification.

What level of study do you think Property should be?
- Vocational Education Advanced Diploma (TAFE)
- Bachelor Degree
- Postgraduate Degree
- Other (give details)

What length of full-time study would your perfect property program take?
- Two years
- 2.5 years
- Three years
- 3.5 years
- Four years

What type of delivery should it offer?
- Face to face
- On-line
- Blended learning (a mixture of both)

Would your program have: (click as many of these options as you like)?
- Lectures
- Tutorials
- Workshops
- Lectorial type workshops
- Field exercises
- Other (give details)

How frequently would you like your classes?
- Weekly
- Intensely over two weeks
- Intensely over weekends
- A mixture of these
- Other (give details)

What type of contact would you like?
- Three hour classes
- Two hour lecture and one hour tutorial
- 1.5 hour lecture and 1.5 hour tutorial
- One hour lecture and two hour tutorial
- Frequent field trips with supporting classroom activity
- Other (give details)

Which of the following attributes would you value most highly in the people delivering your program?
- Academic qualifications relevant to Property
- Doctoral qualifications relevant to Property
- Senior industry experience and contacts
- Professional body profile
- New graduates
- Older industry experienced people
- Tertiary teaching qualifications

Would your ideal Property program allow you to specialise? For example do more property related subjects if you did not want to be a Valuer and more valuation subjects if you do want to be a Valuer.
Yes
No
Which subject groupings would you include in your Property Program? Click as many of the following subject areas that you like and then tick the list of subjects that follow, for the subject areas you choose
Core Business Subjects (courses)
General property Subjects
General Valuation Subjects
Property related study
Research methods and a minor thesis
Elective studies
Other (give details)
What subjects (courses) would you choose to study within the Core Business units?
Economics
Commercial Law
Property Law
Accounting
Statistics
Advanced Statistics
Management
Marketing
Communication Studies
Other (give details)
What General Property subjects would you include in your Program?
Planning and Development
Property Studies
Property Management
Property Development
Planning and Urban Studies
Property Investment
Financial Analysis
Capital Markets
Urban or Land Economics
Other (give details)
What General Valuation subjects would you include in your Program?
Valuation Principles
Residential Valuation
Statutory valuation (combined rating and compensation
Rating Valuation
Valuation following compulsory acquisition
Urban Valuation
Rural Valuation
Advanced valuation
What Property related subjects would you include in your Program?
Residential Construction
Commercial Construction
Engineering Principles
surveying
Sustainability
Geographic Information Systems
Other (give details)
What research related subjects would you include in your Program?
Research Methods
A Minor Thesis
Professional Writing
Humanities options
Other subjects (courses) give details
What type of Assessment would you choose?
Individual assignment based
Group assignments
Individual assignments and exams
group assignments and exams
Presentations, assignments and exams
Other (give details)
How important is it for your ideal degree to contain the following components?
Extremely
Important Very Important
Neither Important
nor Unimportant Very Unimportant
Not at all
Important
Formal Work Experience
Field trips/Practical Work
Case Studies
Are you able to expand on your thinking with respect to your answers to the above question?
Please tell me a little about yourself.
Male
Female
Nonspecific gender
What age group do you belong to?
20 - 24
25 - 29
30 - 34
35 - 39
Other (give details)
What university did you attend and the year you completed?
What type of work are you doing now? You are able to check more than one option
Valuation
General property or Land economy
Property Management
Agency
Funds Management
Unrelated to the property industry
Other (give details)
Did you work during your study?
Yes
No
If Yes, please indicate the details below.
Property Industry
Non-property industry
Part-time
Full-time
Now you have industry experience are you more or less critical of your Property program, as you were when you immediately left?
More critical (explain)
less critical (explain)
Feel much the same (explain)
Is there anything that you could share that you think might provide me with a better understanding of what makes students really happy – or conversely, really unhappy – with their property and valuation studies?
Appendix I Questions for Industry

1. What are your expectations of a graduate?
2. How do they perform?
3. What are the best things about recent employees?

4. What are the worst things about them?

5. How would you describe your satisfaction with the level of university teaching for Property subjects at the moment?
6. What do you think the students should be taught at university?

7. Do you think that formal work experience is a worthwhile component of property education?

8. ? Yes No If yes, can you qualify this?

9. What changes in the employment landscape do you see in the foreseeable future?

10. What Industry involvement do you think there should be with the universities, academic staff and students?
Appendix M Industry Questionnaire

This research aims to better understand what makes students satisfied with their study programs. It is expected that the results will assist in improving program quality in the future. In this exercise I am asking you to evaluate your experiences with Property/Valuation graduates. This survey forms part of a PhD study being undertaken into an examination of Property education in Australia.

What are your expectations of a graduate?

How do they perform?

What are the best things about recent employees?

What are the worst things about them?

How would you describe your satisfaction with the level of university teaching for Property subjects at the moment?

What do you think the students should be taught at university?

Do you believe a formal work experience program leads to a better quality graduate?

Yes, If Yes can you qualify this in the box below please

No

What changes in the employment landscape do you see in the foreseeable future?

What Industry involvement do you think there should be with the universities, academic staff and students?

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please feel free to mention any other items that concern you in the space below.

Qualtrics Survey Software

https://rmit.asia.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurvey...
Appendix N Questions for Academics

1. What are your expectations of the students?
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

2. What changes would you like to see in your program?
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

3. What are the most difficult things about your position?
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

4. What are the best things about your position?
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

5. How long have you been an academic and at which universities?
   ..............................................................................................................

6. What problems do you see with Property undergraduate education?
   ..............................................................................................................
   ..............................................................................................................

7. Do you believe your students are satisfied with their program?
   ..............................................................................................................

8. Are you consciously taking steps to improve student satisfaction?
   ..............................................................................................................

9. What are your views on student satisfaction?
Appendix O Notice of approval

Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN) Sub-committee of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

Notice of Approval
Date: 17 May 2013
Project number: CHEAN A-2000826-01-13
Project title: Stakeholder expectations of the educational experience in higher education property disciplines
Risk classification: Low Risk
Investigator: Ms Kathryn Robson
Approved: From: 17 May 2013 To: 17 May 2016

I am pleased to advise that your application has been granted ethics approval by the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network as a sub-committee of the RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Terms of approval:
1. Responsibilities of investigator
It is the responsibility of the above investigator/s to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by the CHEAN. Approval is only valid whilst the investigator/s holds a position at RMIT University.

2. Amendments
Approval must be sought from the CHEAN to amend any aspect of a project including approved documents. To apply for an amendment please use the ‘Request for Amendment Form’ that is available on the RMIT website. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from CHEAN.

3. Adverse events
You should notify HREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

4. Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF)
The PICF and any other material used to recruit and inform participants of the project must include the RMIT university logo. The PICF must contain a complaints clause including the project number.

5. Annual reports
Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report. This form can be located online on the human research ethics web page on the RMIT website.

6. Final report
A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the project. CHEAN must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

7. Monitoring
Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by HREC at any time.

8. Retention and storage of data
The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project minimum period of five years.

In any future correspondence please quote the project number and project title.

On behalf of the DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network I wish you well in your research.
Grace Wijnen
Ethics Coordinator
College of Design & Social Context RMIT University
### Appendix P Summary of student best and worst university experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Best Things about property programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lectures/Tut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality of teaching staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer of choice program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well respected by future employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting industry contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property field is diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential earning capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guest lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well informed and involved teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachable mentors and supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People you meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility to study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course requirements are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good student interaction learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interaction and building of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships with my peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many different people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employer of choice opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>full time, but not full time contact hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of course content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The few great lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects gel together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job prospects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interesting topics

It's available external

Being able to undertake it at any pace is great

The on-going relatable assignment

Sustainability courses

Level 8 facilities

Construction

A lot of practical opportunities given
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content is relevant to real world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Property gateway' a great research tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance is not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The diversity of subjects included in the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practical work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online students get good feedback and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Q&amp;A Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively relates to real life situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good learning structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>varied program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to use Moodle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expose to property industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about thinks I didn't imagine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPLICATION OF IDEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trimesters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great lecturers with industry experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communication with lecturer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online unit- I have only done one so far and thought it was fantastic. Very interactive. I will need to wait and see if the other units are the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited by API</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general they want to help and make it fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passes on job adds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In most subjects: good online delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to study online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has real estate in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be done externally with little disadvantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>EASY TO USE PORTAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to train public speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>property practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignments related to real scenarios</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offers connections to property companies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>relevance of tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>learning about structures</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides a good gateway for a job after study</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ability to graduate into a high earning field</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>academics running the courses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interesting</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feasibility work</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>good feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>the teaching staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>teaching staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing it successfully without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate information on occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>changes to more teachers working in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plenty of job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practical assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practical assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lecturers post job offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>length of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student to teacher ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lecturers and tours are property</td>
</tr>
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<td>professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>covers all elements of property sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Worst things about property</td>
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<tr>
<td>programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures &amp; tutorials/workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>can be completed in 2 - 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boring lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures start too early (8.30am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defiantly not enough get togethers!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to make friends in such a large class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the teachers some of them do not try hard enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Load of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad subjects in first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of rigour in tutorial assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the more financial/technical subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seemingly pointless subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A couple of lecturers that are hard to contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>No direct contact for course progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much words on the lecture slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some classes are not timetabled in suitable class rooms even though other rooms are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the lecturers were unorganised and put very little work into preparation. An example of this is going into an exam and the exam paper having mistakes in it (Project Management Concepts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filler Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some lectures say three hours but only go for two hours, so why not change it to a two hour lecture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some subjects require expected knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some lecturer’s hard to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility of class hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of flexibility in class times in earlier years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers not being in the real work force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some irrelevant core business subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As superannuation is a part of every employee's life, there should be subjects on property investment in super</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are not studying full time or externally, you feel very much second class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few tutors/lecturers, little variation in knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No variety in 2nd year class timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistency in how the courses are delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some lecturers drone on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Placements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers trying to trick students in exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doing courses unrelated to property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No aspect on design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way information is set out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need practical learning to be able to understand better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content is dated or relates to overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of feedback on quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been told by other valuers that some of the subjects are irrelevant and not used in the future career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambiguity of Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>property law is difficult to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limited education about future jobs available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workload is inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few teachers are more difficult to connect with than others when assistance is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expensive text books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little interaction with teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mistakes in the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUIZZES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online tutorials with little explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not actually being in a classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some subjects are irrelevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% of the mark is based on exams, yet way more time is put into assignments and exams always drag my marks down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments due all on the same day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work- I have had many problems with group work. I do realise this is not something that can be fixed within the course, but I have worked with many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
people where I have been the sole contributor to the work. Perhaps the introduction of feedback on the groupwork

No exam locations in my area

I had three assignments due with 9000 words on the same date and we had just finished assignments. So if you look at what had to be done over that period per week to have good marks. Ps marks don’t necessary mean you learned something.. any way its was 6 hours of lectuers, 4 hours of reading plus 1 assignment 10 hours inclusive of research. This is 20 hours of almost three working days. I work full time so the quality is poorer because you have to make short cuts.

hurdle exams

Variety between marking standards; i.e referencing etc.

Business Law Tutor

Make it much harder for externals

lack of student based comradoray

Very business focussed.

too many students are enrolled
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boring lecturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boring subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t receive more exemptions from completing my cert IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Enough Group Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Lectures n 1 Workshop in a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long winded lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unnecessary subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some teachers do not seem to have direct recent practical experience or communication skills need to be improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some lecturer teaching styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture spaces/ Rooms we've been allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring lectures are not recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non timely response sometimes regarding course pathway etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less diversity of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation of subjects from major in 1st year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the courses feel like a waste of time e.g. &quot;Professional Communication&quot; and &quot;Professional Property Practice&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much variety in subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable makes it difficult to work around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of feedback on assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the length of program could be condensed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers read off slides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 'development' course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can sometimes be hard to receive direction when something is not understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>干瘪的讲师</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一些教师需要在课程结构上更有序</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>未被高度评价</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>数学科目</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一致性与录制课程或结构的可用性</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>如上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一些IT问题</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>对新协作学习模式/方法的冷淡 —— 只有点&quot;奇特&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>太多与商业相关的课程不相关</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一些不那么互动的讲师</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>刚性</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>选修课程</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>无法与其他学校组合学位</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一些大学发言人的自大</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一些人阅读幻灯片</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Business units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant concepts being taught and tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some lecturers have poor teaching styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little time on quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff - lack of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recorded lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only focus on residential, no real commercial or arg focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics I just can't seem to get my head around the graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes not being able to talk to a lecturer face to face is difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in Lecture Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8am lecturers and 6-8pm lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts difficult to access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group assignments are complex to get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>done especially for online students</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel disconnected at times doing it online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some subjects are unexpectedly intense compared to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i can't get credit from my past study &amp; experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interaction with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude arrogant lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAMMED TIME SCHEDULE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic amount of compulsory readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% hurdle exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades - as stated above it is quiet easy to get good grades, in saying that I have found there is inconsistency in marking, some Tutorial staff are easier and harder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>markers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of group assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to download all my notes in one download not to have to download everything week by week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some subject inequality between online and oncamus students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Law lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much irrelevant theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough property subjects in the first 2 years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>