

Degrees of success: Why you need to consider studying further

Issued by [Vega School](#)

19 Sep 2018

Getting a foot in the door of an agency, business or organisation you'd really love to work for is not always as easy as putting on your Sunday best and flashing the interviewer your brightest, most charming smile. Often, what they're looking for is actually just a tertiary qualification, which is why many young people place more emphasis on obtaining an undergraduate degree.

However, the mistake so many people make is believing that an undergrad qualification is all they need to build a successful and fulfilling career. Most don't even consider the possibility of taking their studies further, and pursuing honours and post-graduate studies. [Vega](#) (a brand of The Independent Institute of Education – [The IIE](#)) conducted a study which found that 95% of its IIE graduates in 2016 found jobs within six months after graduating, which shows why so many young people are opting to complete undergraduate studies alone, and avoid looking into studying further.

“The reality is that, while an undergraduate degree might make you stand out more among other less qualified candidates applying for a job, opting against honours or post-graduate studies robs you of bigger career opportunities, and limits your ability to make a real difference within your industry and the world at large,” says Dr Carla Enslin, Head of Strategy & New Business Development at Vega.

“Because you're focused on a specific area of study, you'll also have the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded people in pursuit of the same or a similar career goal – perhaps you'll join forces to turn an innovative idea into a meaningful, award-winning reality? The possibilities at this stage are endless,” she continues.

Post-graduate studies allow students to delve deeper into their chosen field and gather more in-depth knowledge, where undergraduate studies are designed to introduce you to concepts and new ways of thinking. The learnings gained during post-graduate studies are therefore invaluable, as students develop the mental agility and capacity to make compelling arguments, as well as analyse and conceive meaningful solutions to challenges.

Resourcefulness, interpersonal skills, and practical and logical thinking are just some of the important skills that are honed during honours and postgraduate studies, contributing toward a wider, more all-encompassing view for personal as well as professional improvement.

Is honours or post-graduate studies the right road for me?

The deeper, more meaningful learning and engagement that happens during honours and post-graduate study is rewarding – but only if your interest (and perhaps even passion) for your field of work is genuine. There's no sense choosing to study further because someone told you to – this is when the work can become laborious and demotivating.

Enrol for the post-graduate programme of your choice when you have no doubts that you are genuinely compelled by the complexities and challenges of the field and its relation to the world around you.

For example, you may find that you're naturally inclined towards themes and issues that are relevant to your field, whether it's in current affairs and industry news or even the plot of a new TV series. The ideal post-graduate programme should then enable you to involve yourself in your field of choice to the fullest extent while honing your abilities and skills. It should also expose you to unique opportunities to apply advanced thinking into practice, to work on real-life briefs and projects, ideally participating in trans-disciplinary teams.

Pursuing an honours or post-graduate qualification is about so much more than boosting employability – it enables students to delve deeper than what they were able to do during undergraduate studies, thereby gaining vital skills and perspectives that not only boost their chances of getting that seat at the table, but also contributing something meaningful to their field.

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