

# THE AUSTRALIAN

---

## Overseas student research taken 'out of context'

BERNARD LANE THE AUSTRALIAN FEBRUARY 11, 2014 12:00AM

**TWO Deakin University academics have complained that their research on the labour market experiences of international graduates has been misrepresented.**

The federal Employment Department cited their study when arguing that accountants should be taken off the skilled occupation list, which would make it more difficult for international students to parlay Australian accounting degrees into a skilled migrant visa.

The submission, **reported** (<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/accountant-glut-prompts-skilledmigrant-list-rethink/story-e6frgcjx-1226812384269>) last month by the HES, cited the Deakin study, saying it “indicates that Chinese graduates of Australian and New Zealand universities are experiencing difficulty gaining accounting employment.

“(The study) notes that graduate markets are saturated in both China and Australia”.

The researchers, Jill Blackmore and Cate Gribble, of Deakin’s Centre for Research in Educational Futures and Innovation, said the department had taken their study out of context.

“Our findings are from a qualitative study examining the experiences of international graduates transitioning from university into the Australian labour market in three discipline areas: accounting, engineering and nursing,” they said.

“Our study was not an analysis of the accounting labour market in Australia or in other countries. It involved in-depth interviews with international graduates, employers, industry bodies, university staff and government.”

They said issues emerging from the interviews included the view that “credentials alone” were no guarantee of a job, and that the labour markets in specific fields within these professions were quite different.

“Shortages continue to exist in areas of accounting, engineering and nursing,” they said.

“Many international students embark on their accounting studies in Australia with very high expectations of post study employment, and these may need to be managed.”

The interviews also suggested that “improving the work readiness of international graduates and establishing local networks” would help them find jobs.