

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **IS WESTERN AUSTRALIA THE BEST STUDY LOCATION FOR BUDDING ENGINEERS?**

Perth might be Australia's most isolated city and, with universities and campuses dotted around Western Australia in places like Kalgoorlie and Albany, there's no doubt that the higher education providers in Western Australia operate in a far different environment to east coast metropolitan universities. Nevertheless, Western Australians have never really suffered for their isolation. While results in the 2012 edition of the *Good Universities Guide* (which is now available for purchase) are as mixed for Western Australian universities as they are for New South Wales or Victorian universities, ratings indicate that some Western Australian universities are capitalising on their setting to attain success in the fields of study most relevant to their unique surrounds, most notably within the engineering and technology sector. The five Western Australian universities all rated quite strongly across a variety of categories. 'Teaching Quality', in particular, proved to be a successful area for each of the institutions, with the University of Notre Dame and Edith Cowan University (ECU) rating 5 STARS, and Curtin University, Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia (UWA) not far behind, each attaining scores comparable to or above the national average.

Engineering and technology was uncovered as an area of success for Western Australia universities, with various institutions rating in the top 25 per cent for categories such as 'Getting a Full-Time Job', 'Teaching Quality', 'Generic Skills' and 'Overall Satisfaction'. We asked Professor Parisa Bahri, Dean of the School of Engineering and Energy at Murdoch — which attained 5 STAR ratings across a number of these categories for engineering and technology — what a prospective engineering student should look for in the delivery of a degree: *"There are a number of reasons why our engineering courses have been rated well. Our staff have a strong student focus... and there is excellent cooperation to ensure the degree courses are taught as well as they can be... All of our courses have a strong local industry focus. There is a constant dialogue between us and our industry partners so we know what their graduate needs are and we can tailor our courses accordingly. We also have an internship program which places final year students with our industry partners. Many end up with job offers from these internships. There is a very strong practical focus in our courses in the third and fourth years and clearly our students appreciate that what they learn will be relevant to them when they graduate."*

Furthermore, the guide indicates that starting salaries for engineering graduates in Western Australia are among the best for any graduates in the country; however, there is rising tough competition from Queensland counterparts. Has demand for Western Australian engineering graduates plateaued? We spoke with Professor John Dell, Dean of UWA's Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics to seek his opinion on the issue: *"The continuing success of engineering graduates from The University of Western Australia is not unexpected given the prominent role UWA engineering graduates have played in the State for almost a century. In recent years there is no question that graduate salary outcomes have been supported by a very strong economy, underpinned by a strong resources sector which has attracted many outstanding UWA graduate engineers. However, UWA engineering graduates have developed careers around Australia and around the world based on the quality of their degree, and not simply on the strength of the resources sector. As a result, UWA engineering graduates will continue to enjoy comparatively strong outcomes because their comprehensive theoretical grounding is backed by strong practical industry experience which makes them highly sought-after by employers... With the Western Australian economy likely to remain the strongest in Australia for many years, it is likely that UWA engineering graduates will continue to enjoy success — not only in Western Australia, but anywhere in the world they choose to work."*

As Professor Dell discusses, students who graduate from engineering and technology courses in Western Australia enjoy above-average employment rates due to high industry demand in the state. That said, overall graduate employability in Western Australia does not fare as well, with no Western Australian university placing within the top 20 per cent of all corresponding universities nationally.

As with every state, results for Western Australian universities are diverse and, while engineering persists as an area of strength, other fields of study are not as successful. The 2012 *Guide* shows that, for example, computing and information technology graduates from Western Australia typically struggle to find work after graduation, as opposed to like graduates from New South Wales, who enjoy graduate success either comparable to or above the corresponding national average. While Western Australia's distance from the major east coast universities does not affect the quality of certain courses (and employability of graduates from certain sectors), prospective students would be best advised to look closely at how each Western Australian university performs at a field of study level.

**Media enquiries:** Davorin Vrdoljak, General Manager — Publishing, PH: 03 9627 4859  
Ross White, Education Data Manager, PH: 03 9627 4839

**Book orders:** *The Good Universities Guide* 2012 will be available to the public through newsagents and online at [www.isubscribe.com.au/hobsons](http://www.isubscribe.com.au/hobsons) or by contacting Hobsons on Freecall 1800 682 133.

**Characteristics**

Institution	Non-Govt earnings	Student demand	Research Grants	Research Intensity
CURTIN	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
ECU	★★	★	★★	★
MURDOCH	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★
NOTRE DAME	★		★	★
UWA	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

**Access and Equity**

Institution	Access by Equity group	Gender balance	Indigenous Participation	Entry flexibility	Proportion TAFE credit	Proportion of school leavers
CURTIN	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
ECNH	★★★		★★★	★★★★★		
ECU	★★★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★
MURDOCH	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★
NOTRE DAME	★★	★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★
SAE	★		★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★
TABOR	★★★★★		★★	★★★★★	★	★
UWA	★★★★★	★★	★★★	★	★	★★★★★

**Who's There?**

Institution	Number of Higher Ed Students	Proportion over 25 years	Number of students from abroad	Proportion Part-time	Proportion External	Cultural diversity
CURTIN	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	VERY BIG	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	★★★★★
ECNH	SMALL	VERY HIGH	SMALL	VERY HIGH		★
ECU	BIG	HIGH	BIG	HIGH	HIGH	★★★
MURDOCH	BIG	HIGH	BIG	HIGH	HIGH	★★
NOTRE DAME	SMALL	AVERAGE	SMALL	LOW	VERY LOW	★★
SAE	VERY SMALL	HIGH	SMALL	VERY HIGH		★★
TABOR	VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH	VERY SMALL	VERY HIGH	HIGH	★
UWA	BIG	VERY LOW	BIG	LOW	VERY LOW	★★

**The Educational Experience**

Institution	Staff-student ratio	Staff qualifications	All Graduates : Teaching Quality	All Graduates : Generic Skills	All Graduates: Overall Satisfaction	Domestic Graduates: Teaching Quality	Domestic Graduates: Generic Skills	Domestic Graduates: Overall satisfaction
CURTIN	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★	★★	★★★	★★	★★
ECU	★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
MURDOCH	★★★	★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★
NOTRE DAME		★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
UWA	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

**Graduate Outcomes**

Institution	Work: Starting salary	Work: Getting a job	Work: Positive Outcomes
CURTIN	★★★★★	★	★
ECU	★★	★	★
MURDOCH	★★★★★	★★	★
NOTRE DAME	★★	★★★★★	★★★
UWA	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★