



A stepping stone for postgraduate research? Assessing the place of a one year postgraduate honours degree in the Health Science curriculum

Bridget Kool, Samuel Haysom, David Newcombe and Susan Carter, University of Auckland

ABSTRACT

Research honours degrees provide potential pathways into Masters and Doctorate degrees. Essential to their success is that they provide a sound grounding for novice researchers without taxing supervisors unduly. Our case study is a one-year postgraduate Bachelor Health Science (BHSc) (Hons) degree at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, aimed at attracting high-achieving BHSc graduates to study at an advanced level. This particular programme is not practice focused, but is a training ground for research. The overarching aim of this case study is to explore whether an honours programme provides a sound grounding for further research based postgraduate study. Graduates of the BHSc (Hons) programme (completed 2010 – 2014) and academics at the University of Auckland were invited to take part in online anonymous cross-sectional surveys. A total of 26 graduates and 23 academics completed the surveys. Overall graduates reported they found the programme to be intellectually stimulating (92%; 24/26), motivating (73%; 19/26) and worthwhile (85%; 22/26). Over three-quarters of graduates had gone on to complete further postgraduate study. Academics agreed that the programme was worthwhile (78%; 18/23), and that the programme adequately prepared graduates for future postgraduate study (65%; 15/23). The study gave insights into the challenges, benefits and limitations perceived by academics involved in supervision and graduates completing the programme. Those designing postgraduate honours degrees as researcher training grounds will find this paper useful.

Keywords: honours degrees, postgraduate, research skills, student experience

Introduction

While postgraduate students have a range of choices for further education, entering postgraduate study is a decision that is not taken lightly in the health sciences. For students, supervisors, and curriculum designers, a postgraduate programme must offer distinct advantages that warrant the additional expenditure of time and money. The role of an honours programme is to provide an accelerated pathway to postgraduate training and research (Kiley, Boud, Manathunga, & Cantwell, 2011). While honours programmes differ internationally, in countries such as South Africa, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand (NZ), honours typically represents an additional postgraduate year of research and advanced coursework (Manathunga, Kiley, & Cantwell, 2012). In a postgraduate honours programme, unlike undergraduate programmes, knowledge acquisition becomes less of a focus, and instead the focus is on knowledge creation (Brydon & Flynn, 2014; Manathunga et al., 2012).

The Bachelor Health Sciences (Honours) (BHSc (Hons)) degree at the University of Auckland, NZ, is a one year postgraduate degree aimed at attracting high-achieving BHSc graduates to study at an advanced level. Honours is a separate, and additional, year of study following the three year Bachelor degree (BHSc) - despite the name 'Bachelor of Health Science (Hons)', the programme follows on from the completion of the Bachelors degree and is an early stepping stone towards research study. The aim of the honours programme is to extend students' analytical and communication skills. Additionally it is designed to enhance their understanding of the epistemological underpinning of population health, the discipline that studies factors that affect the wellbeing of entire populations. The programme is unusual for its population health and research focus as most health science programmes are clinically based (e.g. nursing, optometry, physiotherapy). The two-semester (1 year) programme (120 points) comprises the following: (1) four courses (15 points each) including two core courses, one that examines the theoretical concepts of health and, the other course, research methods for health services, and two elective courses that are chosen from the Master of Public Health and Health Sciences schedules; and (2) a dissertation (~18,000 words) (60 points) which is intended to be an entry-point into independent research and is supervised by one or two academics from the School of Population Health.

For entry into the honours programme, students are required to have a B equivalent Grade Point Average (GPA) or higher. However, this grade restriction may not always translate into preparedness for postgraduate research. The undergraduate programmes that focus on the development of postgraduate skills provide a transition into research study and may reduce the pressure for honours students (Schweinsberg & Mcmanus, 2006). Yet, feedback from examiners and supervisors commonly identifies a lack of student preparedness for postgraduate dissertation-based study (Healey, Lannin, Stibbe, & Derounian, 2013; McMichael, 1992; Todd, Bannister, & Clegg, 2004), and as a result, responsibility often falls upon supervisors over the course of the dissertation to bridge deficiencies. As such, the role of the supervisor is crucial for

navigating the student through the unfamiliar territory of postgraduate study (Allan, 2011). It is important that the honours programme provide students the opportunity to obtain the skills and confidence in critical inquiry, research writing, and self-directed study in preparation for future academic pathways.

Generally speaking, the goal of an honours programme is to simultaneously develop the student as an independent researcher and help them to timely completion of a dissertation (Brydon & Flynn, 2014). However previous research has shown that students typically find the transition to postgraduate study difficult, intense and at times overwhelming (Allan, 2011). Although skills gained from honours study are highly relevant, the honours workload can be heavy. For a student who intends to graduate onto further postgraduate study, in particular to a doctoral degree, honours work is accompanied by a steep learning curve as a result of changes in style of learning and writing (Allan, 2011). This makes supervision of honours research a demanding task, performed within a tight time-frame, and arguably undervalued compared to masters and doctoral supervision. Australian research found approximately half of the 45 honours programme coordinators interviewed believed honours supervision was more challenging than doctoral supervision. Contributing factors include the short time frame, lack of potential for joint publication, and uncertainty about the student proceeding with further postgraduate study and continuing as their student (Kiley et al., 2011). Despite these challenges, supervisors at honours level realise that their work enables students to graduate onto the master's or doctoral degree.

The honours programme should therefore offer students the opportunities to bridge their deficiencies in critical inquiry, research writing, and self-directed study in preparation for future academic pathways. It is thus important that there is an assessment of whether an honours programme, such as our case study, is a good investment for students and is a viable undertaking for often already over-committed supervisors. The overarching aim of this case study was to evaluate whether the BHSc (Hons) programme provides a sound grounding for further research based postgraduate study. Specific objectives of the study included to assess: (1) The degree of overall satisfaction with the BHSc (Hons) degree programme; (2) The efficacy of the programme in developing and enhancing student's analytical and communication skills; (3) The efficacy of the programme in preparing graduates for additional postgraduate study; and, (4) The experience of academic staff who supervised student projects/dissertations.

Methodology

Overview

Two anonymous, cross-sectional surveys were developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the BHSc (Hons) programme from the perspective of academic staff members and honours graduates, respectively. A large component of the surveys focused on student preparedness for further postgraduate study; this paper focuses on the findings of this aspect of the surveys. The study was undertaken at the University of Auckland's School of Population Health from February to April 2016. The surveys were designed in paper format and then uploaded into an electronic format using LimeSurvey (LimeSurvey Project), an Open Source survey tool. This study was approved by the University of Auckland's Human Participants Ethics Committee (Ref: 016220). Participant consent was assumed on survey completion.

Participants and Recruitment

For the staff survey, all academic staff who were eligible to supervise postgraduate student research (51 people representing 39.5 full time equivalents) were invited to participate. While we were primarily interested to hear about supervisors' experiences of the programme, we targeted all academics for a wider understanding. The BHSc (Hons) programme is well known among academic staff within the School of Population and Health and therefore we were interested in views of those who had chosen not to supervise students to understand why this might be the case. Their views are likely to show perceived limitations that may need consideration.

For the graduate survey, graduates who had completed the programme between 2010 and 2014 (inclusive) were invited to participate. There were 69 graduates during the period; however, functioning email addresses were only available for 40.

For both surveys, invitations to participate were emailed to eligible people along with the participant information sheet, contact details of the Principal Investigator and a link to the anonymous online survey.

Survey Design

The surveys incorporated both closed and open-ended questions to gain more in-depth information and to allow participants to elaborate further. Where possible, question items were adapted from previous research of this nature (Allan, 2011; Drennan, 2008; Lowden, Hall, Elliot, & Lewin, 2011; McInnis, Griffin, James, & Coates, 2000). The academic staff survey contained questions relating to whether the programme met the intended goals, and suggestions for programme improvement. The graduate survey included questions related to experience during the programme, support received,

academic skill development, experience since completion of the programme, and perceptions regarding the benefits and future improvements of the programme. Both surveys were designed to take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Analysis

Data from the online surveys was analysed using descriptive statistics (i.e. to establish frequencies and percentages). Free text information was analysed using Thomas' general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). In this approach, raw data was condensed into a summary format, and links were then established between the research objectives and these summary findings, showing the underlying issues associated with experiences. Examples of participant free text responses are presented where appropriate. Each response was identified, using a unique identifier to maintain anonymity. Prioritised ethnicity was used; only one of the ethnic categories nominated by each participant was used according to a predetermined hierarchy as recommended by the New Zealand Ministry of Health (Ministry of Health, 2004).

Findings

Survey response

A total of 40 graduates and 51 academics were invited to take part in the corresponding surveys. Of those invited, 26 graduates and 23 academics completed the surveys resulting in response rates of 65% and 45% respectively. The results for each survey are presented separately below.

Graduate survey

Table 1 presents a summary of the characteristics of the graduates who completed the graduate survey. In summary, they were predominantly NZ residents (96%; 25/26), and female (81%; 21/26). For the majority, the BHSc degree was their first undergraduate degree (73%; 19/26).

Table 1: Characteristics of participating graduates (n=28)

Characteristic	n (%)
Gender: Male	5 (19%)
Age	
<24	6 (23%)
25-26	10 (38%)
27-28	8 (31%)
29-30	1 (4%)
31+	1 (4%)
Ethnicity	
New Zealand European	10 (38%)
Māori	1 (4%)
Pacific	4 (15%)
Asian	7 (27%)
Other ¹	4 (15%)
New Zealand residency status	25 (96%)
First undergraduate qualification	
BHSc	19 (73%)
BHSc conjoint degree (i.e. BHSc/BCom)	3 (12%)
Certificate in Health Sciences	2 (8%)
Other (i.e. BA)	2 (8%)
Year completed the Honours degree	

2010	6 (23%)
2011	7 (27%)
2012	4 (15%)
2013	5 (19%)
2014	4 (15%)
Completed further study since completing Honours degree: Yes	21 (81%)

¹ Includes Europeans and South African

Overall, graduates reported satisfaction with the programme, with 73% (19/26) agreeing that they were satisfied with the quality of the honours programme and 69% (18/26) reporting that the honours programme stimulated their interest in the field. More than three quarters (n=21/26) of respondents had enrolled in further study upon completion of the honours programme; 12 carried on to Masters, nine enrolled in PhDs, and three respondents gained entry to medical school. Despite three quarters progressing into further study, all but one graduate reported gaining some kind of employment post-completion of the honours degree (96%; 25/26). Skills that we intended for research capacity are shown here to have wider deployment of use to graduates, suggesting that the honours programme has further justification beyond its transitional benefit.

Overwhelmingly, graduates agreed that the programme was intellectually stimulating (92%; 24/26), motivating (73%; 19/26) and overall worthwhile (85%; 22/26).

"The honours experience has been a valuable experience for me. I especially thank [name] for their mentorship and also [name] for a memorable student experience." (G012, completed 2011)

"I really enjoyed my honours, although it was certainly challenging it was well organised, I felt very well supported and the coordinators and supervisors really helped to make the experience as smooth as possible for students." (G002, completed 2011)

"I found the Honours program challenging and enjoyable. I enjoyed doing my research project the most, and realized my passion for research. Doing Honours helped me decide which discipline I would like to form a career in. Prior to doing Honours, I had been very confused about which pathway to follow. However, that one year of study helped me decide what I was really interested in." (G005, completed 2013)

The majority of students agreed that through the programme they were able to explore their academic interests with other students and staff (77%; 20/26), and that they learned to explore their ideas confidently with others (96%; 25/26). The sense of membership and belonging in academic community was identified as a key benefit of the programme. Almost all graduates agreed that they felt part of a 'learning community' (96%; 25/26), and they felt a sense of belonging to the 'university community' (81%; 21/26). Overall graduates largely agreed that, where appropriate, learning resources and student support available to them met their needs and was adequate.

When asked about the honours programme research experience, participants reported developing a range of skills during the programme including how to develop ideas and present them in written work (100%; 26/26), and analytical skills (96%; 25/26).

"The honours programme gave me the ability to critically analyse literature, statistics and policies. Having the ability to complete a dissertation within the space of a year meant I was able to quickly establish myself as having some level of expertise within my chosen field in a short period of time." (G004, completed 2010)

"Writing skills of reports, project management skills, researching literature, formatting, learning to break a large project up into smaller achievable steps for quick wins" (G024, completed 2014)

Table 2 presents the graduates agreement with specific skill development during the honours programme.

Table 2: Graduates skill development during the Honours programme (n=26)

The Honours programme...	Disagree/ Strongly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree/ Strongly agree	Not applicable
Further developed my problem solving skills	0	5	21	0
Sharpened my analytical skills	0	1	25	0
Taught me how to develop ideas and present them in written work	0	0	26	0
Increased my confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems	1	2	23	0

Helped me to develop the ability to plan my work	1	2	23	0
Taught me to critically evaluate relevant scholarly literature and generate a broad base in contemporary theory and research	1	0	25	0
Taught me to identify, define, analyse and solve problems in a flexible manner	1	3	22	0
Taught me to design, conduct and report original research	0	2	23	1
Taught me to apply understanding at a policy development and practical level	3	3	20	0

Regarding the quality of the supervision provided to graduates for the honours dissertation, 85% (22/26) agreed that supervision was available when needed, 73% (19/26) that their supervisor/s provided helpful feedback on progress, 73% (19/26) that they were given good guidance in topic selection and refinement, and 85% (22/26) agreed that their supervisor/s made an effort to understand the difficulties they faced.

"I had an excellent supervisor, who was able to provide ample relevant and timely guidance, as well as stimulating my interest in the topic." (G001, completed 2012)

When it came to the honours dissertation process most graduates agreed that they understood the level of work that was expected (77%; 20/26) but only about half (58%; 15/26) agreed that they understood the required standard for the dissertation. Sixty-two percent (16/26) were satisfied with the dissertation examination process, with 35% (9/26) dissatisfied with the process. Approximately half the graduates (58%; 15/26) agreed that they understood the requirements for the dissertation examination, and felt that the dissertation examination process was fair. However, six graduates (23%) identified improving the consistency of dissertations as an area requiring improvement, three (12%) who felt clearer guidance was needed on what was expected of students, and four (15%) who reported that the theoretical content of the programme was either too big a jump from undergraduate studies or did not align with preparing students for careers outside the academic environment.

"More guidance and structure for the marking process." (G024, completed 2014)

"I believe the support via tutorials should be more personalised and relevant to the individual's dissertation." (G026, completed 2014)

"What is expected when actually completing a dissertation (guidelines, rules, length, breadth etc.);" (G022, completed 2014)

"Quite a jump in some of the undergrad subjects for example health theories, but I believe this has been addressed since." (G016, completed 2010)

Over a third of graduates (35%; 9/26), felt the supervision they received was good and 23% (6/26) were satisfied with the programme content. Alongside supervision, graduates also identified the positive interaction between staff and students (8%; 2/26), and the support from the staff running the honours programme (8%; 2/26) as favourable aspects of the programme.

"I really enjoyed being a part of a small cohort, and found that really motivating and supportive. The academic staff involved in the programme were amazing, and really assisted and supported my learning. My supervisor was great, and motivated me to continue research at a postgraduate level." (G010, completed 2011)

All but one graduate reported being employed post-completion of the honours degree (96%; 25/26). Of these employed graduates, 76% (19/25) reported that they felt the skills developed throughout the honours programme had equipped them for the workplace. The most common skills that graduates reported as workplace-relevant included 1) communication skills including presentations, written communication (52%; 13/25); 2) specific research skills (i.e. analysis) (48%; 12/25), critical thinking and problem solving (32%; 8/25); and 3) project management skills (16%; 4/25).

Academics survey

Table 3 presents a summary of the characteristics of the academics who completed the survey. In summary, the majority had a PhD or MD (91%; 21/23), had worked at the University for over 5 years (83%; 19/23), and were full-time employees (74%; 17/23).

Table 3: Characteristics of participating academic staff (n=23)

Characteristic	n (%)
Highest level of academic qualification attained	

PhD/MD	21 (91%)
Masters	2 (9%)
Current academic position	
Professor/ Associate Professor	9 (40%)
Senior Lecturer/ Lecturer	12 (52%)
Professional Teaching Fellow	1 (4%)
Research Fellow	1 (4%)
Number of years employed at the University of Auckland	
≤5	4 (17%)
6-10	6 (26%)
11-15	8 (35%)
16-20	5 (22%)
Employment status	
Full time	17 (74%)
Part time	6 (26%)

The majority of supervisor respondents agreed that BHSc (Hons) degree programme was a worthwhile academic programme (78%; 18/23). Approximately two-thirds felt that the programme adequately prepared graduates for future postgraduate study (65%; 15/23) and entry-level employment in public health (65%; 15/23).

"The honours programme is great for those who know what they want to do and are prepared to work hard to be able to fast-track their postgraduate study." (A005, Associate Professor)

The majority agreed the programme worthwhile; only one person expressed concern over the time constraints of a one-year programme and cost to students and that students might be better to go straight to a Master's degree.

Approximately two-thirds of the academics who responded (70%; 16/23) had supervised or co-supervised a BHSc (Hons) dissertation project. For the seven respondents who had not supervised, the opportunity had not arisen yet for four respondents (i.e. new to the university, recently graduated); two had wanted to supervise but could not find a suitable student or project; and the final person reported that it was not a priority for them.

For those that had previously supervised BHSc (Hons) dissertations, three had supervised only one student, six had supervised two students, and six had supervised three or more students. Overall, the majority were satisfied with the supervision experience (80%; 12/15), planned to supervise more BSc (Hons) students in the future (73%; 11/15), enjoyed supervising (93%; 14/15), and believed that supervising an honours student project was very rewarding (87%; 13/15). Their satisfaction endorses Kiley et al.'s (2011) Australian-based study, where more than half of the academics agreed that the project they supervised was valuable and contributed to their own research. Indeed, many staff supervised students because the experience "provided substantial intrinsic academic reward" (Kiley et al. 2011, p. 629). Supervisors in our study were asked to rate their experience of supervising honours students' projects for each of the first four projects/students they had supervised (total 39 students/projects across the 15 supervisors). Supervisors reported that 29 (74%) of the students had met their expectations, and reported approximately half of the projects to have been valuable and to have contributed to their own research (56%; 22/39). In seven (18%) cases, the supervisors reported that the student was not adequately prepared through the undergraduate programme, and in 16 (41%) cases the supervisors reported that they had to provide more help to the student than they had expected.

When asked to identify what were the most rewarding aspects of supervising honours students' dissertation projects, many supervisors commented that they took pleasure from seeing students become enthusiastic about research and seeing them develop into competent researchers (80%; 12/15). Interacting and working with students was another reward of supervision commonly identified (27%; 4/15).

"Seeing the student develop as a confident and competent researcher." (A013, Lecturer)

"Working with the students themselves." (A017, Lecturer)

Supervisors were also asked to list the biggest challenges when supervising honours students' dissertation projects. They most commonly reported time constraints (53%; 8/15); students' lack of research knowledge and skills (33%; 5/15); and the dissertation examination process (13%; 2/15) as the biggest challenges.

"The time in which to complete the project is reasonably confined and students have to be organised with a reasonable level of understanding of the methodologies they will use." (A021, Professor)

"[students'] lack of statistical and data analysis training and knowledge." (A018, Professor)

"Getting ethics approval in time for them to have enough time." (A014, Associate Professor)

Conclusion

Although a common focus for first year undergraduate teaching is to facilitate the transition from school to university, our findings address the transition from taught learning into independent research, another significant learning curve that also needs attention. The learning required in research means stepping up to a higher level of intellectual engagement and standard of work compared to undergraduate study (Kiley et al., 2011). This transition often demands critically engaging with academic literature, obtaining ethics approval, collecting primary data, handling the student-supervisor relationship, and time and financial constraint (Kite, Russo, Couch, & Bell, 2012). Almost inevitably, this work will require skills of self-management. Graduates in the current case study reported that the intellectual engagement and workload required of the programme was more demanding than their undergraduate degree: it was a step up from undergraduate to honours study. Furthermore, supervisors also noted the large increase in support requirements for students and the limited time frame. Despite these pressures during the case study programme, many graduates said that they were able to establish and enhance the key skills needed for postgraduate study, including verbal and written communication skills, evaluation and problem solving, advanced enquiry, and a capacity for undertaking research and generating new knowledge (Galpin, Hazelhurst, Mueller, & Sanders, 1999; Kiley, Moyes, & Clayton, 2009; Zeegers & Barron, 2009). Our case study suggests that an honours bridging programme can provide a suitable foundation for students intending to undertake research, and be worth the cost in time and effort for many students.

The programme established a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), something that is common to research work, is recognised as valuable to advanced learning (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014), and should be factored in by academics designing an honours bridging programme. A significant contributor to the support and wellbeing of students will be their peers (Allan, 2011). The majority of graduates surveyed reported they felt part of a 'learning community' within the programme, and also part of the University community. They believed that there was also a strong community feel between honours students during their year on the programme. This has positively contributed to their overall postgraduate development, and outlook on further postgraduate study. A mutual enthusiasm for research was shared between many supervisors and students, with both relishing the opportunity of working together.

The findings confirm that the programme fills a bridging role between taught study and research. Graduates noted an increase in their analytical and independent research skills as well as an increase in their autonomy following the programme. The study findings suggest that a course with a mix of taught and research dissertation components works well as a transition between undergraduate and further research based postgraduate study. Many supervisors thought that most honours graduates were ready for further study. Their assessment was confirmed by more than three-quarters of graduates' surveyed going onto further study, most of which was fully research-based (Masters or PhD). We are currently emphasising practical time management and realistic goal setting, developing an analytical outlook and flexibility and responsiveness to change (Kite et al., 2012) in the programme. We have designed rubrics for examination, and now specifically make reference to metacognitive aspects of learning. However, we are satisfied that honours work on a small supervised research project is likely to soften the steep learning curve of masters and doctoral degrees.

The supervisor-student relationship is likely the most crucial factor for a student during the honours year (Kite et al., 2012), yet while the supervisor may act in assisting student welfare, they may also exacerbate any ill feelings a student has (Spear, 2000). However, this was rarely the case in this study, as many students relished the opportunity to work with a member of staff, a feeling that returned by academics. This phenomena has been noted by Todd and colleagues (Todd et al., 2004) as a major influence in the success and enjoyment of first time researchers, and may indicate why the majority of our graduates continued onto further postgraduate study. Additionally, supervisors are usually central in the transformation of student's research skills during the transitional honours period (Allan, 2011). Ideally, these skills are developed via stimulation by the student to reach an answer independently (Fraser & Matthews, 1999), with supervisors having merely a supportive and guidance role. Supervisors in our study regularly provided helpful feedback and guidance, thus allowing the students to achieve and develop skills and awareness of research and postgraduate processes. Time put into the honours programme supervision is likely to be saved during masters and honours supervision, a topic for future research. In the meantime, we suggest that an honours programme with a research component that teaches skills is a possible response to high masters and doctoral attrition. We also emphasise that supervisor interest is a crucial factor to success.

It is important that the study findings be interpreted in light of the limitations including the response rate. Less than 50% of invited academics completed the survey and, although the response rate for the graduates invited to take part was relatively high (65%). It is possible that the graduates included in this study are biased towards those who had completed further postgraduate study at the University of Auckland as they would be more likely to have valid email addresses in the system. The results may therefore be biased towards those who used the honours programme as a pathway to further study rather than those who left the academic environment.

Despite the limitations, the methods in this study included the perspectives of both graduates and supervisors, and thus provided a comprehensive overview of an honours programme. In our case study, supervisor and student components play an integral role in the programme's ongoing development and success. We suggest that there are benefits in longitudinal reviews: graduates and supervisors surveyed in this study were from multiple cohorts and spanned a period of six years since the programme's inception. This timeframe allows a broad look at the course through its development.

The findings of this case study have highlighted direction for future improvement in curriculum design. This study shows that the programme largely achieves its aims of supporting students to study at an advanced level, thereby enhancing analytical and communication skills, as well as extending understanding of the epistemological underpinning of population health. The methods used in this case study provided evidence to showcase the success of the programme and calibre of the students and their research projects to future supervisors. Our findings give us research evidence for reporting, reflection and course recalibration.

Biographies

Bridget Koolis is Associate Dean (Academic) for the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Auckland. She is a former nurse, but for the past 17 years has worked at the University in a range of research and teaching roles. She is a former Director of the BHSc (Hons) programme.

Samuel Haysom is a second year medical student at the University of Auckland. He has previously completed a Bachelor of Science (Anatomy) and a Master of Science (Biomedical Science).

David Newcombe is an Associate Professor in the School of Population Health Sciences at the University of Auckland. He has over 20 years working in the addiction sector in New Zealand and Australia. He is a former Director of the BHSc (Hons) programme.

Susan Carter is an Associate Professor in the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education at the University of Auckland. She previously coordinated the Student Learning Doctoral Programme, and now contributes to the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, the Art of Supervision seminar series within the Centre.

References

- Aitchison, C., & Guerin, C. (2014). Writing groups, pedagogy, theory and practice. In C. Aitchison and C. Guerin (Eds.) *Writing Groups for Doctoral Education and Beyond* (pp. 3-17). Routledge.
- Allan, C. (2011). Exploring the experience of ten Australian Honours students. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(4), 421-433. 10.1080/07294360.2010.524194
- Brydon, K., & Flynn, C. (2014). Expert Companions? Constructing a Pedagogy for Supervising Honours Students. *Social Work Education*, 33(3), 365-380. 10.1080/02615479.2013.791971
- Drennan, J. (2008). Postgraduate research experience questionnaire: Reliability and factor structure with master's in nursing graduates. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(4), 487-498.
- Fraser, R., & Matthews, A. (1999). An Evaluation of the Desirable Characteristics of a Supervisor. *Australian Universities' Review*, 42(1), 5-7.
- Galpin, V. C., Hazelhurst, S., Mueller, C., & Sanders, I. (1999). Experiences of introducing research methods to Honours students. *Paper presented at the 29th Conference of the Southern African Computer Lecturers' Association*. Golden Gate, South Africa.
- Healey, M., Lannin, L., Stibbe, A., & Derounian, J. (2013). *Developing and Enhancing Undergraduate Final-year Projects and Dissertations: A National Teaching Fellowship Scheme project publication*. York: Higher Education Academy.
- Kiley, M., Boud, D., Manathunga, C., & Cantwell, R. (2011). Honouring the incomparable: honours in Australian universities. *Higher Education*, 62(5), 619-633. 10.1007/s10734-011-9409-z
- Kiley, M., Moyes, T., & Clayton, P. (2009). 'To develop research skills': Honours programmes for the changing research agenda in Australian universities. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 46(1), 15-25. 10.1080/14703290802646164
- Kite, J., Russo, S., Couch, P., & Bell, L. (2012). The honours year—A reflection on the experience from four former students. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 36(1), 165-177. 10.1080/03098265.2011.599368
- Lowden, K., Hall, S., Elliot, D., & Lewin, J. (2011). *Employers' Perceptions of the Employability Skills of New Graduates: Research commissioned by the Edge Foundation*. University of Glasgow SCRE Centre and Edge Foundation.
- Manathunga, C., Kiley, M. B., D., & Cantwell, R. (2012). From knowledge acquisition to knowledge production: issues with Australian honours curricula. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17(2), 139-151. 10.1080/13562517.2011.590981
- McInnis, C., Griffin, P., James, R., & Coates, H. (2000). *Development of the Course Experience Questionnaire*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- McMichael, P. (1992). Tales of the Unexpected: supervisors' and students' perspectives on short-term projects and dissertations. *Educational Studies*, 18(3), 299-310. 10.1080/0305569920180304
- Ministry of Health. (2004). *Ethnicity Data Protocols for the Health and Disability Sector*. Wellington:

- Schweinsberg, S., & Mcmanus, P. (2006). Exploring the transition: Coursework to research-based study in the geography honours year. *Geographical Research*, 44(1), 52-62.
- Spear, R. H. (2000). *Supervision of Research Students: Responding to Student Expectations*. Australian National University. <http://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/41534> Accessed 28/11/16.
- Thomas, D. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246. 10.1177/1098214005283748
- Todd, M., Bannister, P., & Clegg, S. (2004). Independent inquiry and the undergraduate dissertation: perceptions and experiences of final-year social science students. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 29(3), 335-355.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zeegers, M., & Barron, D. (2009). Honours: a taken-for-granted pathway to research? *Higher Education*, 57(5), 567-575.