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## What are the options for a doctorate after completing my Coursework Masters?

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### C/w Masters data

- From 2003-2009 a 36% increase in C/w Masters enrolments—domestic and international (14% decrease in Research Masters and 26% increase in doctoral enrolments) (DEEWR, 2011)
- Domestic-only has increased about 84% from 2000-2010 (DEEWR, 2011)

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### Significance in Australia

- Tuition for domestic students
  - Undergraduate degrees partially funded by Govt and by student
  - Postgraduate coursework degrees fully funded by student (employer) not the Govt
  - Research degrees (must be ≥66% research) fully funded by the Govt through the Research Training Scheme

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### Aim of project

- First class Honours degree (an additional year of research training & research at the undergraduate level)
- Research Masters/MPhil
- Project looked at a pathway gaining more traction: the coursework masters
- What does this mean for doctoral entry?
- What can we learn from Prof Docs?

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### Research vs. Coursework (DEEWR, 2010)

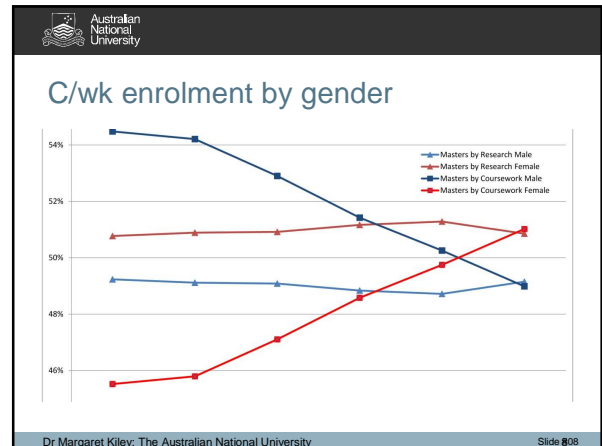
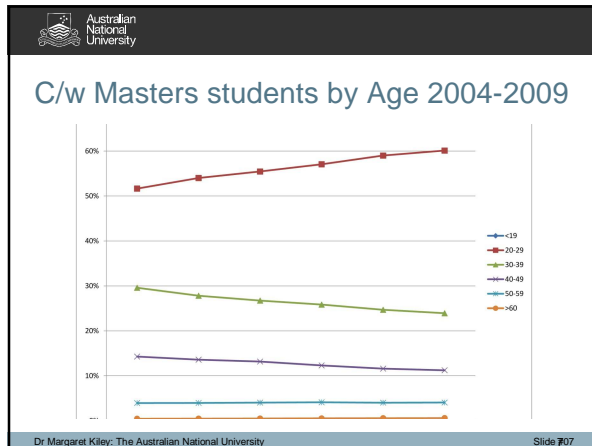
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### C/w Masters Students' Interest in PhD

(background data by the Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement, POSSE)

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- ### C/w Masters Data
- Data suggest that:
    - 20-29 age are likely to be international students
    - 30-39 age are likely to be domestic students
    - International students (45%) are more likely to be interested in undertaking a research degree than domestic students (37%)
    - Female enrolments have increased significantly since 2004, male enrolments decreased

- ### National Research Student Survey
- (Edwards, Bexley & Richardson, 2011)
- In the year prior to commencing a doctorate
    - 56% of respondents had been employed (45% FT, 9.5% PT/Casual)
    - Almost 21% had been undertaking Honours
    - 16% C/w postgraduate study

### As Palmer (2011) suggests

“Among other things this suggests that the number of research candidates with prior coursework postgraduate qualifications is substantially higher than that [16%] and these would in many cases have informed selection decisions for admission to the research degree, if not be the principal basis for admission” (p.3)

- ### HDR (PhD and Prof Doc) data
- Mean age at commencement 33 years
  - 40% undertaking doctorate part-time (increased by 10% in 2010)
  - Given these data what might this mean for doctoral entry?
  - What can we learn from Prof Docs?

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## Introduction of coursework in PhD

- Formal award coursework being introduced into the PhD in various Australian universities
- Rate of interest increasing rapidly
- Wide range of curriculum, still in flux
- What might all this mean for doctoral entry? And
- What can we learn from Prof Docs?


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## Research Design

- Across four universities interviews with:
  - 35 PhD students who entered with C/w Masters
  - 21 supervisors of candidates who entered with C/w Masters
  - 18 conveners of C/w Masters programs where graduates are known to go onto a PhD


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## Initial Findings from interviews

- Students generally positive about C/w Masters as preparation for PhD; supervisors less positive
- Supervisor and coordinator view was that C/w Masters as pathway to PhD was (still) exception rather than rule
- Trend to greater integration of work, education and research


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## Initial Findings from interviews cont.

- Increasing diversity (across universities and disciplines)
- Program types, other than conventional programs
- Candidate selection
- Student support
- Future directions


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## Program types

- Increased flexibility re entry and choice:
  - combining existing programs (e.g. joint M/PhD)
  - designing new programs (e.g. four year PhD)
  - 'Packaged student offers', incorporating flexible doctoral pathways
  - Accredited exit points (e.g. Graduate Diplomas)
  - 'Professional' and 'Practice' doctorates
  - C/w Masters that allow choice part way through


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## Candidate selection

- In addition to H1 equivalence
  - Substantial C/w M project at HD plus GPA
  - International Masters generally considered to have sufficient research component
  - International students majority PhDs with C/w M
  - High achieving and mature age
  - Declining in Honours degrees in some disciplines
  - International students + Visas make two year Masters attractive


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## Student and supervisor support

- Not all universities allowed access to research support for C/w Masters students but recent positive developments
- Peer and supervisor support identified as most important for student completion
- P/T students tend not to use support services
- Most universities don't require 'qualified' supervisors at the C/w M level


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## What does this mean for pathways?

- Flexibility?
- Curriculum?
- Student selection?
- Supervisor development?
- Exit strategies?


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## Preliminary Conclusion

- Variation by university and discipline
- Evidence to suggest that a C/w masters is a pathway to a PhD/Prof Doc for:
  - international students and/or
  - older domestic students from the professions
- What might this mean for PhD/Prof Doc:
  - Entry? Curriculum? Pedagogy? Time to Completion? Administration? The role of Prof Docs?

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## Questions

- What can the Prof Doc experience and curriculum offer to the issue of different entry AND the introduction of coursework into the Australian PhD?
- What might these developments mean for the Prof Doc in Australia?

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