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Murdoch University Dubai

The Link: Employability News & Updates



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Greetings and welcome to the 5th edition of The Link, Murdoch University Dubai's Employability e-Newsletter. With each issue, our aim is to equip you with the tools and knowledge needed to refine your skills, carve your own unique career path, and thrive in the professional landscape. Please stay focused, resilient, and always embrace opportunities for learning as you navigate your way forward.

Good luck and best wishes for a bright future with fulfilment, success, and joy. May you find purpose and satisfaction in all your endeavours. Good luck!

Leadership Spotlight



Mark Brown: General Manager, Murdoch University Dubai

In this issue, we are thrilled to feature an exclusive interview with Mark Brown, the General Manager of Murdoch University Dubai. Mark has been an integral part of the Murdoch community since 2019 when he started as General Manager.

Please read the full interview with Mark Brown to gain further insight into his inspiring career journey.

1. Tell us a bit about you and your career journey.

My career journey has been an interesting ride, largely unplanned and full of surprise twists and turns that have taken me all around the world, meeting and working with an amazing array of people, in a wide variety of roles.

Like many university graduates, I didn't have a very clear idea of what I wanted to do after graduation. I studied a very broad Arts degree and I graduated with a double major in Mass Communication & Literature, but a post-graduation trip back-packing in Japan led to a love of that country and a desire to live and work there and so, like many young people at that time, I took up teaching English as a way to stay and live there. Surprisingly, I really loved teaching, and so my journey into the world of education began.

Since then, I have taken on a variety of roles in a range of key areas of Australian and international education, in the tertiary and vocational sectors for both private and public providers, including teaching and course design, student support services, academic management and administration, marketing, brand & sales, business development, strategic partnership management and campus management.

I have now been in Dubai with Murdoch University for nearly 4 years and it has been one of the best professional and personal experiences yet!

2. What gravitated you to work for academia?

My early experience in teaching really set me up for a lifelong passion for education and its power to change people's lives. Through the various roles I have had both as an educator and in support and management functions in the international education sector, I have seen the life-changing journeys of individuals from their humble beginnings studying English as a true beginner through to their graduation with a Master's degree and moving on to an amazing career. Not many jobs can give you that kind of personal satisfaction, knowing you have been a part of helping people reach their goals and fulfilling their education and life dreams.

3. What is one advice you'd like to give to our students and graduates?

Be open-minded, be adventurous – having a career plan is great but also be open to saying yes as often as you can to opportunities that come your way. Of course you have to weigh up each opportunity on its merit, but my career journey has been full of sometimes very unexpected and surprising opportunities that I have said yes to that have led to many life-changing personal and work experiences that I could never have predicted or planned for. It's a cliché because it's true – *the only limits you have are those you place on yourself!*

4. What is your leadership style?

I am quite hands-off in my leadership style. I have always luckily been given a lot of latitude and autonomy in my career and that has influenced how I work best and how I treat my team. My experience is that you do not get the best from anyone who is micro-managed, and people shine when you give them the tools they need and let them run with it. I make it clear what our end-game is (our shared vision for what we are trying to achieve), ensure everyone has the resources to do their job, and then let people use their own skills, abilities, knowledge, and ideas to achieve their professional and personal goals. I like to have faith and trust in the people I hire – if I don't have faith in the people I am hiring then there is something wrong with me in that process. For me, you are presumed to be a professional unless you prove otherwise, not the other way around.

5. If you were to hire a fresh graduate, what qualities would you look for in her/him?

The 'soft-skills' are far more important to me than anything you have studied. I can teach anyone how to carry out the tasks required in a role, but I need to know how well you will interact and operate with your colleagues in a collaborative environment. So, first and foremost, I'm looking for an easy-going personality that can be flexible and adaptable. I'm also looking for dependability and a strong work ethic, maturity, a professional attitude, strong communication and positive professional interpersonal skills. I also look for evidence of leadership qualities (yes, even for entry level positions), positive teamwork and logical analytical skills. It might sound overly simplistic but someone who is well presented, polite and well mannered (and has a good sense of humour) always jumps to the top of the list.

Skill Development Tips - Industry Identified: Human Resources

This issue's industry is Human Resources (HR) which has evolved significantly post the COVID-19 pandemic particularly due to shift to remote work.

Depending on your specific interests and experience, there are roles within HR that will align with your capabilities. Consider exploring HR job descriptions to understand the requirements of each role, and assess how well they match your unique skills and career aspirations. For example:

If you enjoy:	Then, seek roles such as:
Administrative work and client service	HR Coordinator, HR Administrator, HR Generalist, HR Client Service Specialist, HR Services Coordinator, and HR Business Partner. In these roles, you will provide administrative support to the HR department such as managing employee records, coordinating recruitment and onboarding processes, offering services, scheduling interviews, and supporting documentation. Your strong client service skills would be vital in delivering a positive employee experience and building strong relationships with stakeholders.

Skill Development Tips - Industry Identified: Human Resources continued...

If you enjoy:	Then, seek roles such as:
Numbers, data analysis, and working with formulas	HR Analyst, Compensation Analyst, HR Data Specialist, HR Metrics and Reporting Specialist. In these positions, you will focus on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting HR data to provide insights and support decision-making. You would work with HR metrics, analyze salary data, conduct market research, and create reports to identify trends. Your proficiency in working with formulas and data analysis would be valuable in configuring system workflows, conducting system audits, and enhancing HR systems to support data-driven decision-making.
Project work, developing and implementing new initiatives	HR Change Management Analyst, HR Programs Coordinator, HR Workplace Initiatives and HR Org. Development Specialist. You will focus on designing and implementing HR new initiatives and programs, coordinating HR projects, and streamlining HR workflows.
Policy Design and Implementation; Strategic Planning	HR Policy Specialist, HR Risk and Policy Analyst, HR Strategy Consultant, HR Compliance and Strategic Planning Analyst. Your skills would be utilized in developing HR policies, measuring the effectiveness of HR programs, supporting/designing strategic HR initiatives and ensuring compliance with HR policies and regulations. Your focus would be on partnering with clients to identify their specific needs, design tailored HR policies, and support their successful implementation.
Technology	HR Systems Analyst, HR Data Analyst, HR Technology Specialist, HR Digital Transformation Consultant and HR Tech Project Manager. You will focus on managing HR technology platforms and ensuring their optimal functionality, implementing new HR systems, managing HR systems and integrations, and seek ways to automate HR processes. In these roles, you will specialize in managing and supporting HR technology solutions. This could include HRIS (Human Resources Information System), ATS (Applicant Tracking System), LMS (Learning Management System), or other HR-related software.

- Check out the selection criteria in the job adverts to determine what will give you an edge over other applicants within your career trajectory in HR.
- Develop advanced expertise in MS Office Suite. Advanced features of Excel and PowerPoint are very powerful for HR professionals.
- Consider obtaining Certifications in HR such as those offered by WorldatWork, CIPD, SHRM, and Korn Ferry. These will strengthen your technical expertise in HR and significantly boost your employability.



Career Fair at Murdoch University Dubai - Internships and Work Opportunities

Murdoch University Dubai organized an in-person Career Fair on May 24, 2023 in its Dubai Knowledge Park campus. The event brought together 15 esteemed companies and 30 representatives who provided over 200 students with valuable insights into various industries and career opportunities. We are delighted by the positive feedback we have received from both the employers and students. It is events like these that enable students to develop meaningful connections with industry experts and gain practical insights about the world of work.

Stay motivated and persistent, Murdoch University Dubai students, as you actively expand your network and cultivate valuable employability skills! Keep up the great work and remain dedicated to enhancing your career prospects. Your commitment to personal growth and professional development will undoubtedly pay off in the long run.

Interview Preparation FAQs

In our interactions and conversations with students, we frequently come across inquiries about interview preparation. We have compiled a summary of our helpful guidance to assist you in your interview endeavours as follows:

A. What steps can I take to adequately prepare for interviews?

To effectively prepare for interviews, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of your own capabilities and effectively communicate your skills and experiences. Start by reflecting on your unique skill set, notable accomplishments, and how they align with the specific position you are interviewing for.

Take time to identify your strengths and areas for improvement, articulate why you are the ideal candidate for the role, and visualize your long-term career goals. By addressing these aspects during your preparation, you will boost your confidence and significantly improve your performance in the interview setting.

B. What is the most effective way to answer the “tell me about yourself” question during an interview?

When responding to the “tell me about yourself” question, it is important to cover key points such as your academic pursuits, strengths, values, career interests, and how you can contribute to the job and the company. Craft a concise and well-rehearsed response including the following to offer a succinct response to this very important and frequently asked question:

- What are you studying? (Your name, year in university and major. List anything unique about you).
- What can you offer? (Your strengths, values and career interests. Include projects, internships, extracurricular or community work, where you exemplified a skill).
- Why are you interested in this company and how is your skill set most relevant for this Job and the Company?
- How would you like to create an impact or add value? (You can mention a relevant experience or achievement that demonstrates your value add immediately upon joining).

Here is an example of your response:

Good morning! My name is Tom Stevie, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you. I am a 2nd year student pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Business Information Systems and Cyber Security. I specialize in algorithm formulation, software development, and AI.

As the President of the Computer Science Club, I've gained hands-on experience leading a team of 15 students handling various IT initiatives and projects. I have also been a leader of a team that ranked in the top 10 prize-winning hackathon projects at the MIT Hackathon last summer. These opportunities have enhanced my knowledge in different technological areas and honed my problem-solving abilities.

I am particularly interested in exploring an internship opportunity within your progressive organization. I am drawn to the fast-paced environment of a start-up, where I can further develop my software development skills and contribute to innovative projects.

With my technical expertise, adaptability, and collaborative mindset, I believe I can make an immediate impact and contribute to your company's success. I consider myself highly motivated and driven, always seeking opportunities for growth and learning. I would love to discuss how my skills align with your organization's vision and goals.

B. How do I prepare for a behavioural interview?

When preparing for a behavioural interview, it is helpful to utilize the STAR method to structure your responses. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Results. This method allows you to effectively communicate a story that showcases a specific skill or competency relevant to the interview question.

Here's how you can use the STAR method:

1. **Situation:** Begin by setting the context and describing the specific situation or problem you faced. Provide enough details for the interviewer to understand the background and any challenges involved.
2. **Task:** Clearly explain the task or objective you needed to accomplish in that situation. What were you aiming to achieve or resolve? This helps the interviewer understand the goal you were working towards.
3. **Action:** Share the specific actions you took to address the situation and accomplish the task. Focus on your personal contribution and the steps you took to overcome challenges or obstacles. Be sure to highlight the skills, qualities, or strategies you utilized during this process.
4. **Results:** Describe the outcome of your actions and the results you achieved. Quantify the impact whenever possible (e.g., percentage improvement, cost savings, increased efficiency). Emphasize the positive outcome and what you learned from the experience.

By structuring your responses using the STAR method, you can effectively showcase your abilities and provide the interviewer with a clear and concise narrative of your past experiences.

Remember to practice and have a few examples ready that demonstrate various skills and competencies, as behavioural interviews often involve multiple situational questions.

Murdoch University Dubai Employability Support: Book an Appointment

If you're seeking assistance with career and employability-related matters, feel free to reach out to **Uzma Shaheen** to grab a 30-minutes in-person or virtual appointment (via Zoom). Uzma can help you evaluate the effectiveness of your resume, refine your LinkedIn Profile, practice your interviewing skills, or even explore potential career paths within your field of specialization.

Feel free to reach out to Uzma or any other student services available to you for valuable support and guidance. They are there to assist you in various aspects of your academic and personal journey.

Murdoch University Dubai Career Portal: Apply for opportunities of your interest

Make sure to regularly visit the Career Portal at murdochdubaicareerportal.com/ and keep an eye out for opportunities that align with your majors and career aspirations.

The Murdoch University Dubai Career Portal provides a wide range of work opportunities in various fields and industries, including Marketing, Event Management, Content Creation, Finance, Business Development, Information Technology, Psychology, and more. These work experiences, including internships, part-time, and full-time roles, offer students the invaluable knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the professional world.

Stay updated and take advantage of these opportunities to enhance your career journey.

Employability Workshops

The following workshops were conducted during this trimester. Stay tuned for the upcoming "Practicing Your Interviews", designed to assist you in preparing for technical interviews, practicing behavioural questions, and refining your elevator pitch. These workshops aim to enhance your interview skills and boost your confidence when facing interview scenarios:

Career Fair Preparation (conducted in-person)

May 23 & 24, 2023

[Slides link](#)

Elevator Pitch and Interview Responses (conducted in-person)

May 23 & 24, 2023

[Slides link](#)

Guest Speaker Session – Empowering Your Career

June 1, 2023

[Slides link](#)

[Recording link](#)

Practicing Your Interviews

July 18, 2023 (TBC)

Over the last few semesters, we hosted a large number of Employability workshops. We are excited to provide you with the recordings of three of our previously offered Employability Workshops. We will continue to bring-back selected previous workshop recordings to our future issues of this Newsletter:

Digitizing Your Brand!

September 2022 Trimester

[Recording link](#)

Entrepreneurship in Today's World – Guest Speaker Session

September 2021 Trimester

[Recording link](#)

Emotional Intelligence at Work

September 2022 Trimester

[Recording link](#)



Contact Points & Questions:

We would love to hear from you if you have any ideas, comments or requests for a specific employability workshop or initiative, please contact **Jil Salhani** or **Uzma Shaheen**. Let us know how we can support you more!

Have a great rest of the Summer Trimester!