

Longitudinal Study of Student Outcomes – Commercial Cookery Wave 1 Insights

Introduction

Historically, Commercial Cookery job roles have been in high demand. However, significant workforce and skills shortages have been an ongoing challenge

Over the last five years, the number of workers in job roles requiring Commercial Cookery qualifications and skills grew significantly, with Chefs and Cooks numbering 101,000 and 38,300 respectively in 2019.¹

A range of other operational job roles across the Hospitality sector such as Kitchenhands and Food Assistants can also be supported by the Commercial Cookery qualifications. The size of the workforce is therefore significant.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting Australia’s economy, strong growth was forecast for the Hospitality sector, with an additional 16,300 Chefs and 3,800 Cooks required respectively by 2024.² Whilst the true impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Australian job market is both unprecedented and unknown, the Hospitality sector is expected to play a significant role in supporting future economic recovery once operations resume. Strong employment growth is therefore anticipated.

To better understand the experience of students entering the Hospitality sector in Commercial Cookery roles, students and recent graduates were invited to take part in a longitudinal study which is currently being conducted over a three-year period. Insights from Wave 1³ (conducted in 2018) are provided in this paper.

Figure 1: Longitudinal Study into Student Outcomes – Wave 1 Recruitment



Commercial Cookery Student Profile

- Predominantly male (64%)
- Aged up to 25 years (62%)
- Almost half undertook the course as part of their apprenticeship or traineeship (45%)
- 6 in 10 were part-way through completing the qualification (61%) at the time of interviewing
- Most had a job in the Commercial Cookery industry (82%).

¹ Australian Government. Job Outlook. ANZSCO 3513 Chefs [Available at: <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=Career&code=3513>]; [ANZSCO 3514 Cooks [Available at: <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=Career&code=3514>] [Accessed 31 July 2020]

² Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020) 2019 Occupational Projections – five years to May 2024. Available at: <https://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections> [Accessed 31 July 2020]

³ Wave 1 was conducted online and by telephone between August and November 2018. Data has been weighted by age and gender to reflect the Commercial Cookery student population profile.

Insight 1 - Motivators for studying a qualification in Commercial Cookery

Respondents cited the following as driving motivations for entering the sector:

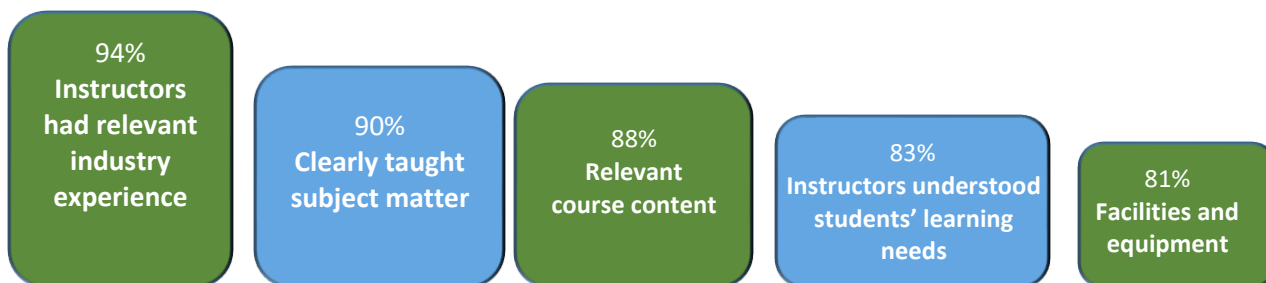
- **Employment-driven** i.e. to get a job (25%), change careers (20%) or gain extra skills (18%)
- **Personal passion for cooking and wanting to be a chef** – desire to be creative.

‘Cooking has always been a passion of mine and I love the creativity side of cooking, so that’s why I decided to become a chef, and this is the qualification I require to achieve that.’

‘There’s a lot of opportunities for you to travel, a lot of jobs going at the moment, and it lets you be creative.’

Insight 2 - Student satisfaction with the course

- **A very high proportion were satisfied** with the course overall (89%) and were likely to recommend the course to others (85%)
- Satisfaction with many aspects of the Commercial Cookery course was high, with the following cited as the top five areas from the student’s perspectives:



Insight 3 – Employment outcomes

- **Eight in ten students had a job in the industry** (82%) at the time of interviewing
- The median number of hours worked was **30-39 hours per week** and the median income per year was **\$30,000 to \$40,000** (pre-tax and excluding superannuation)
- The majority of Commercial Cookery students with a job said **both the qualification and training were important** in securing their jobs (83%).

Insight 4 – Early measures of satisfaction with employment

- **A very high proportion** of respondents working in the sector were satisfied with their jobs (85%). Drivers for high satisfaction included:
 - ✓ Enjoyment of job
 - ✓ Opportunities to learn and be creative
 - ✓ Being part of a team
 - ✓ Busy work environment.

‘I get to work in an environment with passionate chefs that have time to show me new things.’

- **A small proportion were not satisfied** with their jobs (4%). Drivers for dissatisfaction included:
 - ✗ Poor working environment
 - ✗ Not provided opportunities to learn.

‘I don’t think there is much more for me to learn from this workplace.’

Early intentions indicate that workforce retention is high, as a majority plan to still be working in the Commercial Cookery sector in one year’s time (82%)

Next Steps: Wave 2 will recontact respondents to gauge their short- to medium-term outcomes in Commercial Cookery roles and explore job satisfaction and drivers for leaving the sector.