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# **RECENT GRADUATES AND THE LABOUR MARKET**

**A Study of Graduate Expectations and  
Experiences in New Zealand**

**A thesis  
presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Business Studies  
in Human Resource Management**

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**Allana Coulon  
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## *Abstract*

This research examined graduate transitions from study to work in New Zealand by investigating the expectations, experiences, and satisfaction with early career for three consecutive graduate cohorts. It was timely, in light of increasing participation in tertiary education; a national emphasis on the development of a learning society and lifelong learning; and the unpredictable and highly competitive labour market in New Zealand. Several key findings emerged from this study, notably: graduates encountered significant turbulence in the first eighteen months of their career; and whilst most graduates had entered stable employment, in many instances they were underemployed.

The findings challenge the limited nature of current data collection processes for the annual New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee graduate destinations report. Given the importance, both politically and socially, of the need for accurate reporting, it is essential for the current data collection techniques to be revisited.