EVALUATION PLAN

Formative evaluation to be carried out during the development of the web-based Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career

Prepared by Debra Maddocks

3 June 2009

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INTRODUCTION:

A **formative evaluation** will be carried out to find out how effective and useable the online learning materials are for students in a web-based programme: *Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career (Level 2)*. The evaluation will be carried out by Debra Maddocks, School of Business and Computing, Faculty of Humanities and Business, as part of the requirements for 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice course (MIT). This plan will describe the Background, Purposes, Audiences, Decisions, Questions, Sample and Instrumentation, Methods, Limitations, Timeline and Budget.

BACKGROUND:

The development of the programme was based on research carried out by Victoria University (2006) and Massey University (2005) on employers' needs in terms of the type of people and skills they require. This research identified the ten most important traits, attitudes and attributes that employers are looking for in potential employees. The programme (developed by Qualmaster in association with QJumpers, and delivered via a learning resource called GETSET) teaches participants not only to recognise these traits, but also how to use them to match the requirements of any potential employer. The programme incorporates the completion of an online Curriculum Vitae (QPASS CV), eventually hosted by [www.qjumpers.co.nz](http://www.qjumpers.co.nz).

The *Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing Your Career* has been designed to enhance the existing external programme process, (GETSET). Students use a 'virtual visit' to a large Business, as a platform for discovering the necessary skills and experiences that are important as a job seeker. While they 'visit and observe' all the departments/levels in the Business and 'talk' to relevant people in each department, they are also completing their own online electronic QPASS CV, which is hopefully relevant and current. The institution has created further learning and assessment materials in order to deliver a 15 credit Level 2 on-line programme, with additional content such as Stress Management and Problem Solving, along with the necessary skills to prepare for an eventual Interview (embedded into the course are 3 NZQA Unit Standards, relating to Interview Skills, Problem solving and Stress Management).

Traditionally, the GETSET component is used in a face to face (f2f) situation, with students being stepped through the programme by a Tutor. However, with the new programme, the students will be off-campus, distance students, working independently and completing assessments as well as the QPASS CV. Therefore, all the necessary guidance and interaction/feedback will need to be included in the form of extra, on-line instructions, with tutor support and learning/feedback e-tivities built into the E-learning part of the course. This has been provided via the development of a Programme Page built in to the Moodle Learning Environment.
One of concerns noted during development of the content is that the students may simply scroll too quickly through the virtual business tour, just so that they can get their QPASS CV up and running, and therefore possibly not engaging in the real learning aspects of the programme.

It is also beneficial for the students to add as many details as possible to their QPASSCV, as this will be verified by the institution, and eventually hosted on the QJumpers Recruitment site. If students skim through the program too quickly; some of the subtle learning that should have occurred may be missed.

**PURPOSES:**
The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate whether the additional course material and assessment (with support) developed by the institution for the *Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career* enhances the GET SET programme through the provision of online student engagement and material relevant to the learning context.

I believe the quality issues to evaluate are:

*Is there enough interaction with the students- how will the tutors know when the students are struggling?*

*How can we get them to engage fully with the tutors and with the online materials?*

**AUDIENCES:**
The evaluation will involve peers (3), an expert review (1) and prospective students (3-5). While the evaluation is part of the assessment for Evaluation of Best Practice course, the evaluation report will also be presented to Senior Staff in the School of Business, as interested parties. The future students and lecturing staff involved in the development will also be interested parties.

**DECISIONS:**
The primary decision will be based on changes to the delivery design and level of support with the aim to identify areas for improvement.

1. The approach used for online learning in the *Short Course Certificate in Preparing and Enhancing your Career* will be re-designed to ensure best practice-optimal interaction with tutors and content.

2. Changes to the online materials, navigation and support instruction for students of the GET SET programme will made if they are found insufficient for independent engagement.
QUESTIONS:
The evaluation has been designed around two eLearning guidelines for New Zealand (2005). The selected guidelines have been re-worded to suit the purpose of this evaluation; that is to investigate usability and effectiveness.

**SD3**: (peer and expert review) “Is the design of the activities relevant to the learning outcomes”

Further sub questions to investigate effectiveness of the design of the activities and learning material:

- Can the students potentially engage with the learning activities provided with no face-to-face contact with lecturing staff? (Expert/Peers)

- How appropriate are the activities in encouraging users to engage with the virtual tour? (Expert)

- How does the design of the instruction/support help or encourage students to interact with the course materials? (Expert/Peers)

- How will the tutors know when support is needed? (Peers)

**ST9**: (user review) “Do the technologies employed successfully help the students participate and learn?”

Further sub questions around usability (navigation, access, interface design etc.) and effectiveness for learning (design) of the programme:

- How easy is it for users to find the material they need to complete the requirements of each of the topics (levels)? (Navigation)

- How do users interact with the content and is it relevant? (Access)

- How does the design of the virtual business tour allow effective and meaningful engagement? (interface design)

- How do the instructions encourage independent study? (Effectiveness)

In terms of the questionnaire design and because of the task-orientated perspective on e-learning instruction associated with this programme, three of Nielsen’s heuristics for useable design were identified as appropriate for addressing in this type of programme evaluation (Mehlenbacher et al, 2005):

(2) Match between system and real world

(3) User control and freedom
(6) Recognition rather than recall

At its most basic level, testing usability is ‘evaluating against Nielson’s 10 heuristics’. However the questions designed here are aimed at extending usability to mean an e-learning environment that is useful (it does what is wanted) and effective (allows the users to perform tasks proficiently and quickly).

METHODS:

This is a formative evaluation of the prototype version of the programme, planned to be carried out on a pilot release in the development phase to selected staff and students of the institution. This type of evaluation will provide valuable data in order to make decisions about support and the learning approach. The model used is the mixed method-eclectic-pragmatic approach, (Reeves, 1996). This model was chosen because of the appropriateness to e-learning in terms of being able to use multiple methods of collection for problem solving inquiry. Multiple methods allow for ‘triangulation’ of data, both qualitative and quantitative, from multiple observers, to validate the responses. If such inquiry is carried out during this ‘development stage’, then the sampling methods can be used to establish if the manner in which the students use the programme encourages the desired learning process and what is needed for improvement (Phillips, 2004). Good explanation and use of literature.

The questions used in the data collection instruments are listed as Appendices.

- **User review (Appendix 2)**: Questionnaire, preferably completed online using Moodle. Sufficient Guest log-ons will be arranged in allow individuals to complete the survey questions anonymously. Paper-based copies will also be created in case of time restrictions.

- **Peer review (Appendix 3)**: Face-to-face focus/discussion group with the evaluator, with semi-structured questions. The peers will have access to the programme, and the questions (including the learning outcomes) prior to the focus discussion group.

- **Expert review (Appendix 4)**: Conversation/one-on one interview with semi-structured questions as prompts. The questions will be given to the ‘expert’ in advance of the interview, with the intention of recording the interview at a mutually pre-arranged time.

Quantitative data will arise out of the **user review questionnaire**, while the other two methods (**peer and expert**) will provide qualitative data.

Reeves and Hedberg (2003) discuss, in their book, the need for deciding the acceptability, feasibility, reliability and/or validity of each of the data collection methods.

A peer review was chosen for feasibility. This is not a full release of the program, so there are not many students available. A moderate amount of time is needed to conduct this but there is low preparation and analysis time (Learning Technology Dissemination Initiative, 1998). Interactions among the focus group participants can enhance the answers given, and will not be restricted to a formal questionnaire.
An expert review was chosen for validity, while needing a moderate time for preparation and analysis, as well as a high amount of time to conduct, there is only one interview to perform and the ‘expert approach’ will hopefully avoid an unacceptable approach to programme delivery or identify missing content.

A small user review with students will be feasible, and acceptable, at this stage of development. It will need moderate preparation time but only a low amount of time to conduct. Analysis time is moderate but with careful design of the questionnaire, useful, quantitative data will be produced. Learner reactions are important at this development stage and are widely acceptable.

SAMPLE AND INSTRUMENTATION:

Between three and five students will be selected to evaluate the programme and work through the materials in the development phase (in a user review for effectiveness’ of design and usability) of the Pilot prototype environment.

Three Academic Staff will form a focus/discussion group (in a peer review with respect of design of activities).

One Expert Reviewer (GETSET) will evaluate the design and support for the material with the original content and the learning outcomes.

Feedback on the instrumentation has been gathered from class participants of 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice, agreed to and since incorporated in the user (student) review. This feedback suggested the use of further questions to the students, noting “in general- are there any improvements to suggest, and to note whether there were any difficulties noted”. Please see Appendix 2.

LIMITATIONS:

The evaluator is also one of the lecturing staff/developers of the material. The students chosen for the user review will not be formally enrolled as the programme is not at the full release stage at the time of the evaluation. The small number of students chosen may be a limitation, as is the fact that they may not completely work through the programme. The timing of the requirements for the Evaluation for Best Practice course assessment may restrict use of some methods (e.g. discussion group with all peers present).

TIME LINE:

The process will follow the timeline required (as close as possible) for the Assessment requirements of the Evaluation Best Practice Course. The expectation is that institution requirements for course delivery
can also be met within the timeframe of this evaluation (if changes are needed, before full student release).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft evaluation plan written:</th>
<th>Weeks 19th April/26th April 2009</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise Plan and submit for feedback:</td>
<td>Week 3rd May 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaires finalized:</td>
<td>Week 10th May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirm plan and carry out Evaluation:</td>
<td>Weeks 10th May/17th May</td>
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<td>Collate results and data analysis:</td>
<td>Week 24th/31st May</td>
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<td>Revise programme if possible (Expected release to Students):</td>
<td>Week 31st May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete data analysis and write Evaluation report:</td>
<td>Weeks 7th/14th and 21st June</td>
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</table>

**Budget:**

There is no set budget for this evaluation as it will occur during the normal development of the programme. Time for collating the results and presenting the results is incorporated into the assessment requirements of the Evaluation for Best Practice Course.

An estimate of time required follows. A figure of $30 per hour is used as approximation to include the Evaluators time as well as Peer reviewer’s time. Student time has not been accounted for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepare Evaluation Plan and Present Plan</th>
<th>10 hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carry out Questionnaires/Focus Interviews</td>
<td>4hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyse and Summarize Data</td>
<td>4 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation report</td>
<td>10 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 28 hrs @ $30/hr</td>
<td>$840</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES:


APPENDICES
The following appendices contain the learning outcomes and the questions for each of the three review groups (with Information Sheets for participants), also attached in each appendix.

APPENDIX 1

Learning Outcomes (Job Skills):
On successful completion of this paper, students will be able to:
LO1 Identify appropriate job opportunities in terms of occupational titles
LO2 Demonstrate skills for locating suitable vacancies in those occupations
LO3 Describe the preparation for and implementation of a job search programme
LO4 Produce a CV
LO5 Prepare for, and take part in, a formal interview

Learning Outcomes (Employment Skills):
LO1 Describe sources and the effects of stress and ways of dealing with it
   Performance criteria as in US 12355
LO2 Demonstrate knowledge of problem solving and apply a problem solving technique to a problem
   and evaluate the results
   Performance criteria as in US 7123
LO3 Demonstrate knowledge of the communication process.
   Performance Criteria
   3.1 Elements of communication process are identified, and explained in terms of their function.
   Range: sender, receiver, message
   3.2 Identify listening skills that are effective in the workplace.
   3.3 Body language is described in terms of its significance to the communication process.
   3.4 Identify factors that contribute to effective verbal communication.
   Range: clarity, conciseness, correctness
LO4 Demonstrate knowledge of motivation in the workplace
   Performance Criteria
   4.1 Identify factors that motivate employees
   Range: intrinsic, extrinsic
   4.2 Select motivational techniques that elicit a positive response for the individual
LO5 Demonstrate knowledge of team functions
   Performance Criteria
   5.1 Explain the steps in the group formation process
   Range: forming, storming, norming, performing
APPENDIX 2

User Review Questionnaire-for usability and effectiveness of the prototype version of the Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career.

Please tick the following items (click the radio button if completing in Moodle) within each Objective group as relevant, using the five point Likert Scale (rating 1 to 5: with 1 being the lowest and most negative impression).

Overview:

“Do the technologies employed successfully help the students participate and learn?”

Sub questions to investigate usability (navigation, access, interface design etc.) and effectiveness for learning (design).

- How easy is it for users to find the material they need to complete the requirements of each of the topics (levels)? (Navigation)
- How do users interact with the content and is it relevant? (Access)
- How does the design of the virtual business tour allow effective and meaningful engagement? (Interface Design)
- How do the instructions encourage independent study? (Effectiveness/Design)

Thank you for your feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective: Navigation and Access</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5).

1. Instructions for accessing the GET SET programme are clear

2. Instructions for accessing institutional support and learning materials are clear

3. Instructions for navigating and using learning materials are clear

4. The Activity Guide (What you need to do) is clear and useful
5. The navigation prompts clearly link the learning material to the requirements for the QPASS CV

6. It was easy to switch between the GETSET program and the institution Moodle Site

7. I could always match the learning material with the assessments and activities as introduced at each building level

8. I am able to use the learning materials without help and guidance from the tutor

9. I know how to ask for help from a tutor

10. I prefer to get help from a tutor than try and work out how to use the online materials

11. The organization and order of the content is appropriate to the subject matter

12. Learning materials are relevant to help me complete my QPASS CV

13. Learning materials are relevant and help me with my assessments

**Comments:** Do you have any other comments relating to Navigation and Access?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Objective: Interface Design</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The virtual business tour is easy to use</td>
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<td>2. I could relate to the study guide material better if I engaged on the virtual business tour</td>
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<td>3. The virtual business tour is interesting and relative to ‘real world’ situations</td>
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<td>4. I was motivated to try all the activities in the virtual business tour</td>
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<td>5. The design of the virtual tour encouraged me to explore all the levels in the building</td>
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<td>6. The design of the virtual tour encouraged me to complete the QPASS CV when prompted</td>
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<td>7. The timing of the assessments (availability) throughout the course was useful</td>
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<td>8. The assessments were completed at the time recommended in the Activity Guide</td>
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<td>9. I was well informed of the objectives for the programme</td>
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<td>10. Narration and animation during the virtual tour is appropriate to the objectives of the programme</td>
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<td>11. The roles of the staff on the virtual business tour are appropriate to guide my learning</td>
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**Comments:** Do you have any other comments relating to Interface Design?
**Objective: Effectiveness**

| 1. The staff on the Virtual tour encourage completion of the QPASS CV when prompted |
| 2. Learning Activities on each Building Level encourage completion of the CV |
| 3. Meeting the different staff on the Virtual Tour encouraged me to read the study guide material |
| 4. The online materials encourage me to study independently and explore |
| 5. The activities and study guide material enhance my previous experiences (work and study related) |
| 6. Feedback is effective for learning and promotes completion of the QPASS CV |
| 7. The ability to take notes online was useful (GET SET) |
| 8. The PDF notes were useful and relevant to the learning material |

**Comments:** Do you have any other comments relating to Effectiveness?

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**General Additional Comments:**

Overall, can you think of anything in the course that could be improved generally?

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What were the main difficulties that you encountered during the course?
Information Sheet for Student Participants (user review)

Formative evaluation during the development of the

*Short Course in Preparing for and Enhancing your career.*

Please read this information before completing the evaluation. The prototype programme that you are being asked to evaluate is to be jointly delivered by the institution and QJumpers, and is under development by the School of Business and Computing. The programme has been designed to provide additional support via the institution’s MOODLE LMS.

The evaluation is being conducted as part of the requirements for the following paper in the Graduate Certificate in Applied eLearning: 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice course (MIT).

**Purpose:**
The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate whether the additional course material, support and assessment developed by the institution for the *Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career* enhances the GET SET programme through the provision of online student engagement and material relevant to the learning context.

**Participants:**
Students from the institution who can spend approximately 2 hours testing the prototype will be invited to participate.

**Required:**
The evaluation will involve you accessing the programme on Moodle (as a guest) at the following URL:

Enrolment key: xxxx

Use the following log on for access to QPASS CV:

............................................................

After working through the programme, please complete the Evaluation Questionnaires on MOODLE.

**Data/Results:**
Data will be collated and reported as part of the assessment requirements for 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice. The report will also be available to Faculty Staff as appropriate. User identities will remain confidential (guest log-ons). A hard copy of the questionnaire is also available, if preferred.
APPENDIX 3
Peer Review/focus group - with semi structured (open) questions relating to E-learning guideline SD3:

Overview:

“Is the design of the activities relevant to the learning outcomes?”

Sub questions to investigate effectiveness of the design of the activities and learning material relating to engagement (E) and support (S):

- Can the students potentially engage with the learning activities provided with no face-to-face contact with lecturing staff?”
- How does the design of the instruction/support help or encourage students to interact with the course materials?
- How will the tutors know when support is needed?

Questions:

1. Are the learning activities clearly identifiable and justifiable? (E)

2. Do you believe the students will use the activities to fully complete the CV? (E)

3. Are the learning activities appropriate for independent engagement and completion of the CV? (E)

4. Do you think the Virtual tour will motivate students to investigate the learning materials? (E)

5. Do you think the students will engage with the summative activities before completing the CV and assessments? (E)

6. Do you think the students will engage with the assessments at the recommended stage of the programme (in the Activity Guide)? (E)
7. Are the types of assessment consistent with the course content and learning outcomes?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

8. Do you think there is enough instruction to prompt engagement with the learning material? (E/S)
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

9. Are there sufficient learning activities to match the content at each stage of the virtual tour? (E)
__________________________________________________________________________

10. Is there sufficient interaction with the students to establish when support is needed? (S)
__________________________________________________________________________

11. Are there appropriate mechanisms for tracking student progress? (E/S)
__________________________________________________________________________

12. What do you think of the Activity Guide (What you need to do?) (S)
__________________________________________________________________________

13. Do you think the design of the Activity Guide encourages interaction with the course materials?
__________________________________________________________________________

14. Are the support mechanisms appropriate for this type of learning? (S)
__________________________________________________________________________

15. Do you wish to make any other comments with respect to engagement and support?
__________________________________________________________________________

Finally, please give us your views on using the GET SET program to complete an online CV?

a) What drawbacks (or disadvantages) do you see in using this program independently?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
b) Can you suggest ways of overcoming these drawbacks (if any)?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

c) What benefits do you see for using GET SET in this independent online format?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

d) If you could change anything what would it be?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Information Sheet for Staff Participants

Formative evaluation during the development of
*Short Course in Preparing for and Enhancing your career.*

Please read this information before completing the evaluation. The prototype programme that you are being asked to evaluate will be jointly delivered by the institution and QJumpers, and is currently under development by the School of Business and Computing. It has been designed to provide additional student support via the institution’s MOODLE Learning Management System. The evaluation is being conducted as part of the requirements for the following paper in the Graduate Certificate in Applied eLearning, 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice course (MIT).

**Purpose:**
The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate whether the additional course material and assessment developed by the institution for the *Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career* enhances the GET SET programme through the provision of online student engagement and support material relevant to the learning context.

**Participants:**
Senior Academic staff (Peer review) from the institution who can spend approximately 2 hours testing the prototype will be invited to participate.

**Required:**
The evaluation will involve you accessing the programme on Moodle (as a guest) at the following URL:

Enrolment Key:xxxx

Use the following log on for access to QPASS CV:

................................................................

After working through the programme, please give some thought to the questions and prepare responses prior to a focus group discussion.

**Data/Results:**
Data will be collated and reported as part of the assessment requirements for 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice. The report will also be available to Faculty Staff as appropriate. User identities will remain confidential (through the use of guest log-ons).

If you have any questions about the evaluation or the programme, please feel free to contact Debra Maddocks.
APPENDIX 4

Expert Review Interview/Conversation-with semi structured questions relating to engagement (E) and support (S) for E-learning guideline SD3:

Overview:

“Is the design of the activities relevant to the learning outcomes?”

Sub questions to investigate effectiveness of the design of the activities and learning material.

- Can the students potentially engage with the learning activities provided with no face-to-face contact with lecturing staff?
- How appropriate are the activities in encouraging users to engage with the virtual tour?
- How does the design of the instruction/support help or encourage students to interact with the course materials?

Questions:

1. Are the learning activities appropriate for independent engagement and completion of the CV?
2. Are the learning activities appropriate to accompany the Virtual Tour? Do they complement the existing GET SET content? (E)
3. If compared to delivery via a face-to-face classroom, do you think the students will fully engage with the content before completing the CV? (E)
4. Do the learning experiences gained by completing the Virtual tour align with the additional learning outcomes? (E)
5. Does the design of the programme encourage students to further engage/align with concepts that they would already be familiar with (e.g job seeking skills-CV completion-prior experience)? (E)
6. Is there enough interactivity in the programme to encourage reading of the Study Guide text, in addition to material covered by the Virtual Tour
7. Do you think the additional institutional content and design of the support mechanisms can help the students meet the relevant learning outcomes more effectively with minimal tutor support? (S)
8. Do you think the instructions supplied and the Activity Guide contains sufficient information to guide the students? (S)
9. Can you see where there are opportunities for students to seek help? (S)

10. Do you think the design of the Activity Guide encourages interaction with the course material? (E/S)

11. Do you think a more comprehensive CV is produced by engaging with all the learning activities? (E)

12. Do you wish to make any other comments with respect to usability and effectiveness?

Finally, please give us your views on using the GET SET program to complete an online CV in an independent environment?

a) What drawbacks (or disadvantages) do you see in using this program independently?

b) Can you suggest ways of overcoming these drawbacks (if any)?

c) What benefits do you see for using GET SET in this independent online format?

d) If you could change anything what would it be?
Information Sheet for Expert Participants

Formative evaluation during the development of
*Short Course in Preparing for and Enhancing your career.*

Please read this information before completing the evaluation. The prototype programme that you are being asked to evaluate will be jointly delivered by the institution and QJumpers, and is currently under development by the School of Business and Computing. It has been designed to provide additional student support via the institution’s MOODLE Learning Management System.

The evaluation is being conducted as part of the requirements for the following paper in the Graduate Certificate in Applied eLearning, 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice course (MIT).

**Purpose:**
The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate whether the additional course material and assessment developed by the institution for the *Short Course Certificate in Preparing for and Enhancing your Career* enhances the GET SET programme through the provision of online student engagement and support material relevant to the learning context.

**Participants:**
An Expert reviewer from QJumpers who can spend approximately 1-2 hours accessing the prototype will be invited to participate.

**Required:**
The evaluation will involve accessing the programme via the institutional Moodle site at the following URL:

Please use existing log-ons for access to MOODLE and QPASS CV:

After working through the programme, please give some thought to the following questions and prepare responses prior to an informal phone discussion.

**Data/Results:**
Data will be collated and reported as part of the assessment requirements for 906.704 Evaluation for Best Practice. The report will also be available to Faculty Staff as appropriate. User identities will remain confidential (through the use of guest log-ons) as appropriate.

If you have any questions about the evaluation or the programme, please feel free to contact Debra Maddocks.