



Engineering Practice Research Summit 2024, Melbourne, Australia

## **Engineering Internship Feedback by Gender: Engineers Australia Student Placement Survey**

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Summit Themes: Education and Practice, Factors Influencing Practice, Opportunities to Enhance Engineering Practice

Engineering students report that the quality of their placements in industry during their studies is inconsistent. A project with Engineers Australia sought to provide a clearer picture of the challenges of how and when students engage with professional practice during their studies and how this could be improved.

As part of this project, students with Engineers Australia student membership were surveyed in 2021 about their professional practice experience (n = 777 respondents). This presentation focuses on the students who had completed one or more internships and compares the responses of females (n = 136) and males (n = 312) about their internship experiences. Once in an internship, the experiences of males and females were practically the same, with both groups commenting on the same improvements: payment, and a more structured internship program with more challenging, technical and varied tasks.

While it is encouraging to note progress in developing internships where female students report the same, for example, level of satisfaction, sense of belonging, ability to speak and respect shown towards them as male engineering students, work is still needed on ensuring a more consistent internship experience for all engineering students.

### Bio

Jolanta Szymakowski worked as an electrical engineer in the telecommunications industry for 15 years before moving into engineering education. Her research aims to improve the educational experience for engineering students, especially the gifted and talented and those who do not quite fit the stereotype, appreciating the systemic and cultural context of engineering development.