

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

JENNA HAWES



**CURRENT ROLE: GRADUATE PROJECT OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
PERTH**

**DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**

Jenna is just over halfway through her graduate program with the West Australian Department of Communities. She loved the experience of moving from Newcastle to Perth and has been developing her professional skills in the role.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATION?

Jenna knew she wanted to go into a graduate program after she had completed her degree. She found the [Graduate Development Program](#) within the Department of Communities Western Australia whilst searching on the Government of Western Australia online [jobs notice board](#). Jenna felt that that graduate program was the most relevant to the Development Studies degree and aligned with her career goals. Fortunately, Jenna had plenty of experience on her resume that allowed her to stand out, and she secured the Graduate Project Officer position before graduating.

Jenna started in February 2019 and has so far worked in Consultation and Engagement, WA Seniors Card Centre, Disability Justice, and the Local Communities Coordination Prototype. The two teams that have been the most interesting for Jenna so far have been Consultation and Engagement, where she worked on consultation for the [State Disability Strategy](#) and the Local Communities Coordination Prototype, a strengths-based early intervention approach. Both teams and projects were most closely related to Development Studies.



Image: Jenna with her colleagues from the Department of Communities, Western Australia at the Perth NAIDOC event.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

Jenna has found that many of the Development Studies courses have been relevant during her rotations in the graduate program. A reoccurring theme in the Development Studies degree is the importance of a strengths-based approaches to problems. This has been particularly crucial to Jenna's work in the graduate program.

Currently, Jenna is working in the Local Communities Coordination Prototype team. Local Communities Coordination is an early intervention, strengths-based community development approach that aims to support and empower community members. Jenna's work is split between policy development and prototype evaluation. She has worked on policies on individual safeguarding, consent and privacy and information sharing. Her role also included evaluation of the prototype to see where the project is running and what the future will look like for the individuals that are engaged with the prototype.

“My work is never the same, it is different every day and that is exciting.”

Jenna completed two overseas short courses during the last year of her degree. Her first trip was to India with [IndoGenius](#). This trip involved travelling to Indian universities, businesses and non-government organisations (NGOs) in order to learn about India's significant cultural influence and explore its innovative contributions to global challenges. One of the experiences was a visit to [USHA Silai School](#), an NGO that teaches women practical sewing skills in order for them to achieve financial independence. This related closely to Jenna's courses in Development Studies.

Jenna's second short course was a two-week program to South Korea with two workshops. The first workshop was with the [United Nations Institute of Disaster Risk Reduction](#) and had a focus on local Disaster Risk Reduction whilst looking towards risk-informed urban development, sectoral and climate change strategies. The second was with the [United Nations Institute for Training and Research](#) and Cifal Jeju which looked at Green Infrastructure for Climate Resilience through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Image: Jenna and friends in before a celebration at the Australian High Commission during her IndoGenius trip in Delhi.



Image: Jenna with her group at the 12th Youth Workshop on Green Infrastructure for Climate Resilience. Jeju Island, South Korea.

Travelling while studying is an amazing experience where you can learn outside of the classroom and it is also extremely beneficial when you start applying for jobs.

“There were a lot of networking opportunities in the overseas courses.”

Throughout her undergraduate degree Jenna also completed an internship through the [Career Trackers Indigenous Internship Program](#) which Jenna found out about through The Wollotuka Institute. Jenna’s internship was with QBE Insurance, where she worked in human resources on projects and programs including the QBE Foundation, Diversity and Inclusion and was a part of QBE’s Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. There Jenna gained the necessary experience and skills that set her apart from others applying for the Graduate Development Program.

“Having something on your resume, whether that is volunteering, an internship or an additional language, is really important to help you stand out.”

ADVICE: APPLY EARLY AND SAY YES TO OPPORTUNITIES

Graduation program applications generally start opening around February each year, for the follow year’s intake of graduates. Jenna ensured she was applying for graduate programs during her final year, to secure a job for the following year. Being accepted into the Graduate Development Program early meant that as soon as Jenna was finished with her studies, she was able start her current role. Having job security before graduating was important for Jenna.



Image: Jenna and other UoN students at the CareerTrackers Gala Dinner.

All experiences are an opportunity to learn. Jenna made the decision to move by herself to Perth for her work. She encourages other students to consider taking up opportunities in other places as it can be a fantastic experience.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Jenna has been accepted into a double masters at the Australian National University. Starting in July, Jenna will be studying for a Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development, and Master of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies. Jenna approached her masters’ topics in the same fashion she approached her Development Studies courses; study what you are interested in and the rest will follow. Working overseas in the future is on Jenna’s radar. Opportunities are bound to arise for Jenna as she continues with the graduate program and follows her passion for development in her Masters work.

For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:

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