Postgraduate research education and the engineering workplace: employers' perspectives

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This paper presents an investigation into industry employers' views of the professional roles undertaken by postgraduate Engineering research degree holders. In particular, it explored the beliefs employers held about postgraduate Engineering research experience, its value to industry, and the types of work in which these degree holders are engaged. The study forms part of a larger investigation into the postgraduate engineering research experience and how it relates to the professional identity of engineering research candidates. This paper reports on three findings that emerged from discussions with employers: differences in engineering innovator roles, the (non)relationship between candidature experience and social interaction in the workplace, and an inherent contradiction in simultaneously valuing and criticising the qualities of autonomy, independence, determination and persistence developed in the research doctoral experience.