UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

A guide to implementing the **Employability** pillar of the USQ Academic Plan



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This guide has been designed to support the scholarly practice of university educators, in the context of curriculum-embedded student employability and graduate careers. It is suggested that you treat this guide as a workbook, recording your notes and ideas along the way, to support your practice.

As an academic development resource, this guide:

- operationally defines key relevant terms (in plain language)
- unpacks the USQ Draft Employability Strategy (describing how educators can apply and adopt approaches at a Course and Program level)
- presents authentic case studies of evidence-based good practice, to inspire ideas and possibilities.

The goal is to help you (as university educators) DO six things:

1. make curricula more relevant to careers
2. reposition assessment to develop students' employability
3. identify employability blockages, and resolve these challenges
4. design Program experiences which mirror/support career progression
5. strengthen industry collaboration and networks
6. develop students' career-relevant knowledge, skills, attributes and identity.

There are four propositions, which underlay this guide.

1. Employability and career ambition are the main motivation for students to choose higher education.
2. Across the student experience, the most powerful agents, to develop students' employability, are their university teachers.
3. For students to engage with employability and career development, strategies must be interwoven in their regular coursework, including through graded assessment.
4. A key factor in the value proposition of universities is in the context of employability and careers – to strengthen communities and societies to prosper and progress, socially, technologically and economically.

The overall aims of the work described in this guide are to:

- improve the overall employment rate (in aligned disciplines/ industries) of university graduates
- create strong career foundations for university students and graduates
- widen participation of disadvantaged students in graduate careers
- strengthen engagement between employers and university educators
- develop the relevancy of university curricula and assessment
- lead the world forward through skilled graduates.

Contents

A guide to implementing the Employability pillar of the USQ Academic Plan B

What is employability? 2

Whose responsibility is employability? 3

Students' perspective on university employability 4

What is the role of *University Careers & Employability*? 6

Curricular, Co-Curricular & Extra-Curricular 7

What theory guides employability and careers practice? 8

What are some examples of embedded employability, which are working at other Australian universities? 9

Adopting and applying the DRAFT *USQ Employability Strategy* to your courses and programs 10

Employability pillars 10
USQ Employability Model 11
Embedded in courses and programs 12
Supported through infrastructure & analytic data 13
Work Integrated Learning (WIL) 14
Learning Integrated Work (LIW) 15
Employability Engagement 16

Definitions 17

References 18

What is employability?

Employability: "A set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the work force, the community and the economy." (Knight & Yorke, 2002)

Knight and Yorke (2004) wrote that the higher education sector uses *employability* to stand-for three overlapping meanings:

1. **Employment** of graduates in their first post-degree job
2. **Approaches and strategies** carried-out by universities to support their students for future career success
3. **Capabilities of university graduates**, which are broader than the specific degree or industry of study (e.g. cultural competency), also called *graduate attributes* in Australia (Green, Hammer, & Star, 2009; Oliver & Jorre de St Jorre, 2018; Oraison, Konjarski, & Howe, 2019; Yorke, 2010).

The meaning of employability most relevant to this guide, aligns closest to **2**, and therefore concerns, the strategies and approaches conducted and/or encouraged by university educators, and supported by student services and supports (including *USQ Careers & Employability* and OALT), to increase the chances that graduates will get jobs and be successful in their careers.

WORKBOOK EXERCISE 1:

Define employability in your own words.

Whose responsibility is employability?

If employability was to be expressed as a formula, it would be:

STUDENT + external labour market factors + University strategies/supports = Employability

Expressed narratively (***emphases*** not in original), Jackson and Bridgstock (2020) wrote:

> [Graduate employment] can be mediated by ***individual characteristics***, such as social and cultural capital and job seeking behaviours and flexibility, and ***external factors***, including recruitment bias, location, and labour market demand. … we consider employability to be a multi-dimensional, lifelong, and life-wide phenomenon that is malleable and ***driven by the individual, yet encouraged and facilitated by Higher Education***. (p. 2)

Among the university stakeholders, it is ***educators*** who have primary responsibility for students' and graduates' employability. You are the best prepared and equipped to support the employability of your students, because:

- you have the most contact with students and have required/timetabled schedules for interaction. It is you, who the students expect to learn from
- you know the discipline and therefore the curriculum
- you are across (and up-to-date) with the discipline-specific knowledge, skills, attributes and identity students need to develop for success
- you may have worked in some of the jobs, and therefore industries, in which graduates are likely to be employed, and likely have helpful networks.

In addition, research shows that contemporary students have busy lives and numerous responsibilities. If employability and career development is not embedded in their regular Courses and Programs, it probably will not happen. Most students do not have the time to participate in extra, add-on components.

Lock and Kelly (2020) are explicit about the need for, and advantages of, curriculum-embedded employability. They conducted research with 462 students, in a wide variety of disciplines, through 15 Australian universities. They expressed their key findings as follows.

Firstly, the development of employability skills in general, and of career awareness in particular, must be deeply connected to the regular curriculum of students if it is to be meaningful; extracurricular employability or careers advice has been shown to be of little value. Secondly, as these findings make clear, employability and career awareness are issues that must be addressed from the very outset of a student's undergraduate studies; no longer can they be left to the final year of study. (pp. 32,33)

These researchers found that, across disciplines and throughout Programs of study, teaching in ways which make students employable are not only necessary for their graduate success, but also for their ongoing motivation and resilience, reflected in retention rates and student achievement.

WORKBOOK EXERCISE 2:

Reflect on your Course Examiner role, as employability driver. Is this a new perspective about your role? What makes you excited and/or nervous about this?

Students' perspective on university employability

There is emergent research from the students' and/or graduates' point of view, about the ways in which their universities are/are not supporting their employability (e.g. Bennett, Knight, Jevons, & Ananthram, 2020; Jackson & Bridgstock, 2020; Jorre de St Jorre, Elliott, Johnson, & Bisset, 2019; Kinash, Crane, Judd, & Knight, 2016; Kinash, McGillivray, & Crane, 2018; Lock & Kelly, 2020).

Themes which are repeated throughout these articles are as follows. In each instance, one of the main articles advancing this theme is referenced below.

- Whereas universities tend to talk about employability, students talk about employment. (e.g. Jorre de St Jorre, Elliott, Johnson, & Bisset, 2019)
- Students believe that graduate employment is a joint responsibility of themselves and their universities. (e.g. Lock & Kelly, 2020)
- Students believe that what and how their university educators are teaching them (including learning through assessment) should advance their employability. They do not feel that they should be expected, and they state that they do not have time, to attend add-on counselling sessions or workshops, beyond their assigned work in their classes. This can become an equity matter, such that often the students with the largest employability barriers are the same students who do not have time to attend add-on employability and careers activities. (e.g. Jackson & Bridgstock, 2020)
- There should be heightened transparency about the specific connection between university degrees and careers. Future students want to start with the question of 'what career/s am I interested in pursuing' and then 'which degree will get me there' in that order. Furthermore, students want to know what (specific examples) careers graduates from the specific degree have successfully launched. (e.g. Lock & Kelly, 2020)
- Whether degrees are in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) or in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths or Medicine (STEMM) or generalist or directly aligned with the professions, students want employability and careers to be a highly visible component of the curriculum and assessment. Overall, many university educators believe that they are teaching in ways which will enhance students' employability, but students are often not seeing this connection. (e.g. Jorre de St Jorre, Elliott, Johnson, & Bisset, 2019)
- Assessment matters to students more than any other element of higher education. Students want at least some of the assessment to allow them to develop the skills they will need in the workplace. Currently, while university educators see the relevance of the usual assessment to employability, students do not. This indicates that the connection between assessment and employment needs to be made more explicit to students. (e.g. Kinash, McGillivray, & Crane, 2018)

Bennett, Knight, Jevons and Ananthram (2020) analysed personalized employability profiles created by 6004 undergraduate business students across 32 Australian universities. The authors reprinted numerous poignant student quotes which align with the themes summarized above. A few of these quotes were:

> "There are so many of us who become lost in the transition from student to worker…Most of us don't have a clue what to do after we graduate" (p. 3).

> "Students need to be taught how to implement what we learn in the real world" (p. 3).

> "I would remove lectures; there are much better ways to deliver large amounts of information in smaller, more manageable sections to encourage higher levels of focus on the material" (p. 4).

These authors summarised the key emergent theme of their analysis as follows.

> [Students] lack the strategies with which to maximise their opportunities both within and beyond the formal curriculum. It is likely that some of their comments about connecting 'knowledge with the real life workplace' relate not to a deficient curriculum but to students' grasp of the alignment between their learning tasks and their future lives and work. This finding aligns with previous accounts of graduate transition, poor academic performance and student attrition, all of which emphasise the impact of perceived lack of relevance on student engagement. … It follows that more might be done to make explicit the relevance between the learning assigned to students, their social interactions within and beyond their studies, their emerging professional identities and their future lives and work. (p. 4)

The overall question asked in this research was how satisfied students are with their degrees and what should be changed. As evidenced in the authors' summary above, the main piece of feedback was that, overall, students are dissatisfied, in that they do not believe that their educators are presenting curriculum, designing learning activities (including graded assessment) and teaching in ways which are explicitly aligned with employment and careers.

WORKBOOK EXERCISE 3:

Do you have any points to add about why it is important that employability and careers approaches are integrated into regular coursework?

What is the role of *University Careers & Employability?*

Embedding employability and careers throughout and across the full curriculum, including through pedagogical approaches, and in assessment, is complex. Research has shown that the most efficacious models function as partnerships between university academics and central services.

Following on from Bridgstock, Grant-Iramu and McAlpine's (2019) research, conducted through 30+ interviews, across 9 Australian and international universities, they recommended

> "cross-disciplinary collaboration between career development practitioners, learning and curriculum designers, and academic units" (p. 56).

Course Examiners contribute their disciplinary/industry expertise, as well as rich knowledge and experience with nuanced student cohorts, the curriculum and pedagogies.

Office for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (OALT) staff, such as Educational Designers, are available to support StudyDesk design and other pedagogical and digital learning and teaching approaches, such as creative industry-aligned assessment tasks and rubrics which align with careers.

University Careers & Employability team members contribute expertise in **Career Development Learning**, which Bridgstock, Grant-Iramu and McAlpine define as,

> ... the acquisition of capabilities that are useful to the lifelong development and management of one's career, grounded in an ongoing authentic learning-based process that builds knowledge of the world of work and one's self. This process develops the learner's ability to make sense of and synthesise this knowledge, and form the basis for effective decision-making relating to career choices, professional development and career building activity (including work acquisition). (p. 57)

Course examiners are recognised as experts in the curriculum you teach to students, and in your students' learning.

University Careers & Employability staff members contribute expertise in the application of career development learning to your teaching.

OALT staff contribute expertise in pedagogical design and application of innovative teaching approaches.

> The key to success in graduate employability is that these stakeholders (1. Course Examiners 2. OALT and 3. Career Development Practitioners) work together, mostly behind the scenes, to design robust, meaningful and explicit ways for students to develop the knowledge, skills, attributes and identity each requires for graduate career success, and that this strategy is integrated in the coursework that students have signed-on-for, and not as a bolt-on, or through discrete one-off projects.

At USQ, the primary role of *University Careers & Employability* is to service and support university educators to design curriculum and engage students in learning activities (including assessment) which will strengthen graduate careers success. As such, *University Careers & Employability* staff are available to provide bespoke professional development to academics about topics such as career development learning, and to co-create practical tools and resources.

University Careers & Employability also supports educators to establish and strengthen connections with employers, including for Work Integrated Learning opportunities and graduate employment transitions.

Student-facing supports are also available, particularly to those students who experience extra barriers to employment.

WORKBOOK EXERCISE 4:

Do you have an upcoming program or school meeting or PD, where you might invite OALT and Career Development Practitioners to attend, to partner in the design and development of learning and teaching for heightened student employability? If not, identify a date and time to co-create some bespoke PD. What are the aims of the session? Who will be invited to roll-up-their-sleeves and contribute?

Curricular, Co-curricular and Extra-curricular

An effective framework to think about your role, as Course Examiners, in employability and careers, is as the facilitator of curricular employability.

> **Curricular employability:** means that approaches and strategies which will advance students' careers, upon graduation, are facilitated directly by their educators and embedded in regular course-work, including assessment.

Employability strategies and approaches can be classified into three categories: *Curricular, Co-curricular* and *Extra-curricular* (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2020).

The *curricular* approach to employability is embedded in students' regular coursework, required study, assignments and exams. Lock and Kelly (2020) define curricular employability (using the alternate term, *employability teaching*) as

> "the design and delivery both of employment-focused modules, units, or subjects, and of the many activities throughout a course or program that connect students to the education-employment pathways on which they are travelling" (p. 24).

In this approach, university educators are expected to build employability into their pedagogical approaches. Lock & Kelly assert that,

> "the development of employability skills in general, and of career awareness in particular, must be deeply connected to the regular curriculum of students if it is to be meaningful" (p. 32).

Course and program learning outcomes are therefore designed to assure that graduates have the knowledge, skills, attributes and identity they require for career success (Kinash, Crane, Judd, & Knight, 2016). Efficacious enactment of curricular employability requires that educators engage in reflection and make responsive changes to their teaching, in accordance with their students' learning, including in the context of employability.

Co-curricular, in most Australian universities, means employability strategies which are not embedded in curriculum and assessment, and are administered outside of regular coursework. The authors of this guide were unable to find a suitable published definition of co-curricular employability and have therefore coined a new definition, as

> **Co-curricular employability:** University-organized student experiences, which take place primarily outside of (but alongside) regular coursework expectations and formal study, and are designed to support students' progression towards graduate success, including post-graduation employment and long-term careers.

Two examples are student leadership training, often run by universities' careers and employability teams and/or by student groups or guilds (Andrewartha & Harvey, 2017), and sometimes drawn-upon within coursework, including as case studies or the basis for graded student projects, and Work Integrated Learning (WIL) when placements are organized and administered outside of courses, but themes are drawn-upon in coursework and sometimes assessment (Jackson, 2019).

> The third category is **extra-curricular employability** strategies. These activities are conducted extra-to the curriculum.

Student activities may be made available to students, and sponsored, by universities, such as clubs, bands and recreational and/or competitive sport. However, these activities are seldom, if ever, drawn into the curriculum, nor taught and assessed within regular coursework (Nghia, 2017). Extra-curricular employability also includes leisure and recreation pursuits and hobbies, which are often encouraged, but not necessarily organized-by, universities. Universities sometimes encourage and support extra-curricular employability student activities because employers state a preference for well-rounded graduates who have developed themselves beyond a sole focus on university studies (Kinash, Crane, Judd, & Knight, 2016).

WORKBOOK EXERCISE 5:

As you were reading the description of *Curricular, Co-curricular* and *Extra-curricular* employability strategies above, what ideas came to mind? Describe an idea for implementing *each* in your course, program and/or with your students.

Curricular Employability	Co-curricular Employability	Extra-curricular Employability

What theory guides employability and careers practice?

Two of the theories which closely align to, and guide, employability and careers practice, in universities, are ***Psychology of Working Theory*** (Blustein, Duffy, Erby, & Kim, 2019) and ***Sociological Career Theory*** (Bimrose, 2019).

University has long been characterized as an establishment for the privileged (Davis, 2017). However, some universities attract, and reinforce more of the privileged sector of society than others. Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) universities are known to be elite institutions, attracting wealthier students with higher secondary school grade point averages, as compared to other universities.

On the other end of the spectrum, are regional universities, which are known to attract a higher proportion of students whose parents are labourers, and mature-aged students who had lower secondary grade point averages, and consider university pathways, not as lifelong volition, but due to economic needs.

Blustein (2006) published a book about *Psychology of Working Theory* (PWT). Many of the career theories preceding PWT focused on matching people's interests, goals and personalities to particular careers, which tended to inadvertently exclude people whose means did not afford vocational choices. PWT is grounded on the premise that work is an important part of life for all adults, in that work is necessary for the achievement of three basic needs: survival and power, social connection and self-determination. PWT therefore leads us to ask the following questions to probe our practice (including university strategies and supports).

- Do regional students feel more marginalized in the context of work?
- Given that work is theorized to satisfy three human needs (survival, social connection and self-determination), do regional students emphasise survival as university motivation, and Go8 students favour careers which will satisfy self-determination?
- How does social connection come into play? In other words, how important is social connection to the way in which universities design employability supports? To what extent does social connection affect students' and graduates' career choices?
- To what extent do students, from the two contrasting university types, express optimism about what PWS theorists call decent work (characterized by absence of marginalization and economic constraints)?

Similarly, *Sociological Career Theory* (SCT) posits that people's career success is affected by "contextual, systemic or structural constraints" (Bimrose, 2019, p.53). Applying this to higher education, contextual constraints mean that university students with well-connected parents, for example, are likely to start graduate employment sooner because of these instrumental networks. Systemic constraints are enacted, for example, in that chosen degrees and career pathways tend to run in families and along socio-economic castes. Finally, societal structures mean that some children will be streamed-into educational pathways which lead to higher education, and others into vocational education. Within the education models, structural constraints make it more likely that some students (in certain conditional groupings, such as disability or low socio-economic status) will drop-out.

Having a theoretic basis in PWT and SCT means that USQ employability and careers strategies and supports have a basis in social justice and widening participation. One of the overall aims of USQ's employability strategy is to identify the constraints which are seeming to impact the career success of graduates, and to ameliorate these conditions. Authentic change, in the sphere of employability and career success (of university graduates) requires strategic planning and intervention at the levels of environments. Counselling and educating individuals are not effective on their own; partnerships within, across and beyond the university are necessary to address societal inequities.

WORKBOOK EXERCISE 6:

What thoughts did reading the descriptions of the *Psychology of Working Theory* (PWT) and *Sociological Career Theory* (SCT) provoke? Do either of these theories apply to your students? What can you apply, from one or both of these theories, to enhance the way in which you support your students' career development, as embedded in your learning and teaching approaches?

What are some examples of embedded employability, which are working at other Australian universities?

Kinash, Crane, Judd and Knight (2016) represented an institutional affiliation across two Australian universities – **Bond** and **James Cook**. The researchers used a complementary survey methodology administered to four stakeholder groups (students, graduates, employers and university educators) across 26 institutions, in order to compare and contrast stakeholder regard for various employability strategies. Personal invitations to participate were sent to 1500 individuals and 821 responses were received (55% response rate). Ten employability strategies were queried, two of which were *curricular* (capstone projects and developing graduate portfolios), six of which were *co-curricular* (Work Integrated Learning – WIL, international exchanges, careers advice, networking, student memberships in professional organizations and volunteering) and finally *extra-curricular* activities and part-time work. The researchers noted which of the strategies were selected by the majority of respondents from each of the four stakeholder groups. The top strategy was WIL.

The employability initiative described by Gill (2018) is a multi-institutional initiative between six participating universities: **Swinburne**, **Victoria University**, **Deakin**, **RMIT**, **Monash** and **La Trobe**. Gill described an annual forum (since 2011) for students in communications disciplines. The forum includes case studies, networking activities with graduates and employers, and industry visits. Empirical data were collected through exit surveys of students and industry participants. The author did not specify how many students were surveyed, response rate, and whether surveys were administered face-to-face or online. Surveys were completed by 33 senior industry presenters, 27 recent graduates and 26 different professional organizations. Data indicated that from the perspective of students, graduates and employers, the forum is an effective employability strategy. Eighty per cent of survey respondents indicated a belief that "the forum improved their prospect of becoming employed in the industry" (p. 87) and "89% of industry feedback confirm[ed] students present for work as more employable … as a result of the forum" (p. 88).

The four authors of the next study to be addressed here, (Jorre de St Jorre, Elliott, Johnson, & Bisset, 2019) are all from **Deakin University**. Their research included second and third year science students from **four Australian universities**. In total, 138 students were individually interviewed or participated as focus group participants. Response rates were not reported. One of the overall research questions was, "what do students believe will help them gain employment or develop employability" (p. 30). Many students expressed concerns about not developing the skills through their programs of studies to get and succeed in graduate jobs (i.e. students were critical about their universities not using a *curricular* employability model). The authors wrote about students not being made aware of a link between student assessment and employability. This finding concurs with the findings of Kinash, McGillivray and Crane (2018) whereby qualitative analysis was conducted of responses to questions about employability to see which stakeholder groups would self-raise assessment as catalyst (to employability). Their findings revealed that students did not think of assessment when asked what works for employability.

A team led by the **Australian Council of Engineering Deans**, with partners from **12 Australian universities**, surveyed engineering students from 11 of those universities (Male & King, 2019). In an online survey, 214 students rated 13 *curricular* and 1 *co-curricular* strategy (interaction with professional engineers through a student society) on improving their understanding of engineering practice. Response rates were not provided. A key finding was that the highest rated strategies were those with visible employer involvement. As part of the same project, three academics supervised six final year engineering student researchers across two universities (Bennett & Male, 2017). The students studied employability strategies and associated student development. The findings of these studies concur with those Nguyen, Male, Bennett, and Maynard (2013), who surveyed a purposive sample of 10 students about their employability and found that the students who had completed *co-curricular* engineering-related employment had better recognition of the need to improve their communication, teamwork, and understanding of contact and sustainability, than did students who had not completed engineering-related employment.

Adopting and applying the DRAFT *USQ Employability Strategy* to your courses and programs

This next section specifically addresses the approaches presented in the *DRAFT*[1] *USQ Employability Strategy* and provides some guidance as to how you might adopt and apply each in your context.

As experts in the situations, characteristics and cultures of your student cohort, and in your curriculum, discipline and industry/ies, it is up to you to decide which approaches will work in your courses and in your overall program.

You do not need to action each, or all, of these approaches.

Employability Pillars

There are **5 pillars** (**2 enablers** and **3 strategies**) of the *USQ Employability Strategy*.

- **Enabler 1: Embedded in courses and programs** – Assure the design and provision of a comprehensive suite of high-quality programs, curricula and learning opportunities, in a flexible and supportive environment, that advance the employability of all students and graduates and develop students and graduates to be global citizens in a rapidly changing world.
- **Enabler 2: Supported through infrastructure and analytic data** – Increase institutional provisions and opportunities to support, evaluate and continually improve employability capability development and entrepreneurial mindsets for students, including through building staff capacity.
- **Strategy 3: Work Integrated Learning** – Provide robust Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placements and/or opportunities (across programs) for all USQ students through aligning industry-needs and disciplinary-nuanced curriculum and assessment, and through further developing high-quality standardised administrative supports and systems.
- **Strategy 4: Learning Integrated Work** – Review and credit prior/current work experience and/or co-design degrees with industry and community groups to support focussed cohorts of graduates to advance their respective communities through Learning Integrated Work (LIW) initiatives.
- **Strategy 5: Additional Employer Engagement** – Coordinate and maximise multi-dimensional engagement with professional practice and external stakeholders, including with graduates and employers, and through student volunteering.

1 **Note:** The USQ Employability Strategy is designated as DRAFT because COVID-19 has resulted in a delay of full consultation, resulting in a final version.

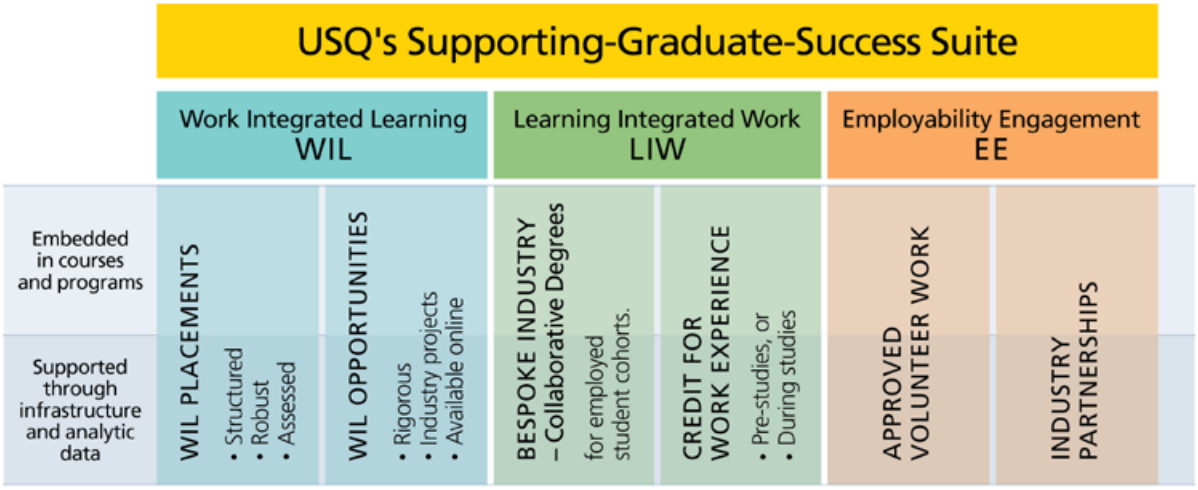
USQ Employability Model

The *USQ Employability Model* depicts the distinctive employability advantage for students and industry, whereby these primary stakeholders have access to a full suite of strategies and enablers to support the success of graduates and the global workforce.

USQ's robust *enablers* ensure that employability is **embedded in courses and programs**, to minimise the time students with busy lives need to dedicate to their education beyond their course-based studies. Also enabling, USQ's employability supports include well-planned **infrastructure and analytic data** so that we can respond by continually improving our employability offer.

All students can take advantage of between *one and six strategies*, including:

- **Work Integrated Learning** (WIL), as *placements* or other *opportunities*
- **Learning Integrated Work** (LIW), either through participating in *bespoke industry-collaborative degrees* and/or through achieving *credit for work experience* prior to, or alongside, their degree studies
- **Employability Engagement** through approved *volunteer work* and/or other structured *industry partnerships*.



Adopting and applying the DRAFT *USQ Employability Strategy* to your courses and programs

Embedded in courses and programs

Enabler 1: Embedded in courses and programs – Assure the design and provision of a comprehensive suite of high-quality programs, curricula and learning opportunities, in a flexible and supportive environment, that advance the employability of all students and graduates and develop students and graduates to be global citizens in a rapidly changing world.

Initiatives	Ideas for Application	Your Notes
1.1 Assure rigorous employability evaluation and close-the-loop on employability recommendations deriving from the regular cycle of course and program review for course renewal, annual program assessment, program accreditation and to meet regulatory requirements.	Draft a set of Employability and Careers questions (aligned with your Professional Body standards, if applicable) which you respond to in all program and course reviews going forward. Close-the-Loop.	
1.2 Provide a consistent and transparent employability interface through all USQ StudyDesks to maximise student career identification, networks and clear connections between curricula and industry.	Co-create an explicit student-facing employability and careers statement and include on every course StudyDesk in the program. Create career profile videos of program graduates and link to the online collection in course-based StudyDesk announcements.	
1.3 Facilitate the embedding of employability and career development across the curriculum by developing embedded course resources for identified relevant courses in all programs.	Consider the career-relevant knowledge, skills, attributes and identity developed in each assessment task and student learning activity, and include this as text in the assessment description.	

Supported through infrastructure and analytic data

Enabler 2: Supported through infrastructure and analytic data –
Increase institutional provisions and opportunities to support, evaluate and continually improve employability capability development and entrepreneurial mindsets for students, including through building staff capacity.

Initiatives	Ideas for Application	Your Notes
2.1 Introduce a compulsory measure, record and register of UG & PG student career and employability readiness (Career Registration) at point of enrolment, a second year check-in, and at graduation and beyond, through an @USQ toolkit, to ascertain and responsively support growth in employability learning gain throughout student and graduate learning/career journeys.	Work with the *USQ Alumni Office* and *USQ Careers & Employability* to develop measures you would like to track in your students' and graduates' journeys from future student application through to transition from the first graduate job. Use this data to close-the-loop, improving the program of studies.	
2.2 Introduce a formal process for assessing, tracking, and formally reporting UG student progress against relevant graduate attributes and program learning outcomes.	Identify and nominate a program team member to contribute to this University-wide work.	
2.3 Add optional questions, and analyse responses, to QILT data collection (SEQ employability scale), including: • working within regions, • whether previously employed students remain with same employer • graduate promotions.	Identify and nominate a program team member to contribute to this University-wide work.	

Adopting and applying the DRAFT *USQ Employability Strategy* to your courses and programs

Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Strategy 3: Work Integrated Learning – Provide robust Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placements and/or opportunities (across programs) for all USQ students through aligning industry-needs and disciplinary-nuanced curriculum and assessment, and through further developing high-quality standardized administrative supports and systems.

Initiatives	Ideas for Application	Your Notes
3.1 Establish and maintain consistent university-wide WIL supports, systems, expectations, engagement and administration, by supporting Faculty-based coordinating positions to enact WIL placements and WIL opportunities.	Review your current WIL practices and opportunities. Write and enact an improvement plan. Some questions to consider: • Are the students who are most disadvantaged and/or who most need WIL given ample opportunity and support to participate? • Are the administrative systems efficient?	
3.2 Improve University-wide transparency (including to students) of WIL placements and WIL opportunities, and simplify consistent WIL student experiences and processes.	Create a standard and consistent student-facing invitation and encouragement to participate in WIL and upload as an announcement on every course StudyDesk.	
3.3 Identify creative WIL opportunities for online learners, students with challenging circumstances and to fill additional identified gaps. • This is to include establishment of a 3RO Institute (Regional, Rural, Remote & Online) to co-create, research and test solutions to relevant problems, as WIL opportunities.	Pursue and add new WIL opportunities (including in collaboration with *Careers & Employability*) to establish new WIL which is regional, rural, remote and/or online.	

Learning Integrated Work (LIW)

Strategy 4: Learning Integrated Work –
Review and credit prior/current work experience and/or co-design degrees with industry and community groups to support focussed cohorts of graduates to advance their respective communities through Learning Integrated Work (LIW) initiatives.

Initiatives	Ideas for Application	Your Notes
4.1 Apply the *Prior/Current Work Experience Credit* procedure to acknowledge/award student equivalent completions, as part of the curriculum/program.	Create robust case studies of prior and/or current student work experience which could garner future students course exemptions/credit.	
4.2 Consult with regional, rural, remote and online employers to identify gaps wherein groups of staff (cohorts), and their industries, would benefit from completing bespoke degrees while working. • Design, model and manage administration, student experience, degree registration, evaluation, financing and all other components of bespoke degrees.	Identify a regional, rural, remote and/or online employer, who employs a group of people (e.g. 12–50) who would benefit from a bespoke, creatively administered degree, offered in a blended mode online and at the workplace. Co-create a formal proposal.	
4.3 Apply the USQ micro-credential strategy and key recommendations from USQ UpSkill to develop micro-credential units as key components of the LIW bespoke degrees.	Identify a need and business case for a new set of three micro-courses and create a formal proposal.	

Adopting and applying the DRAFT *USQ Employability Strategy* to your courses and programs

Employability Engagement

Strategy 5: Employability Engagement – Coordinate and maximise multi-dimensional engagement with professional practice and external stakeholders, including with graduates and employers, and through student volunteering.

Initiatives	Ideas for Application	Your Notes
5.1 Develop an expanded and enhanced suite of opportunities to bring employers, graduates and professional associations on-campus and online into UG & PG course and program sites including, but not limited to, joint University/Industry/ Student conferences and industry-engaged lectures.	Schedule a Program-wide Workshop to map-out specific plans (who, what, where, when, how) to bring employers, graduates and professional associations on-campus and online. Enact, evaluate and build-on this success.	
5.2 Create a *University/Industry Partners* (UIP) initiative whereby competitive applications are submitted by academic and professional staff to spend a semester in-industry, renewing their industry skills, increasing engagement within industry and co-creating industry-based opportunities for student engagement.	Create a formal Expression of Interest (EOI) process to identify a minimum of one academic and one professional staff member in your program to participate in the UIP initiative. Nominate one Program member to join a University-wide committee to roll-out the UIP.	
5.3 Formalise and enact a procedure to advertise, coordinate, support and acknowledge student completion of robust volunteer opportunities.	Form a Program-based committee on Volunteering. Invite a member of Careers & Employability to join the committee. Write specific KPIs, enact, evaluate and improve.	

Definitions

Career Development Learning:
Learning centred upon the relations among the student, their academic discipline and the world of work[2].

Career Registration:
A measure of where each student is (on point of enrolment) where they want to get to e.g. decide phase, plan phase, competed phase, and the progression of graduates, as assessed each year. This enables the University to plan interventions targeted at where the student/graduate is and to understand the employability learning gain and graduate achievements. The University will thus map employability development across the curriculum.

Co-curriculum:
Whereas extra-curricular activities are separate and apart from the formal learning program, universities align co-curricular activities with formal education so that such activities are part of the overall learning experience to support employable graduates. Activity examples include university sport, club/society membership and student leadership[3].

Employability:
"A set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the work force, the community and the economy."[4]

Entrepreneurial mindset:
Behaviours that are oriented towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes, either within an organisation, new employment creation or individual endeavours, focused on creating opportunities, innovation and new value creation[5].

Graduate Attributes:
"The qualities, skills and disciplinary expertise that Students should develop during their time with the University and which are valued by the University Community, employers and society."[6]

Professional Identity:
Work related disposition and identify related to the understanding of and connection with the skills, qualities, conduct, culture and ideology of a student's profession or intended profession[7].

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and **Learning Integrated Work** (LIW) are flipped versions of the joining-up of university and industry experiences.

- In WIL, the student's primary environment is university-based, and they go-out into industry (through placements or other opportunities, such as online project-based collaboration) to gain vital work experience and build networks while studying.
- In LIW, the student's primary environment is industry-based, and they pursue university to increase credentials, apply theory and to engage in research, often to enable promotion. Whereas in WIL, the student often goes-out into the workforce for a period of time, LIW often involves the university staff (including academics) going-out to industry settings to facilitate education.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL):
An "umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum."[8]

- At USQ, the definition of WIL is applied to mean formal organised *placements* or other structured WIL *opportunities*, in which students:

  a) *do* authentic assessed work

  b) are supervised / given feedback by academics and *industry staff*

  c) participate / contribute in *usual environments* for that industry (including online).

Learning Integrated Work (LIW):
Providing credit for student work experience completed pre or during studies, and/or a formal initiative in which the University and [an] employer/s and/or community group co-create a bespoke flexible degree curriculum, schedule and process to meet the education/ credentialing needs of a group of staff, who become a student cohort.

- University staff go to the industry site to facilitate much of the learning in the in-situ environment, and online learning is provided through micro-credentials.

2 Brown, J. L., Healy, M., McCredie, T., & McIlveen, P. (2019). Career services in Australian higher education: aligning the training of practitioners to contemporary practice. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 41*(5), 518–533.

3 www.GraduateEmployability.com

4 Knight, P., & Yorke, M. (2002). Employability through the curriculum. *Tertiary Education and Management, 8,* 261-276.

5 Di Fabio, A. (2014). Intrapreneurial self-capital: A new construct for the 21st century. *Journal of Employment Counselling, 51*(3), 98–111.

6 University of Southern Queensland (2019). *Graduate Attributes Policy.*

7 Jackson, D. (2016). Re-conceptualising graduate employability: The importance of pre-professional identity, *Higher Education Research and Development (5)*35, 295–939.

8 http://cdn1.acen.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/National-WIL-Strategy-in-university-education-032015.pdf

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