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The Future is Connection:

Collaboration, Creativity and Compassion in a Digital Society

Beyond graduate attributes: Embedding employability through reflective practice and work-integrated learning

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Graduate employability has become a strategic priority across higher education, yet development of employability capabilities often remains fragmented, positioned outside the curriculum through co-curricular activities or graduate attribute frameworks that lack developmental coherence (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021). This poster asks: *how can employability capabilities be scaffolded longitudinally through reflective practice and Work-Integrated Learning to develop professional identity and career resilience in AI-enabled professional contexts*? It presents the curriculum design rationale for the Bachelor of Applied Business at UNSW College, commencing October 2026, demonstrating how digital infrastructure, systematic reflection, and authentic workplace learning build career-ready graduates who work critically with emerging technologies.

The design positions reflection not as an isolated assessment task but as career development pedagogy, building metacognitive capability, professional identity, and adaptive resilience across three years. This draws on foundational theories of reflective practice (Schön, 1992) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991), integrated with contemporary scholarship on professional identity formation (Jackson, 2016, 2017) and career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The scaffolded architecture moves from foundational self-awareness tasks in Year 1, through applied workplace reflection during industry placements in Year 2, to integrative professional identity synthesis in the Year 3 capstone—providing authentic contexts for capability development throughout the degree.

This progression is enabled through Canvas LMS integrated with the Stackle reflective learning platform. Stackle creates a longitudinal ePortfolio where students document reflective entries across all courses, receive structured prompts aligned to developmental focus, and build a cumulative narrative of professional growth. The curriculum embeds industry engagement through industry-informed assessment tasks across 100% of courses, formal placements, and a capstone industry project. Reflective practice is explicitly connected to each WIL experience through Stackle, requiring students to analyse workplace challenges and articulate capability development—an approach shown to strengthen pre-professional identity formation (Jackson, 2017; Trede et al., 2012). The platform enables integrated feedback from academic supervisors and industry mentors, making capability development visible to students, educators, and potential employers.

Embedding AI fluency as a professional capability is central to this design. Rather than treating generative AI as peripheral or threatening to assessment integrity, the curriculum positions AI literacy as essential to contemporary professional practice. Students engage with transparent AI disclosure practices in reflection, use AI tools critically to analyse workplace data, and develop ethical reasoning frameworks for AI use. Assessment structures centre human judgment and applied problem-solving—reflective analysis, workplace challenge responses, and professional presentations—requiring critical thinking about AI outputs rather than uncritical acceptance. This responds to contemporary debates about authentic assessment in AI-mediated learning environments (Bearman et al., 2023), positioning graduates as professionals who work with AI critically and ethically.

This poster presents: (1) the theoretical framework; (2) the three-year reflective practice progression model; (3) the WIL integration strategy with 100% industry-informed assessment; and (4) design principles for embedding AI fluency. The contribution is a replicable framework for

embedding employability longitudinally while leveraging digital infrastructure to support human agency in AI-augmented professional contexts.

Keywords: Reflective practice, Work-Integrated Learning, human-centred design, AI-enabled learning, professional identity

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