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# GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

ADEPT: Resources for Educators Series

August 2021

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*This guide to the University of Adelaide's **Graduate Employability Framework** has been designed to support university educators and professional staff in the creation, mapping, and review of learning experiences, courses, and programs which contribute to the development of student employability. There is a particular focus on the design and mapping of a crucial element of employability development: *WIL-in-the-Curriculum*.*

This guide was produced collaboratively by staff from the ADEPT Professional Development Program for Educators and staff from Learning Enhancement and Innovation with expert advice provided by:

- Employability Community of Practice

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### **To support your practice**

You can use this guide as a workbook for recording your responses to the reflection prompts, taking notes on how the ideas presented may be adapted to your context, and identifying actions.

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# What is employability?

*The achievement of a set of understandings, skilful practices, and personal attributes, that make it more likely for a graduate to successfully transition to employment and to contribute in ways that benefit themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy.*<sup>1-3</sup>

Employability requires both the attainment of discipline expertise, including technical skills, and personal qualities supporting transferable skills.<sup>4</sup>

Employability is <sup>2,3,5</sup>	Employability is not
The multifaceted characteristics of an individual developed through reflection on and achievement of a set of personally relevant understandings, practices, and attributes	A list of skills or attributes to be taught
The responsibility of all stakeholders in the University community: students, educators, professional staff, community and industry partners	The sole responsibility of one individual or one area within the University
The potential to gain, re-gain, create, and sustain employment	The same as gaining employment
Derived from complex learning within an integrated set of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences	Developed through a singular type of intervention (for example work experience or career development learning activities)
A lifelong learning endeavour	Completed at graduation

## Reflection Point

Does the definition provided change your thinking about what employability is? If yes, how?

If you think about your experience as a student and as a professional, what type of experiences contributed to the development of your own employability?

# Principles of Employability

- The University will take a whole-institution, integrated approach to the development of graduate employability through curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular learning.
- Development of graduate employability is a key priority for the University of Adelaide and is an explicit outcome of our educational proposition.
- Development of graduates' employability is a University-wide responsibility, shared by and undertaken in partnership across the whole University community.
- Employability development is central to students' learning experience; it is germane to transformative lifelong learning and is intrinsically connected with academic learning and the deep discipline knowledge at the core of our educational proposition.
- Employability development strategies will be embedded in all of the University's academic programs. The way in which this is achieved will be determined at a local level to accommodate disciplinary differences.
- The University will partner with employers, industry, community organisations, and alumni to support students' employability development.

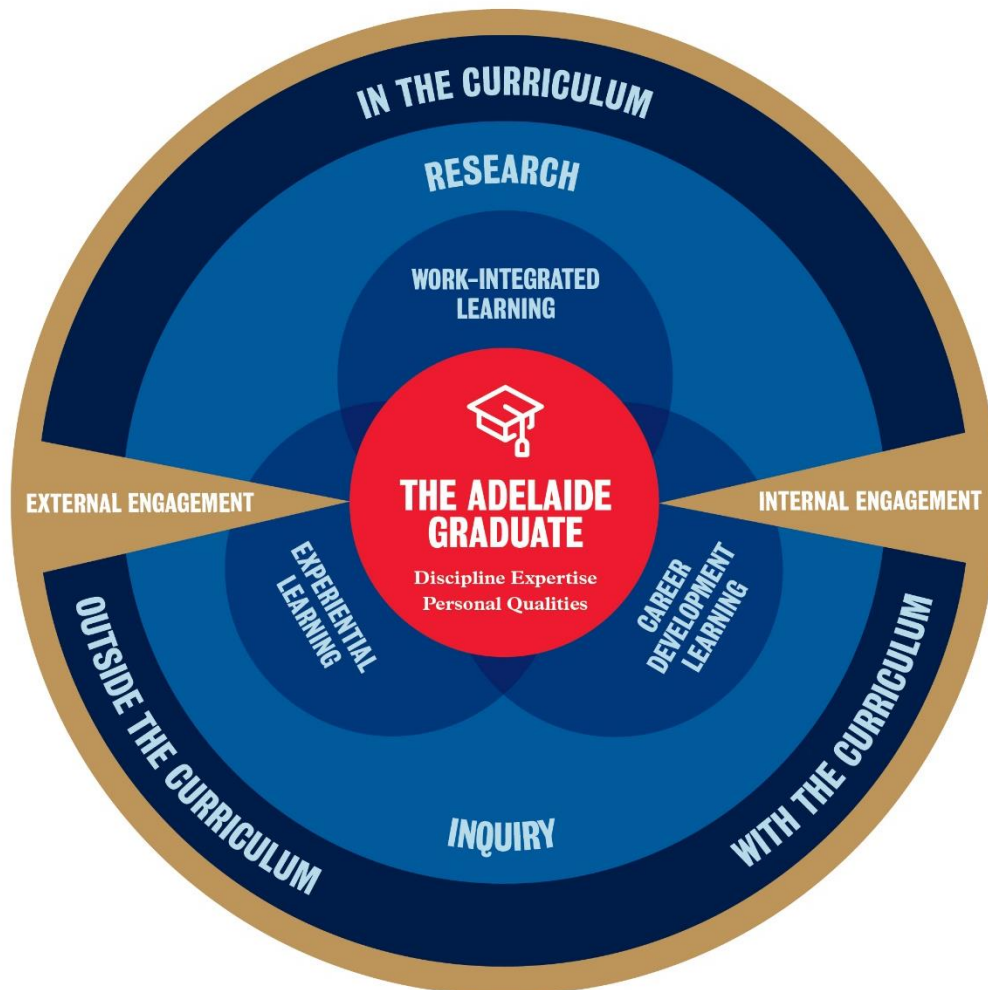
## Reflection Point

What do you see your role is in the development of students' employability?

How supported do you feel in achieving the requirements of your role regarding the development of students' employability? What type of support and resources would enable you to better fulfil this role?

# Employability Development Model

Figure 1: The University of Adelaide Graduate Employability Development Model  
([click here for a screen readable version](#))



## 1. Mapping to the graduate attributes

Central to the model is the Adelaide Graduate who develops a unique combination of knowledge, skills, behaviours and personal qualities across the student lifecycle, embodying the [University's Graduate Attributes](#).

## 2. Educational approaches

Three main types of learning and teaching approach are key to the development of employability:

- **Experiential learning** is an approach that immerses students in an experience and then provides opportunities for reflection on and theory-building around the experience that leads to the development of new skills and ways of thinking.<sup>6</sup>
- **Work-integrated learning (WIL)**, when intentionally aligned to learning outcomes, is crucial to graduate employability as it allows the explicit connection of theoretical learning to practical application.<sup>4,7</sup>

- **Career Development Learning (CDL)** provides students with the skills, knowledge, attributes, and attitudes to manage their professional lives. CDL is most effective when it is delivered as part of the curriculum through partnerships that optimise the expertise of both the [Careers Service](#) and academic staff.<sup>2</sup>

As the educational proposition of the University is shaped by research and inquiry, the foundations for the development of graduate skills and capabilities vital for employability are in place. Authentic learning and assessment approaches that challenge students to solve real-world problems integrated with a work-related experience will develop critical thinking, collaboration, interpersonal communication, and creativity. The approach is inclusive of entrepreneurial and enterprise learning as these are key aspects of employability for all students.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Settings for employability development

Employability development occurs in the curriculum, as well as with and outside of it.<sup>4</sup>

### 4. Stakeholder engagement

Many people across the internal and external University community contribute to the employability of our graduates including, but not limited to, students, academic staff, Careers Service, professional staff, alumni, employers, industry, government and community stakeholders.<sup>1,2,8</sup> It should also be noted WIL opportunities can be hosted by departments within the University of Adelaide, and therefore partners are internal as well as external.

#### Reflection Point

Which elements of the University of Adelaide Graduate Employability Development Model are most relevant in your role?

Which of the elements do you think you need to learn more about? What steps could you take to find out more about them?

# Effective approaches to developing employability

## Identify approaches appropriate to your context

No single approach is the key to developing graduate employability; it is the combination of a range of activities which ultimately contribute to the enhancement of graduate employability and the success of our graduates.

**RESOURCE:** [Approach for enhancing employability and their relationship to the Adelaide Graduate Employability Model](#)

## Map employability approaches across the student lifecycle

To effectively develop graduate employability, all the elements of the employability development model (Figure 1) need to be incorporated and scaffolded throughout the student experience to build skills, knowledge, aptitudes and confidence.

**It is important to note that this does not require extensive addition of learning and assessment activities to the curriculum.** Rather, it enables the extraction of where employability is developed in the existing curriculum and aid in making it explicit.<sup>9</sup>

**RESOURCE:** [Employability across the student lifecycle matrix and template for program design](#)

### Reflection Point

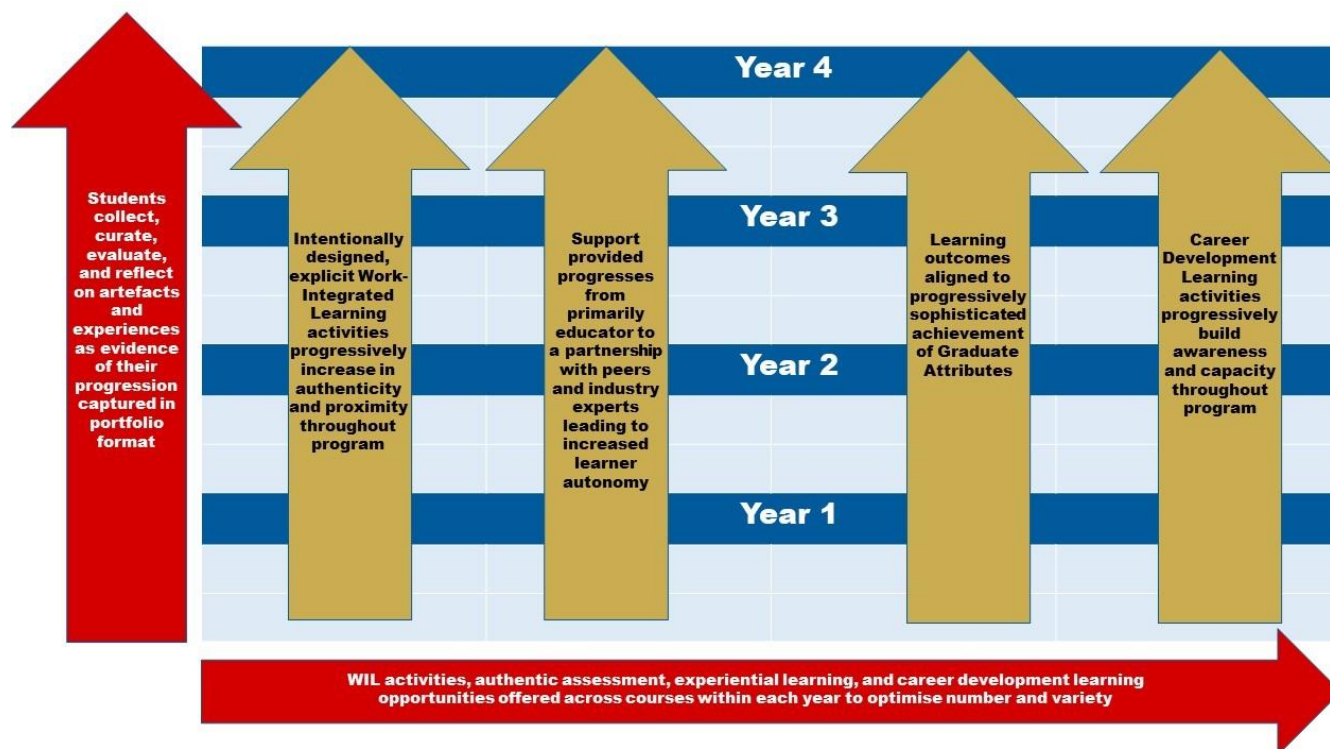
Which of these approaches and tools are relevant for your work as an educator or professional staff member?  
How can they inform the approach you take to developing students' employability?  
How do you make the link between learning activities, WIL experiences, or the course, and employability development explicit for students?



## Map employability development in program curriculum

The Program Level Curriculum-for-Employability Mapping tool (Figure 3) is designed to be used in new program development and to guide program review and enhancement.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 2: Program level curriculum for employability mapping tool<sup>11</sup> ([Screen readable version](#))



## Map and embed WIL in the curriculum

WIL is 'an umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum'.<sup>12</sup> The [Graduate Employability Framework](#) provides an explanation of WIL principles and types for the University.

The WIL-in-the-Curriculum tool (Figure 4) provides guidance on which types of assessment tasks are categorised as WIL and on how these can be scaffolded within a course as appropriate for its place within a program and the student lifecycle.

The tool supports:

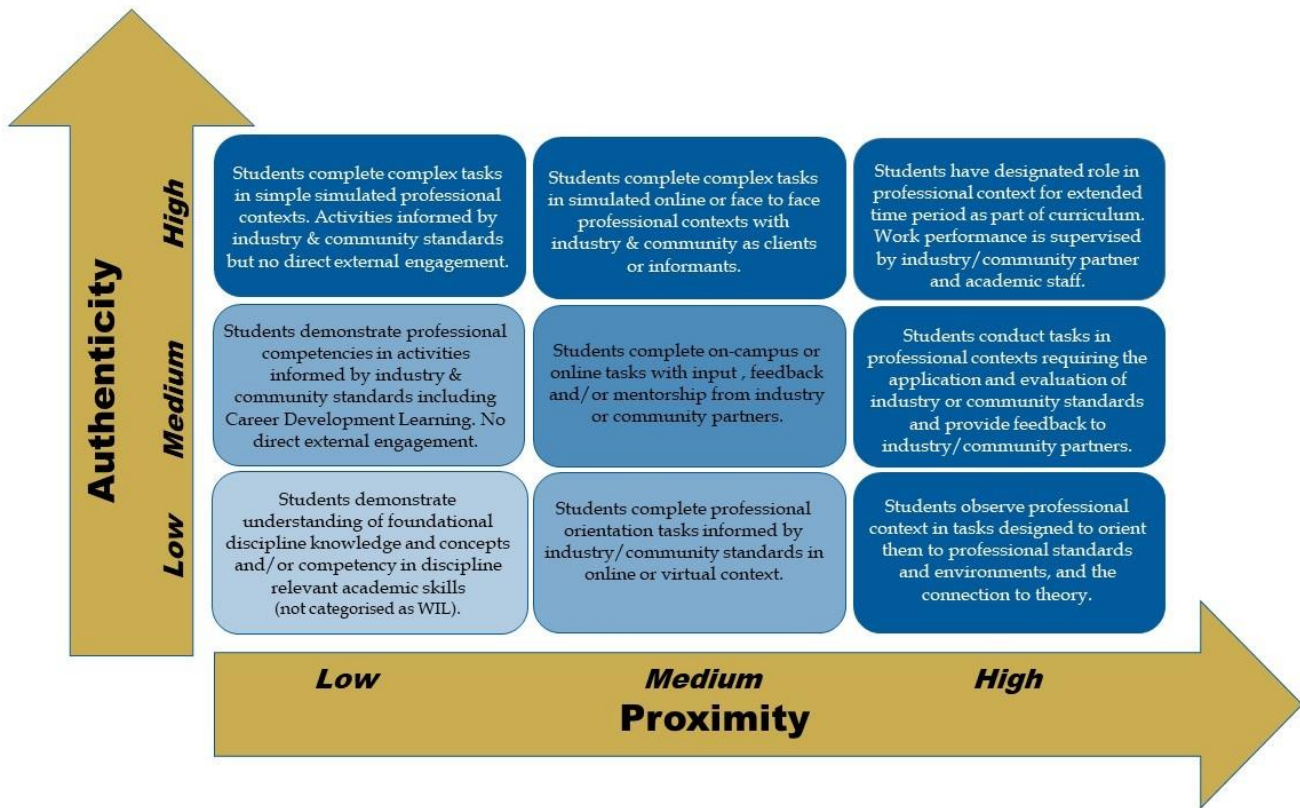
- Faculties in conducting program level mapping and evaluation of WIL-in-the-Curriculum
- Academic staff in the design of course level WIL activities that contribute to program level development of employability
- Student understanding of how the development of their employability is enabled within courses across a program. Providing information to students on how a learning activity, a course, or a program contributes to the development of their employability is vital for engagement.

Please note:

- [Australian Qualification Framework](#) requirements still need to be met through assessments such as essays.<sup>13</sup> The tool does not privilege some forms of assessment over others, rather it allows for a variety of assessment types to be mapped.

- Descriptions of the purpose of the assessment tasks within each section of the tool are provided so that Schools can develop relevant and consistent examples of assessment types.

Figure 3: WIL in the curriculum design and mapping tool<sup>14-16</sup> ([Screen readable version](#))



### Reflection Point

Note some actions you can now take as a result of reviewing the material in this guide.

### Professional Development Opportunity

[ADEPT Designing and Delivering Quality WIL online module.](#)

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