WORK-INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT: SCAFFOLDING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SCIENCE COHORTS

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Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is a common feature of tertiary education curriculums across disciplines, valued for its notable impact on increasing graduate employability (Aprile & Knight, 2020; Jackson & Dean, 2023). The highly competitive job market has increased the pressure on universities to ensure that graduates can recognise and evidence the skills and attributes sought by employers (Sarkar et al., 2016). While WIL programs equip students with disciplinary-specific career skills, they also provide a key opportunity to ensure students graduate with competency in the skills needed to confidently apply and interview for a job.
The UNSW Science WIL program (established 2022) is delivered across seven schools, with disciplines ranging from Physics, Biology, Aviation and Psychology. All students receive the same assessment and training opportunities, with additional discipline-specific training. Feedback from students and industry partners over the last two years of the program revealed an increased desire for students to practice job application skills such as professional reflection, responding to selection criteria, and interview approaches.

As Educational Developers in the Faculty of Science, we are leading the assessment redesign to meet the needs of students and industries, reduce overassessment and marking burden, and consider scalability. We will share our methods and challenges in embedding and scaffolding employability skills by integrating pedagogy and technology. We will highlight a method to assess communication skills in job interviews, the area where students expressed the most interest according to the faculty's latest market research, using the video interview platform Vieple, which is currently used by various employers including government organisations, consulting firms and universities (Vieple, 2024). We will also discuss the challenges of incorporating ethical use of GenAI in the assessment tasks, both to ensure integrity and to build competency in the use of GenAI in the job application process.

We believe that the new WIL assessments will encourage students to evaluate their personal experiences, reflect on their own strengths and areas of improvement, and provide an opportunity for students to practice ethical use of GenAI in education and employment skills.

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