

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR UNCERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES: CURRICULUM APPROACHES TO APPLYING DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS IN A FACULTY OF SCIENCE

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As exemplified by COVID-19, we are living in increasingly uncertain times. What it means to 'be a scientist' is dynamic. This presentation describes the innovative design, delivery, and implementation of 32 interdisciplinary capstone units at the University of Sydney Faculty of Science, including the pivot to online delivery in 2020 and initial evaluation. These units were designed in response to University goals to integrate the graduate quality 'Interdisciplinary Effectiveness' into undergraduate degrees as well as to develop other complex graduate qualities which are well placed to prepare students to adapt and thrive in situations of uncertainty.

These capstones partner science disciplines across majors to facilitate multidisciplinary student teams to work on solving authentic interdisciplinary problems through inquiry-based learning. They share a novel assessment scheme which includes a high proportion of group work, peer evaluation, and reflection on graduate quality development. The units seek to support students to apply their disciplinary knowledge to interdisciplinary problems. We will share the benefits and challenges of this approach to developing and integrating a complex interdisciplinary graduate quality, as well as sharing and reflecting on the process of delivering a suite of new highly hands-on, project- and team-based units online during COVID-19.

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