

INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY IN SCIENCE GRADUATES THROUGH LONGITUDINAL COURSE DESIGN

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Employability for our graduates, especially in science disciplines, is typically lower than that of other, more vocational areas such as computing or engineering. One of the reasons is a lack of opportunities for work experience during the program of study, but also a lack of employability skills and preparedness for work. In Science degrees, these aspects are often neglected in curriculum design in favour of more discipline-specific content.

We have recently designed a degree-spanning curriculum, that embeds employability skills into every year of all our three-year undergraduate Bachelors degrees in Science. Students are encouraged to think and prepare for future employment from day one onwards and build throughout their degree a competitive employability portfolio.

In year 1, students start to think about employability skills, start building a resume and are exposed to some professional skills. In year 2, these skills are further refined, with a focus on communication and professionalism. Finally, in year 3, the skills are applied in either a simulated work environment or a placement in industry.

Initial analysis of the design had shown a significant increase in preparedness for work in third-year students.

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