UOW Curriculum Model

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UOW Curriculum Model

Abstract
The Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) is an ambitious four-year plan to build on and enhance UOW's national and international reputation for top quality teaching and learning that maximises student success. It builds on the outstanding work done by UOW academics over many years and seeks to enhance our reputation for innovative teaching and learning practices. Each faculty has a strong tradition of good practice unique to the demands of their discipline which will be highlighted as we develop and share resources for implementation of the project. The CTP will also build on previous university-wide initiatives such as the development and embedding of graduate qualities and the many successful ESDF and OLT/ALTC projects led by UOW academics. The CTP team will work with the newly established Wollongong Academy of Tertiary Teaching and Learning Excellence (WATTLE) to celebrate and build on this tradition.

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The authors acknowledge the following research sources:

Barnett, Ronald, 2011, Imagining the University, Routledge, London
Denny, S., Durkin, C., Irwin, W., Moore, C. and Toyer, B. 2012 “Developing a Socially Entrepreneurial University”. Invited Presentation presented to: 2012 Conference on Entrepreneurial Universities, Munster, Germany, 25-27 April
Huber, Mary and Hutchings, Pat, 2004, Integrative Learning Mapping the Terrain, AACU, Washington
Ryan, Alex & Tilbury, Daniella, 2013, Flexible Pedagogies: New Pedagogical Ideas, HEA, London

We also thank Dilly Fung whose ideas on the “connected curriculum” influenced the model.
The Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) is an ambitious four-year plan to build on and enhance UOW’s national and international reputation for top quality teaching and learning that maximises student success. It builds on the outstanding work done by UOW academics over many years and seeks to enhance our reputation for innovative teaching and learning practices. Each faculty has a strong tradition of good practice unique to the demands of their discipline which will be highlighted as we develop and share resources for implementation of the project. The CTP will also build on previous university-wide initiatives such as the development and embedding of graduate qualities and the many successful ESDF and OLT/ALTC projects led by UOW academics. The CTP team will work with the newly established Wollongong Academy of Tertiary Teaching and Learning Excellence (WATTLE) to celebrate and build on this tradition.

The CTP will conduct a holistic review of all UOW courses that will:

- ensure they meet regulatory requirements embodied in the Higher Education Standards;
- develop existing UOW good practice subject and course design;
- plan for effective technical infrastructure to support course delivery and evaluation;
- seed and enable the next generation of curriculum innovation.

This document outlines a set of characteristics to inspire and guide this curriculum renewal process. It designates a set of:

**Themes**: broad clusters of ideas, values and orientations which characterise our curriculum model

**Principles**: research-based guidelines which are applicable to curriculum design across disciplines, level of study and delivery mode

**Transformational practices**: a set of proven programmatic educational solutions which are transformative and have a major positive impact on the student learning experience.
### UOW Curriculum Themes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research/Enquiry Based</strong></td>
<td>The UOW curriculum will induct students into a rich set of research and inquiry processes that may include empirical, interdisciplinary, practice-based and creative research activity. This will develop connections between learning, academic research, critical enquiry and problem-solving. It will offer students opportunities to engage ethically with global challenges and to undertake mutually beneficial research related to professions and communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Real World Focused</strong></td>
<td>The UOW curriculum will engage students with key professional or disciplinary scenarios and skill sets that model, simulate or address real-world practice. This focus brings the world into the classroom and takes students out into the community or profession. They progressively develop skills, aptitudes and values that equip UOW graduates to operate confidently and responsibly in a diverse range of complex situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technology Enriched</strong></td>
<td>The UOW curriculum will be technology-enriched in its delivery and content and will prepare graduates to be digitally literate, technologically-engaged professionals. Students will use a wide range of technologies, media, tools and platforms to learn, create and connect with peers, teachers, researchers, communities and professions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectually Challenging</strong></td>
<td>The UOW curriculum will challenge students to think broadly and critically within and outside their disciplines and apply this knowledge to a range of complex questions and/or diverse situations. Carefully designed learning activities and open, flexible curriculum structures will empower students to be adventurous in their learning by exploring unfamiliar and challenging subject matter and pressing global questions.</td>
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### UOW Curriculum Design Principles

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transition</strong></td>
<td>A curriculum-integrated approach that enables a smooth, supported shift into higher education at UOW and a successful transition from UOW to the world of work and lifelong learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Synthesis</strong></td>
<td>A curriculum-integrated approach that provides multiple, connected and sequenced opportunities for students to share, synthesise and integrate their learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Broadening</strong></td>
<td>A curriculum-integrated approach that compels a breadth of focus for learning beyond the student’s primary area of study and recognises the interconnected nature of today’s global challenges and the value multi-disciplinary teams bring to the modern workplace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transformational Practices: *Five key educational solutions will be integrated into all courses to bring the themes to life*

**FYE@UOW**

UOW courses will be carefully designed to provide a discipline-specific, curriculum-integrated first year experience which enables students to learn how to learn and provides a critical foundation for future academic success. When combined with UOW’s suite of institutional supports, these initiatives will improve both student retention rates and academic outcomes.

FYE@UOW, will ensure students’ transition to university learning is supported through a structured, integrated approach to the development of essential academic skills, knowledge and values. This will include an enhanced focus on formative assessment that introduces students to the cycle of evaluation, feedback, reflection and improvement vital to university and lifelong learning.

Integrated FYE@UOW programs will ensure that all students are provided with resources, learning tasks, and feedback that equip them to develop: English language proficiency; numeracy; digital literacies; academic integrity; and ethical awareness. FYE@UOW will introduce scaffolded opportunities for research/inquiry led, real-world focused and digitally enriched learning right from the first year of study, equipping students to participate as active learners as they transition to further complex academic work.

Connections across subjects and pathways to future learning will be clearly articulated to assist students to build a framework for transition to later years and into the work force. A range of data will be provided to assist faculties to measure whole of course student success. Traditional calculations such as WAMs might be modified by faculties in some instances where there is a desire to recognise that students have strengths that lie in different areas and to take into account factors temporarily affecting student performance.

As a result of a successfully implemented FYE@UOW program students will develop core skills that equip them for learning across their degree and into the workplace.

**UOW GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

First Year Law: All first year Law students do a set of subjects that are carefully sequenced to ensure learning activities in each subject lead into or support activities in other subjects. Students are sent “connection alerts” throughout the academic session to make these links explicit. Students are allocated to a POD – a group with whom they study all subjects – to increase cohesion and peer support.
UOW courses will incorporate digital processes and practices that allow students to reflect on, document, evidence and share their achievements and their evolving understanding of, and progress toward, key disciplinary and professional concepts and practices. This use of reflective, self-managed learning processes not only contributes to academic success it also lays the foundations for patterns and practices of successful life-long learning. As well as also developing critical professional digital literacies.

Through My portfolio@UOW students will be given the opportunities, skills and resources to develop and showcase a diverse set of “real-world”, authentic digital artefacts and accompanying reflections on the progress of their learning and their realisation of course learning outcomes. This will be accomplished through selected subjects with assessments designed to produce professional work for inclusion in web-based collections and showcases. Students may also select additional material they believe evidences their achievements.

My portfolio@UOW draws on the widespread use of ePortfolios in higher education but is not restricted to traditional ePortfolio tools or practices. These web-based collections and showcases will:

- draw students and staff into the co-creation of learning experiences and assessment tasks
- integrate learning across a course
- support students in establishing a professional digital presence
- demonstrate evidence of student achievements
- provide a method of assuring student achievement of course learning outcomes
- may include both public-facing and restricted content
- showcase pieces of co-curricula or professional work
- create a personal record and become a valuable tool to demonstrate student ability to potential employers.

Courses may elect to use any suitable software or online tool, taking into account its sustainability, flexibility and ease of use for students and staff. Various options will be resourced and scaffolded for staff and students.

As a result of a successfully implemented My portfolio@UOW program, students will graduate as self-directed, reflective, digitally literate professionals who understand the processes of continuous learning.

UOW GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Bachelor of Communication & Media: students use a variety of web platforms throughout their degree to create both individual and group web-based projects. Students are taught to integrate their websites with social media creating an integrated professional digital presence.
UOW courses will incorporate a variety of hybrid learning experiences, which combine a range of approaches, strategies and delivery methods, providing students with a rich range of learning opportunities and the capacity to manage their own learning. This maximises the potential for success across the student cohort by catering to different learning styles. It also matches the diversity of communication and collaboration platforms and practices in contemporary workplaces and contributes to students becoming well-equipped, digitally-literate professionals.

Through Hybrid learning@UOW students will be offered a range of carefully designed learning opportunities that combine face-to-face, online, blended and open learning and encourage active participation. These opportunities will be flexible, collaborative and marked by variety in learning tasks, resources and delivery. They may include:
- highly developed eLearning sites using a variety of platforms
- online communication and collaboration tools
- incorporation of social media and open web resources
- innovative, creative tasks and assessments, including group-work
- combinations of work-based and classroom learning
- real-time and virtual simulated professional practice.

Within each course, designated subjects will be developed to employ “flipped classrooms”, hybrid pedagogies or blended learning techniques that move away from the traditional lecture/tutorial model ensuring all students will be offered a dynamic, exciting and engaging learning experience. Learning pathways which incorporate MOOCs, fully-online subjects and other forms of carefully developed open learning may be made available to students in some courses. Various flexible modes including mobile learning will also be explored and implemented.

*As a result of a successfully implemented Hybrid learning@UOW program students will become confident communicators and collaborators adept at using a range of platforms and technologies.*

**UOW GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE**

**Medicine:** After successfully developing a MOOC for UOW Open on “Understanding Common Diseases,” which was taken up by thousands of students internationally, the Graduate School of Medicine has now used this expertise to develop a similar set of video learning resources for use in their degree course among their widely dispersed students on regional placements.
Courses at UOW will introduce students to a broad understanding of diverse cultures as well as cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary ideas. Connections@UOW will provide additional knowledge and skills to ensure our graduates are agile, adaptable professionals who can succeed in a globalised world of increasing complexity. In engaging students with diverse ideas and new contexts, Connections@UOW will assist in broadening essential critical thinking skills and enrich students’ understanding of professional ethics.

Through Connections@UOW, student learning will include structured interactions in each course which challenge students to situate their disciplinary knowledge within broader perspectives. These opportunities will support the acquisition of cross or inter-disciplinary perspectives, global connections, Indigenous and cross-cultural understandings.

Examples include:

- subjects designed to provide a wider perspective within the discipline
- subjects selected from another discipline area
- international case studies
- virtual international collaborations, for example co-taught international subjects with joint activities
- study abroad opportunities (short course-specific or UOW semester exchange opportunities)
- exploration of Indigenous knowledges
- development of cross-cultural skills, knowledge and approaches
- exploration of differences marked by race, ethnicity, gender, sexualities or disability
- exploration of continuing struggles around the globe for human rights and sustainable ecological futures.

Each faculty will map Connections@UOW opportunities across the curriculum to guarantee student exposure to a diverse set of ideas and cross cultural understandings.

As a result of a successfully implemented Connections@UOW program students will be better equipped to act as informed and responsible global citizens.

UOW GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Engineering: a suite of subjects delivered in the Sustainable Engineering Integrated Learning Space combine project based professional skills development with a reflective focus on sustainability and humanitarian issues. This combination provides both a broadening perspective and a specific focus that spurs students to produce innovative and creative professional work.
UOW courses will provide students with a capstone experience. Through a major project, workplace or other authentic experience, capstones provide students with a way of integrating and applying knowledge and skills gained throughout their course. By applying this knowledge and skill to real world problems, capstones assist students in developing a confident professional identity necessary for a successful transition into the world of work.

Through Capstones@UOW all students will be provided with the opportunity to experience a significant final year capstone experience that involves relevance, complexity and independence in application to real-world, intellectually challenging situations and problems. They may involve, but are not exclusive to, independent research projects, client based projects, work-engaged learning projects, internships or professional placements.

Capstones will be supported in many courses by cornerstones throughout the degree (subjects that bring together learning from a sequence of study), My portfolio and showcasing opportunities.

A showcase within a capstone is recommended to provide the opportunity for students to share achievements with a wider audience (peers beyond the classroom and significant external stakeholders). Examples include:

- posting prototypes or posters on a virtual platform
- competitions
- presenting findings or ideas at a student event or as part of an academic or professional forum
- showcasing prototypes and solutions at an event aimed at industry professionals.

Evidence and reflections collected in My portfolio@UOW identify key capabilities and can help shape a student's choice of capstone experience. Capstones, in turn provide an opportunity to further shape the final portfolio of evidence and reflection.

As a result of a successfully integrated Capstones@UOW program students will graduate as more confident emerging professionals with a developed sense of career readiness.

UOW GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Business: A suite of final year subjects, including an independent research project, a group work simulated business development project and an internship provide options for different styles of capstone experiences for Commerce and Business students. Each of the subjects is designed to integrate and apply the degree's focus on socially responsible practice.
Learning experience exemplars: Additional educational solutions that will assist to integrate the UOW Curriculum Themes into courses

The UOW curriculum will induct students into a rich set of research and inquiry processes that may include empirical, inter-disciplinary, practice-based and creative research activity. This will develop connections between learning, academic research, critical enquiry and problem-solving. It will offer students opportunities to engage ethically with global challenges and to undertake mutually beneficial research related to professions and communities.

- Design and content informed by current discipline knowledge, including, research findings and literature, and new research topics and questions.
- Explorations of the basis of discipline knowledge.
- Engagement with ethical issues in research, including data collection and acknowledgement practices.
- Activities on problem solving, enquiry, analysis, reflection and critical thinking.
- Reflective practice – students reflecting on what and how they learn.
- Research activities that develop research skills.
- Student and academic collaboration on research projects.

The UOW curriculum will engage students with key professional or disciplinary scenarios and skill sets that model, simulate or address real-world problems. This focus brings the world into the classroom and takes students out into the community or profession. They progressively develop skills, aptitudes and values that equip UOW graduates to make decisions confidently and responsibly in a diverse range of complex situations.

- Real world simulations
- Authentic assessment tasks that model real world processes
- Work-based projects
- Group tasks structured to model the group dynamics of professional practice
- Explorations of professional communication and negotiation practices
- Professional master classes
- The creation of polished, professional work
- Short field visits
- Work integrated learning
- Internships
- Placements
- Practicums
The UOW curriculum will be technology-enriched in its delivery and content and will prepare graduates to be digitally literate, technologically-engaged professionals. Students will use a wide range of technologies, media, tools and platforms to learn, create, and connect with peers, teachers, researchers, communities and professions.

- Campus spaces enhance network connectivity and support a range of online, socially-connected learning activities
- Student orientation to the learning platform and a range of digital learning tools
- Blend of online and face-to-face experiences
- Flexible, mobile access to varied content
- Creation of rich participatory networks and communities of practice
- Digital literacies explicitly mapped across the curriculum
- Students inducted into discipline-specific technologies
- Learning activities to enhance student competence in technology
- Encouragement of exploratory, experimental use of technology
- Digital assignment submissions, electronic gradebooks, online feedback mechanisms and self-assessment.

The UOW curriculum will challenge students to think broadly and critically within and outside their disciplines and apply this knowledge to a range of complex questions or diverse situations. Carefully designed learning activities and open, flexible curriculum structures will empower students to be adventurous in their learning by exploring unfamiliar and challenging subject matter and pressing global questions.

- Debates which encompass a discipline’s historical controversies and current issues
- ‘Wicked problems’ introduce complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity
- Transformative experiences and co-curricular learning extend disciplinary knowledge and boundaries
- Learning communities with a culture of challenging and questioning
- Formative assessments that scaffold the learning process and allow for retakes
- Opportunities for personal development and personal reflection
- Student-designed projects that combine scholarship and creativity
- Practice-based Honours