Guideline - Undergraduate Professional Practice Core Units

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Guideline is to promote consistency in the design of the Professional Practice Core (PPC) and in the outcomes for students completing the PPC.

(2) The PPC is a distinctive characteristic of the University of Canberra's (University) undergraduate courses and demonstrates the University's commitment to graduating students with the skills, knowledge and attributes necessary to succeed in their chosen profession.

(3) The completion of the PPC helps graduates to successfully transition to the workplace in their professional discipline.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Guideline applies to the University's undergraduate courses.

Section 3 - Procedure

(5) The PPC is:

   a. comprised of four 3-credit point units; and
   b. incorporated in 3-year bachelor courses; and
   c. in some four-year bachelor courses.

(6) In some cases external accreditation requirements may require that faculties map the PPC to equivalent units.

The Indigenisation of the Curriculum Framework and the Professional Practice Core

(7) The [Indigenising of the Curriculum Framework](#) 2020 (ItC Framework) is designed to ensure that our graduates have had opportunities to develop the Indigenous graduate attributes (refer [Graduate Attributes Policy](#)). It also provides mapping between Indigenous and Western approaches to pedagogy.

(8) On completion of a unit at each unit level students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of one or more focus areas outlined in the ItC Framework.

(9) The ItC Framework is integrated with all units in a course. The focus of the work to Indigenise the Curriculum within and between the Professional Core units is to incorporate the learning outcomes of the ItC Framework as appropriate to the discipline, unit level, and overall course design.

(10) [Appendix A](#) provides suggested learning outcomes that accommodate Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and Indigenisation of the Curriculum.

About the Professional Practice Core (PPC)

(11) The PPC is a cohesive and scaffolded stream of professional education units that enable students to integrate theoretical learning with practice throughout their degrees through authentic, real-world learning experiences. This enables students to develop and apply the skills, knowledge, and attributes necessary to succeed in their chosen profession.

(12) In the PPC, academics and industry work together to facilitate a range of diverse opportunities for students to ensure an iterative and fully integrated academic and professional education. Opportunities include placements and internships, WIL projects and competitions, exhibitions, study tours, and virtual and real-world learning experiences. PPC helps students to be professional, career-ready graduates: collaborative, self-aware, critical thinkers with contemporary and theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

(13) The principles of all units in the PPC adhere to best practice WIL standards, and include:

a. high quality authentic experiences integrated with theory;
b. scaffolded skills development;
c. supported preparation, debriefing and reflection; and
d. quality supervision by industry and academics.

(14) The PPC is program-driven, meaning that it is central to all courses in a program area, with the intention of creating a coherent course and cohort experience for students, relevant to their discipline.

(15) The individual units in the PPC will have common learning outcomes and assessment activities ensuring that all undergraduate students have similar preparation for success in the workplace that is tailored to meet particular disciplinary and industry expectations.

Professional Practice Core Units - Progression

Professional Orientation

(16) The introductory unit is designed to develop a student's sense of professional identity and a profession-focused perspective.

Professional Practice 1 and 2

(17) These two units provide students with a combination of preparation for WIL activities as well as experiencing a placement, internship, and/or WIL project.

Professional Evidence

(18) The final unit in the PPC sequence is the culmination of a student's learning in their course: it integrates theory and practice and enables a student to demonstrate that they are an emerging professional in their field.

Advice for Establishing Professional Practice Core Units

(19) Each undergraduate degree features four PPC units typically named in the following way:

a. Professional Orientation (program name).
b. Professional Practice 1 (program name).
c. Professional Practice 2 (program name).
d. Professional Evidence (program name).

(20) The units offered in different programs usually have the same base name to emphasise the commonality in all University programs. In some circumstances units may have different names to align them with discipline requirements, or to specify the type of activity (e.g., Internship). Where this occurs, the program name or other distinguishing title is included in brackets.

(21) PPC units are typically offered in both semester 1 and semester 2 to ensure students from any program can undertake them at the required time in their studies. The availability of fully online offerings is a decision for a faculty.

Professional Orientation (3cp)

About This Unit

(22) Typically, students study this unit in their first semester. This unit focuses on supporting student transition into university as well as providing students with an introduction to the transition from university into the workplace.

(23) An introduction to academic integrity, academic referencing and professional ethics should be part of the transition support in this unit which can be enabled through student completion of the Academic Integrity Module.

(24) Students should be encouraged to complete the Student Readiness Survey which is open until the end of week 2.

(25) All aspects of the unit are considered through an evidence-based professional lens (i.e, learning about foundational university skills, as well as applying these skills within the context of their profession). This unit emphasises active learning, engagement, and collaboration among students. Students are welcomed into their disciplinary cohort and start to form their professional identities through industry knowledge and exposure.

(26) Students examine the diverse employment opportunities available to them, including creative and entrepreneurial approaches to professional employment, and start and/or enhance their career awareness and planning through outcomes such as five-year plans and ePortfolios.

(27) As this is the first unit in the PPC sequence, faculties will need to consider how articulating students commencing a course in year 2 are supported into the PPC 1 and 2 units without their 5-year plan, and their initial ePortfolio.

Learning Outcomes

(28) See suggested learning outcomes in Appendix A.

Assessment Considerations

(29) Assessment tasks must focus on enabling students to develop their understanding of the parameters and opportunities of their disciplines/professions and where they might play a role on graduation.

(30) All marks and grades must be recorded in the UCLearn (Canvas).

(31) Use of marking rubrics with clear criteria (both written descriptors and numerical scores) must be available to students for each assessment task to enable moderation (e.g. written expression components, referencing, evidence, etc).

(32) Assessment must include a program-specific lens to introduce students to their discipline/profession and assist in building their understanding of the skills and attributes they will likely require as emerging professionals in their profession.

(33) Where students have extensive work experience or established careers the Unit Convener may choose to provide an alternative assessment that meets the learning outcomes of the unit or allow the student to propose an assessment task relevant to their personal career goals.

Assessment

(34) An early formative assessment task, preferably in the first third of the teaching period, must be included. It must provide students with meaningful feedback at either the individual or unit cohort level which may have formative, summative, or diagnostic purposes. This may be a written or practical assessment task as appropriate to the professional area (<= 20%) that:

   a. includes a peer assessment activity in which the student takes on the role of assessor, so that student develops understanding of the expectations involved in the assessment of assignments;
   b. is supported by a scaffolded approach to academic writing, referencing, and academic integrity (including evidence of completion of the Academic Integrity Module) and professional ethics; and
   c. includes the Unit Convener's feedback on the initial task, with students required to reflect on this feedback during a later task, ideally as a component in the ePortfolio.

(35) A significant assessment task (>= 40%) focused on establishing an ePortfolio to include the following components:

   a. a 5-year-plan component, where students explore their intentions both during their studies and post-graduation, develop goals, and map out their study plans (for example, consideration of a proposed breadth major (where there is elective space to do so) and co-curricular activities to assist in achieving those goals; and
   b. a short video introduction by the student about themselves 'Me in a Minute' style, or equivalent, as appropriate to the professional area.

(36) The remaining assessment is defined as appropriate to the program and typically includes:

   a. a group presentation task, supported by scaffolding the development of teamwork and presentation skills, with the majority of marks focused on demonstration of these skills rather than solely on the content of the presentation; or
   b. development of aspects of the student's ePortfolio, noting that assessment methods for one of the assessment tasks will typically include a face-to-face conversation with a staff member with expertise in the student's intended discipline or a closely related one.

Professional Practice 1 and 2

About These Units

(37) The two Professional Practice (PP) units work together to provide students with opportunities to develop their employability skills and apply them. This is achieved through experiential learning, WIL activities and/or preparation activities. At least one of the PP units must be a Placement, Internship or WIL Project. Typically, a WIL-focused unit should not exceed the volume of learning for a 3-credit point unit.

(38) Where the other unit is not a placement, internship or WIL project, this unit should either prepare students for their WIL experience or enable them to apply what they have learned in a workplace. Whether only one or both of these units include a placement, internship or WIL project will be dependent on the discipline area and the ability of students and faculties to source appropriate opportunities external to the University.

(39) This flexibility enables the faculty to design and define the relationship between the two PP units to meet the needs of their discipline and professional areas and provide students with a diversity of experiential learning opportunities.

(40) These units should continue to enhance students' understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, and provide them with opportunities to practically apply this understanding in their professional area through the

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Page 4 of 7

learning activities and assessment tasks.

Embedding Professional Practice 1 (3cp) and/or Professional Practice 2 (3cp)

(41) In the Professional Practice units students apply and practice their learning and employability skills in real world and simulated contexts, and strengthen their disciplinary skills and knowledge needed to contribute to and excel in their professions.

(42) In a standard study pattern, students study one Professional Practice unit in year 2, semester 2 and the other in year 3, semester 1, of a three-year course. To allow flexibility to suit individual needs, the pre-requisite is the completion of 24 credit points of study. In some courses, this may vary to accommodate external accreditation requirements, the timing of unit offerings, the number of placements required, and pre-requisites.

(43) If students are entering a Professional Practice unit without having completed Professional Orientation Unit because they are enrolling in the course in second year through an articulation or credit of a Diploma, then the unit must support them in developing their 5-year-plan and their ePortfolio.

(44) Appendix B provides descriptions and examples of WIL activities that may be utilised in either or both of the Professional Practice units. These are:

  a. placements and internships;
  b. WIL projects;
  c. WIL fieldwork; and
  d. simulation.

Learning outcomes

(45) See Appendix A for suggested learning outcomes.

Assessment

(46) Assessment activities in these units will include artefacts that can be included in the student's ePortfolio.

Professional Evidence (3cp)

About This Unit

(47) In a standard study plan, students will study this unit in the final teaching period of their course. To allow some flexibility to suit individual needs, the pre-requisite is 48 credit points of study.

(48) The focus of this unit is to provide opportunities for students to:

  a. apply cumulative learning from their course in a WIL project;
  b. reflect on their learning; and
  c. curate evidence of their practice throughout their course and present this in their ePortfolio.

(49) Students will:

  a. demonstrate the integration of their academic and disciplinary knowledge and skills through significant real-world projects;
  b. critically reflect on the value and outputs of their learning through their ePortfolio; and
  c. demonstrate their understanding of professionalism and career readiness through disciplinary initiatives.

(50) The focus of this unit is consolidating student learning, meaning additional 'subject content' is kept minimal.

Learning Outcomes

(51) See [Appendix A](#) for suggested learning outcomes.

Assessment

(52) A significant (>= 30%) final assessment task is an ePortfolio demonstrating evidence of achieving the course learning outcomes and graduate attributes, and professional registration requirements where applicable. The typical approach includes:

a. use of the University's ePortfolio to help students demonstrate the links between their evidence/artefacts and course learning outcomes and graduate attributes and enable benchmarking with other institutions and industry authorities; and
b. student reflection, with reference to the ePortfolio established in the Professional Orientation unit, and how their reflection has developed over the duration of their study in line with their learning.

(53) A significant project that integrates a student's skills and knowledge developed over their course and applies them through an individual or team-based WIL Project that aligns with the discipline.

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