

The Graduate Work-Readiness Framework

A practical framework for helping students build the confidence, behaviours and workplace skills that support a successful transition from university into work.

Graduate employability is more than getting the first job. It is helping students feel ready to enter, contribute and grow in the workplace.

Six dimensions of work-readiness

Use the framework to review existing employability provision, shape a student development journey, or create a common language for work-readiness across faculties, careers teams and employer partners.

1. Self & Career Awareness

Students understand themselves, what they can offer and how to navigate early career choices.

- Recognising strengths, values and transferable skills
- Articulating experience and potential with confidence
- Exploring roles, sectors and different career routes
- Taking ownership of development and career decisions

2. Professional Confidence

Students can step into professional environments with greater confidence and awareness.

- Understanding workplace expectations and professional behaviours
- Building confidence in unfamiliar situations
- Developing a professional presence - in person and online
- Knowing when and how to ask for help, feedback and clarification

3. Communication & Relationships

Students can communicate clearly and build effective working relationships.

- Adapting communication to audience and context
- Listening, questioning and contributing effectively
- Building relationships with colleagues, managers and stakeholders
- Giving, receiving and acting on feedback#

4. Working with Others

Students can contribute positively as part of a team.

- Understanding roles, responsibilities and team dynamics
- Collaborating with people who think and work differently
- Managing disagreement constructively
- Building inclusion, trust and accountability

5. Getting Work Done

Students can organise themselves and contribute effectively in a working environment.

- Managing priorities, deadlines and competing demands
- Taking initiative while understanding boundaries
- Problem solving and making practical decisions
- Using digital tools and information appropriately

6. Learning, Adaptability & Growth

Students are ready to keep learning as work and careers evolve.

- Responding positively to change and uncertainty
- Reflecting on experience and learning from mistakes

- Building resilience and personal responsibility
- Developing curiosity and a continuous-learning mindset.

How to use the framework

The strongest employability journeys do not treat work-readiness as a one-off final-year intervention. The framework can be used to map development progressively across the student journey and connect curriculum, careers activity, employer engagement and experiential learning.

Explore	Experience	Transition
Build awareness of self, careers and workplace expectations.	Practice through projects, placements, simulations, employer activity and reflection.	Prepare students to articulate their value, navigate recruitment and succeed in the first months of work.

Questions for your team

- Where are these capabilities already being developed?
- Which dimensions are strongest - and where are the gaps?
- Can students see how their academic and extracurricular experiences translate into workplace capability?
- Where are employers contributing insight, practice or feedback?

Want to explore your current employability journey?

Use this framework as a starting point for a team review or talk to Make Strides about creating a solution around your students and context.

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