Student starter kit: Personalised employABILITY profile

Profile prepared for: Sample student report
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Literacies for Life
Developing Employability Initiative
Curtin University, Australia

developing
Employ**ability**

Welcome to your personalised employABILITY profile!

Literacies for Life empower people to make informed life and career decisions that align with personal and societal values and goals.

Your personalised employABILITY profile is designed to help you understand the six **Literacies for Life** that combine to enhance your employability. Use these for your personal and professional development.

Engage with resources like this one on a regular basis. **You can revisit your profile at any time using your student number.**

You will have often heard the term employability in relation to careers and jobs. When reading the profile, resist this narrow view and focus instead on what is important to you in your future life and work.

Basic literacy

Career thinking; belief in yourself and your abilities.

Rhetorical literacy

Interpersonal skills; disciplinary and digital knowledge, skills and practices.

Personal and critical literacy

Problem solving, decision making, goal setting and goal achievement.

Emotional literacy

Interactions and relationships.

Occupational literacy

Career thinking, lifestyle and flexibility.

Ethical, cultural and social literacy

Ethically, culturally and socially acceptable behaviours and values.

Student starter kit

The employABILITY student starter kit is an online resource featuring a student-focussed, personalised employABILITY self-assessment tool, and developmental resources - the student employABILITY resources.

The student starter kit has everything you need to enhance your employability.

EmployABILITY self-assessment tool and personalised employABILITY profile

The first step in the student starter kit was to assess your employABILITY using the employABILITY self-assessment tool. This generated the personalised profile you are reading now.

Use your personalised profile to see how you self-assessed against the Literacies for Life. Target areas for development, and access the linked resources whenever you have time.

Student employABILITY resources

Student employABILITY resources are online, developmental resources that help develop and strengthen employability. You will find resource links throughout the profile; you can also access them here.

EmployABILITY is a cyclical process! Return to your profile on a regular basis, and make use of the resources as and when you need them.

EmployABILITY student starter kit
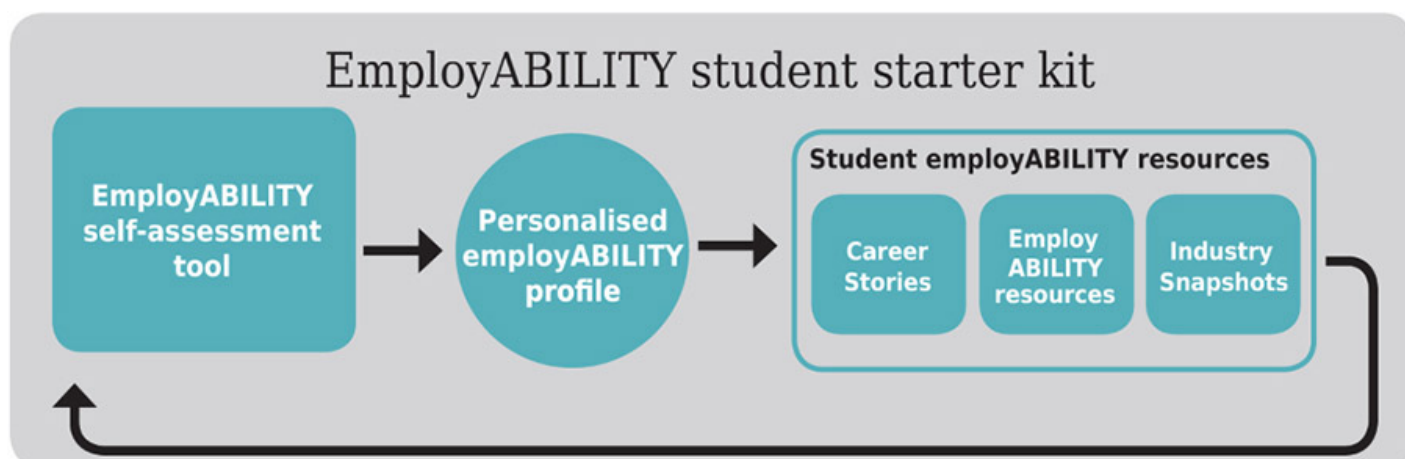
What is employability?

When working with your employABILITY profile, remember that employability means to **employ your abilities**. Our definition of employability is:

The ability to create and sustain meaningful life and work for the benefit of self and others.

Rather than preparing for a single job or career, the *Literacies for Life* approach helps you to shape work and career into what you need and want as an individual.

Three crucial points to remember

1. Employment and employability are different

The term employability is often used to describe skills and attributes that relate to a job (employment) in a single profession; however, many people in the developed world have five or more different careers and hold 17 or more different jobs across their working lives. Employability changes over time as people apply and enhance their skills and knowledge in many different settings. You can read more about this in a report by McCrindle Research (2014).

2. The nature of work is changing

Many of today's most in-demand occupations didn't exist five years ago. Technology in particular is both creating new opportunities and making some occupations redundant. Staying ahead of the trends is a key component of employability (World Economic Forum, 2016).

3. It is far better to plan a life than to just plan a career

Although work is changing rapidly, you will always be you. Many decisions about work and career relate to personal satisfaction and personal circumstances rather than the work itself. Plan a life rather than a career.

When will I be employable?

A better question is, "When will I be able to do the work I want to do?" Use your personalised employABILITY profile to help answer this question.

? Understand employABILITY for yourself

How am I doing?

People strive to be employable—self and career literate—for the whole of their working lives. Being aware of your strengths and weaknesses across the six *Literacies for Life* can help you target areas in need of development and extend areas of strength, so that you can stay ahead.

Your employABILITY profile may change each time you re-assess your abilities, particularly when your goals and career paths change. It is perfectly normal for people to self-assess lower than before in one or more domains; employability is fluid.

As you reflect on your employABILITY profile, identify areas of concern and target these for development. Use the employABILITY student resources linked with your profile, work with career advisors at your institution, and talk with peers, lecturers and industry practitioners.

How do I read my results?

To read your results, first look at the model below and explore the interactive *Literacies for Life model.*

The *Literacies for Life* combine to enhance employability. When you completed the employABILITY self-assessment tool, you assessed yourself against all six literacies.

Basic literacy

- Developing the skills, practices and knowledge of my discipline
- Communicating and interacting with other people
- Using digital technologies for my work and learning

Rhetorical literacy

- Solving problems and making decisions
- Achieving goals, accomplishing tasks and meeting deadlines

Personal and critical literacy

- Thinking about my future in or outside the discipline
- Believing in myself
- Believing that I can complete my studies
- My ability and willingness to learn
- Putting the theory into practice
- Understanding my strengths, my weaknesses and how I learn

Emotional literacy

- Recognising, understanding and managing how I feel
- Being aware of how other people are feeling
- Using my 'people skills' when I interact with other people

Occupational literacy

- Being aware of my possible career paths
- Having a 'Plan B' for my career

Ethical, cultural and social literacy

- Taking the responsibility for my decisions and actions
- Upholding ethical and responsible behaviour
- Recognising different cultural values, beliefs and perceptions
- Identifying myself as a global citizen

My results

The radar or web chart below illustrates your self-assessment in each of the six *Literacies for Life*, arranged radially around a central point. The closer the shading comes to the outside of the chart, the higher you self-assessed in that literacy.

Your self-assessment relates to your confidence. It will change according to your circumstances and experiences, so use it as a prompt for analysis and action rather than as a score card.

? Learn more about the *Literacies for Life*

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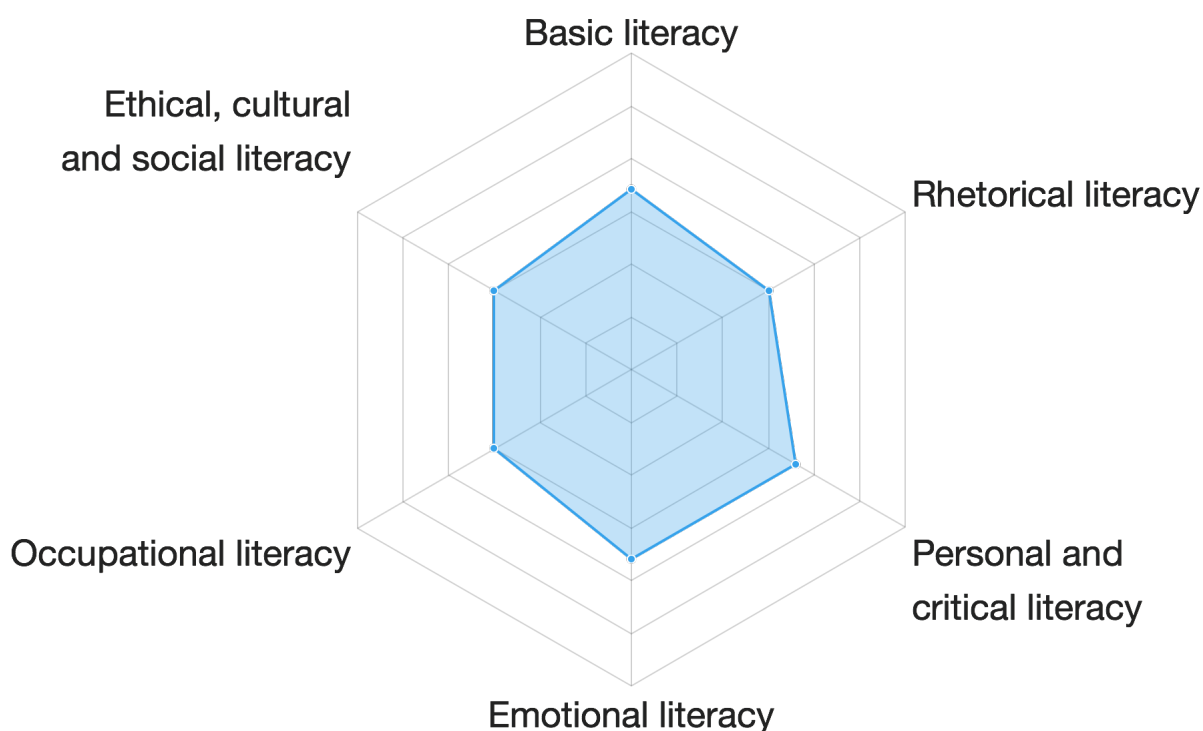
How do I use this profile?

First, explore the interactive Literacies for Life model. Next, use this personalised employABILITY profile to explore each of the *Literacies for Life* in turn.

Your profile includes reflective questions and links to employABILITY student resources. There is no right or wrong way to use the resources; take your time and focus on what is interesting and important to you right now.

The questions and challenges are designed to help you understand and develop each literacy. Each one refers to a crucial facet of graduate success.

Answer the reflective questions alone or with peers, and use your responses as the basis for discussion with career advisors, lecturers and people in industry.

(!) Make it count!

Each employABILITY student resource includes a section titled *Make it count!* The **Make it count!** section prompts you to take what you developed in the resource and transfer it to your studies, everyday activities, career planning, CV or professional portfolio.

Collect evidence at every opportunity and add it to your portfolio and CV so that you can find what you need when it comes to applying for work.

(!) Unsure about professional portfolios?

There are many free portfolio websites and programs, such as Adobe Portfolio. Your institution may also have a commercial portfolio platform which you can access for free. Before you start, make sure that you will be able to access your portfolio once you graduate! For help and advice, click here. For more portfolio ideas, use the resource developed by Manitoba Career Development or seek advice from your institutional career advisors.

Understanding basic literacy

Basic literacy combines your discipline knowledge, skills and practices with your ability to interact with other people and your digital literacy.

Basic literacy includes three qualities, listed to the right. These qualities will be explored over the following pages.

What is digital literacy?

Digital literacy is the ability to identify and use technology confidently, creatively and critically to meet the demands and challenges of life, learning and work in a digital society. The level of digital literacy fluency within any particular domain will depend on the context and your level of engagement in that context.

1. **Disciplinary skills, practices and knowledge**

2. **Communicating and interacting with other people**

3. **Using digital technologies for work and learning**
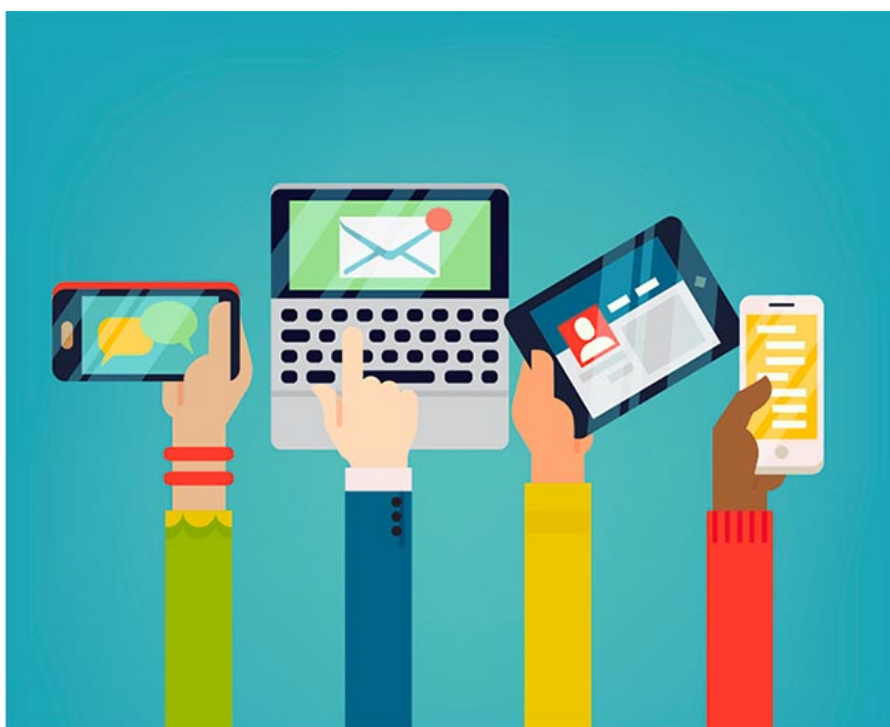
Basic literacy 1: Disciplinary skills, practices and knowledge

- *What are your key strengths?*
- *How will you use your strengths in your future life and career?*
- *What evidence do you have, or need to create, to show you have these strengths?*
- *What can you do to further strengthen these aspects of your employABILITY?*
- *To what extent will your university program prepare you for graduate life?*
- *What new opportunities can you access through your institution?*

EmployABILITY development is a partnership. What are **you** doing to develop your employability?

Think of something you could do in the next 30 days and commit to it!
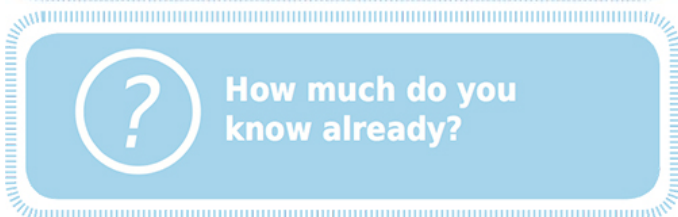
(!) How to make yourself more employable!

If you're unsure about what to do next, follow the advice for students, and advice for people already in industry.

Note the common themes and remember to collect evidence as you go.

- Refine and retain great assessment pieces
- Ask for testimonials and references when you work or volunteer
- Collect certificates
- Digitise media releases

And remember, keep the evidence in your portfolio.

? What are your employability strengths?

← These text boxes link to embedded resources

? What does it take to be great?

? How much do you know already?

Notes

Basic literacy 2: Communicating and interacting with other people

Language and understanding

- *How comfortable are you when communicating with people from different cultures and backgrounds, or with people more senior than you?*
- *What opportunities can you find to develop your language and understanding?*
- *How can you incorporate new opportunities into your daily life?*

View ethical, cultural and social literacy resources

- *Can you make clear and concise oral presentations?*
- *How can you further develop your presentation skills?*
- *What can you do over the next month? Think of something and commit to it!*

Do you loathe small talk? Develop an elevator pitch!

Networks

- *Do you have a network of contacts who might help you achieve your goals?*
- *If not, how will you build these contacts?*
- *How can you engage your networks in your employability development?*

Create effective, professional networks without leaving home

**Manage and extend your professional networks**

Take your network development to the next step

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Leadership and teamwork

The following questions relate to leadership and teamwork strengths. Using the questions as a guide, think about whether you have experiences that show your leadership and teamwork strengths. If you do, write an account of these and put them into your portfolio.

- *How well do you gain the support of others for your recommendations and ideas?*
- *How well do you listen to other people's recommendations and ideas?*
- *How well do you deal with people's problems and resolve conflicts?*
- *What opportunities exist for you to develop your leadership and team work?*
- *What evidence can you find or create for your leadership and teamwork abilities, perhaps from volunteering, work, sports or music?*
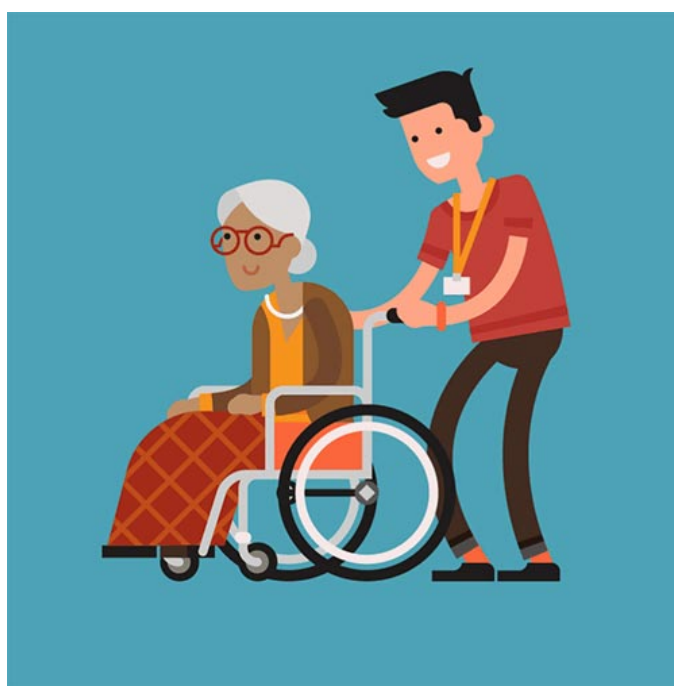
? **Plot your preferences and strengths**

? **Do you dislike networking? Re-think the whole concept here!**

Notes

Basic literacy 3: Using digital technologies for work and learning

Digital literacy involves finding, using and disseminating information in a digital world.

- *How confident are you in learning and using the digital technologies associated with your studies?*
- *How proficient are you at using digital sources to gather reliable information about career opportunities?*
- *How confident are you when interpreting large datasets?*
- *How aware are you of your online presence and the messages it gives to others?*

Being digitally literate implies having skills and capabilities across a number of domains, including the ability to

- *use technology;*
- *find, use and critically evaluate information;*
- *curate data and media sources;*
- *communicate, collaborate and participate in online environments;*
- *manage your online identity as well as your personal security and privacy; and*
- *create online content, not just consume it.*

Skills such as flexibility, adaptability and being a life-long learner are essential in order to maintain relevant digital literacy skills over time. Your digital literacy skills and capabilities need to grow and be nurtured, they need to be scaffold through your learning and, ultimately, they need to be fit-for-purpose.

Beside your studies, what are *you* doing to enhance your employability?

You answered a similar question in the self-assessment tool. This is what you wrote.

If you didn't respond, the text box will be empty. Use the space to answer the question.

The most important person in your employability development is you. Make sure you include actions in the box above, even if these are yet to be implemented. Ask questions and collect evidence whenever you can.

Understanding rhetorical literacy

Rhetoric is effective or persuasive speaking or writing. This includes speaking or writing within the digital domain.

Rhetorical literacy combines the language, communication and interaction capacities within basic literacy with problem solving, decision making, goal setting and goal achievement.

Rhetorical literacy is one of the attributes employers look for at graduate level. To do well in this aspect of employability you need to be able to articulate and show examples drawn from your experience.

Rhetorical literacy includes two qualities, listed to the right. These qualities will be explored over the following pages.

1. **Solving problems and making decisions**

2. **Achieving goals, tasks and deadlines**
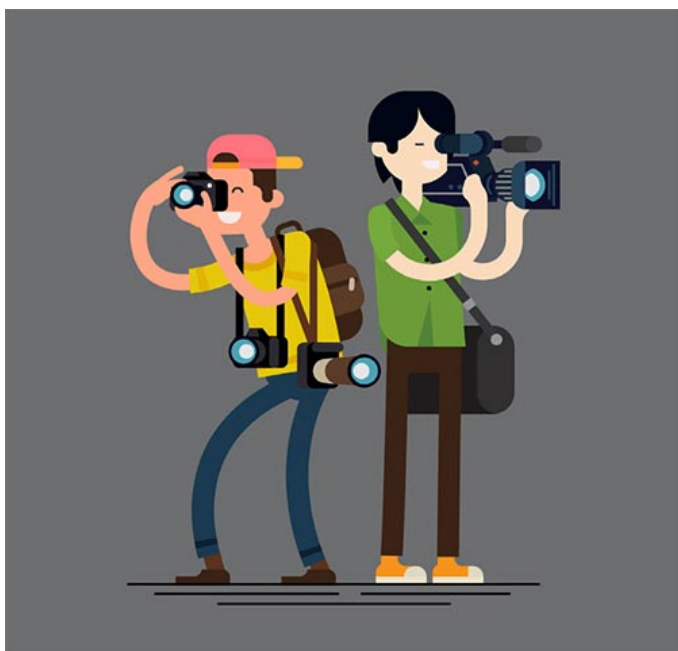
Rhetorical literacy 1: Solving problems and making decisions

Use the following questions to develop ideas and evidence.

- *How good are you at making informed, quick and clear decisions that motivate other people?*
- *How often do you change your work or personal life to make it more satisfying and developmental?*

Career story: Adapting to change

- *To what extent do you consider cultural, business and economic contexts when approaching a problem or situation?*
- *How often do you contribute novel ideas that help resolve a problem or situation?*
- *How often do you anticipate problems before they happen?*

You as a problem solver

(!) Collecting the evidence!

Think of a time when you offered a unique and novel idea that added new knowledge and insights to a problem or situation.

This might have been at school, at work, in a social situation or in a team assignment at university.

Follow the steps below to put together a reflection.

Situation:
Describe the situation

Problem:
Describe the problem or challenge

Action:
Describe what you did about it

Result:
Describe how your actions resolved the problem or challenge

Impact:
Describe how will think differently about your problem solving and/or decision-making abilities as a result of this experience

Combine the sentences to create a statement and add this to your portfolio. The statement will be useful when you address selection criteria. You could also align it with a graduate attribute, learning outcome or accreditation requirement.

In the future, use the above steps or choose from a set of critical reflection strategies and templates.

Rhetorical literacy 2: Achieving goals, tasks and deadlines

Use the following questions to develop ideas and evidence.

- *How often do you set realistic goals and deadlines?*
- *How often do you **achieve** the goals and deadlines you set?*
- *When goals and deadlines are not achieved, what are the reasons for this?*

▼

List your reasons in the notes field below. Add solutions and try to apply these in the future. Then, attempt the 20-minute challenge to the right.

? Career story: Accomplishing your goals

? The art of the interview

Notes

(!) 20-minute challenge!!

Reflect on one instance when you set and achieved realistic goals and deadlines.

- What were the factors that led to success?
- What challenges did you overcome?
- If you were to coach someone else in the same situation, what five things would you advise them to do or not to do?

List two goals or tasks towards which you can start working now.

Commit to starting one of these within seven days. Put a deadline in your calendar and follow the tips you listed above.

Understanding personal and critical literacy

Personal and critical literacy relates to your career thinking, your belief in yourself and your confidence that you can complete your studies. The literacy also takes into account how you understand and apply your learning.

Personal and critical literacy includes four qualities, listed to the right. These qualities will be explored over the following pages.

1. **Career Commitment**

2. **Believing in yourself**

3. **Your ability and willingness to learn**

4. **Putting theory into practice**

Career story: Using opportunities to grow

Career story: Being true to yourself

Career story: Developing your personal brand

Personal and critical literacy 1: Career commitment

Few people stay in the same profession for their whole working lives. If you're unsure about your career thinking, create a career action plan using the resource below.

? **Create a career action plan**

? **Design your future**

? **Career story: Finding a career path**

? **Career story: Making a career commitment**

? **Get to know your dream work**

? **How to have an identity crisis**

How did you choose your major?

This is how you responded to the question when you completed the self-assessment tool.

If you didn't respond, the box will be empty. If this is the case, use the space to answer the question now.

Notes

? **Learn from your experiences with critical reflection**

What is your career thinking now?

Are you considering a change in your university major?

Yes or not sure? Think about what you would like to do and seek advice on the options available.

No? What would you like to do? What is it about your major that excites you?

Do you intend to work in your discipline after graduating?

Yes or not sure? Look at advertisements and what you need to do to get your first role.

No? What would you like to do? Seek advice on the options available.

How long do you think you'll work in your major (discipline), once you graduate?

Yes or not sure? Think about what you'd like to achieve.

No? What else would you like to do? Seek advice on the options available.

Do you feel you have a say in your future career?

No? Seek advice – there is a lot of confidential advice available.

Do you intend to work in your discipline for the whole of your career?

This is how you responded to the question when you completed the self-assessment tool. Take some time to think about it now, using the questions to the left as a guide.

If you didn't respond, use this space to answer the question.

(!) **Sources of advice**

Great sources of advice: The university's careers service and student support office, program coordinators, counselling services and trusted members of your personal and professional network.

Would it help to read about careers in your field? If so, click here to find career stories. Before you read the career stories, make a note of the things you would like to look out for.

Personal and critical literacy 2: Believing in yourself

Efficacy is another word for belief. Believing in ourselves means that we are more likely to see challenges as opportunities rather than threats. We are also better able to cope with setbacks. Put simply, people with high self-efficacy tend to learn and achieve more than other people.

How is your self-efficacy?

You might remember answering the following questions when you completed the self-assessment tool. Take some time to think about them now.

Believing in yourself - your self-efficacy

- *In general, do you feel that you are able to do things as well as most other people?*
- *Do you have respect for yourself?*
- *Are you proud of your successes?*

Believing that you can complete your studies - your academic self-efficacy

- *Do you have the confidence to ask questions in lectures and tutorials?*
- *Do you have the confidence to ask for help when you need it?*
- *Do you know the standard required to get good grades?*
- *Are you confident that you can pass each study module or unit?*
- *Do you understand your study materials?*

If you answered no to any of these questions, follow the link below to the resource on positive self-talk. Low self-efficacy can be a major challenge, so seek help and advice if you feel unsure.

(!) Seek help!

If you are struggling with your studies, seek help! Universities have a wide range of help available, so please talk to someone straight away.

? Which *you* do you prefer?

? What is self-efficacy?

? Develop your self-confidence

? Learn positive self-talk

? What's your mission?

Personal and critical literacy 3: Your ability and willingness to learn

Learning is a constant part of life and career. The following three challenges involve different forms of learning that enhance employability and confidence.

Challenge: Stay up-to-date with technical knowledge and new developments in the discipline

Subscribe to an industry newsletter or blog and commit to staying up-to-date. Read a newspaper at least once each week.

Challenge: Monitor performance against deadlines and milestones

- Look up how many classes you have still to complete before graduating.

- Make a timeline and add the other things you need to develop.

- Create monthly calendar alerts and use these to monitor your progress. Keep it simple and schedule any time-consuming tasks during semester breaks.

Challenge: Do something to improve your knowledge and skills and develop yourself as a person

Take the volunteer challenge, join the Student Guild, and put yourself forward the next time there is a leadership role in class or at work.

(!) **Stay up-to-date with ideas**

Follow and read general websites such as Wired or The Conversation. Also, read publications from your discipline: for example, Mining Monthly or Anthropology Today. Your university and public library will subscribe to some pay-to-view industry journals. If they don't subscribe, make a request!

(!) **Milestone tracking**

Number of classes to complete

Things I need to develop

Evidence I need in order to get work

Ideas for getting ahead

Personal and critical literacy 4: Putting the theory into practice

Graduate employers know that you have a degree and the knowledge that comes with it. They want to know whether you can put the theory into practice!

How often do you see the relevance of each study unit (module) to your future career?

If it doesn't seem relevant, ask the lecturer to help you understand how the learning will be useful as a graduate.

Have you already applied some of the knowledge and skills gained in your studies when in a workplace, as a volunteer or in a placement?

Look for opportunities to do this and write down what you did. The stories will be invaluable when you seek a placement or graduate work.

The self-assessment tool asked you to consider what you would change or add if you were designing your degree program.The box will be empty if you didn't respond, so take the time to answer the question now.

Take control! What can you do to develop anything you feel is missing?

? Volunteer challenge

Notes

(!) Take the volunteer challenge

The best way to find out what kind of work you like is to get out there and do some! Whether or not you have paid work at the moment, remember that employers value volunteer work just as highly as paid work. Take the volunteer challenge to find out why.

Understanding emotional literacy

Emotional literacy is one of the most important aspects of our work life and personal life because it determines how we interact with people and how our relationships function.

The following questions will help you to gauge your emotional literacy. Answer them honestly – you don't need to share them with anyone else.

- *Can you tell how someone is feeling by looking at their facial expression and body language?*
- *If someone is upset, can you help them feel better?*
- *When making decisions, do you listen to your feelings to see if the decision feels right?*
- *Can you handle stressful situations or problems without getting too overwhelmed?*
- *Do people come to you when they need help?*
  - *If so, what is it about you that makes you approachable?*

Watch other people over the next few days and identify people who are emotionally literate.

- *What do they do, or not do?*
- *What could you try in your next conversation?*

Notes

Building positive relationships in life and work

Learn More

Read the Emotional Intelligence (EI) Lifehack by career coach Hannah Braime, who shares 7 practical ways to enhance your emotional intelligence.

Understanding occupational literacy

Occupational literacy adds to our understanding of career exploration, awareness and flexibility. It requires us to think about career fit, lifestyle and alternative careers. For some people, occupational literacy reveals possibilities they hadn't previously considered.

Occupational literacy includes two qualities, listed to the right. These qualities will be explored over the following pages.

1. **Career awareness and exploration**

2. **Having a 'Plan B' for your career**

? How to get a head start

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Occupational literacy 1: Career exploration and awareness

Have you thought about:

- *Identifying careers that best match your interests and skills?*
- *Making a well-informed choice about which career to pursue?*
- *Finding work that is meaningful to you?*

Careers are rarely linear and they are rarely experienced as we had imagined them. In the career story link to the right, read about a university graduate who decided to create a portfolio career – a career that features several different concurrent roles.

**? Career story:
Trying things out**

**? Career story: Networking
and micro-communities**

To explore how this thinking might influence your decisions, try one of the resources to the right.

**? Lifestyle
quiz**

**? How to balance
life and work**

(!) **Industry snapshots**

You might also like to access some industry snapshots. If your discipline isn't included here, ask your institutional career service for similar examples.

**? Careers panel: How did
you get here?**

Occupational literacy 2: Having a 'Plan B' for your career

How will you cope with the disappointment if your first career choice does not work out? Could you create a good back-up plan if your preferred career option does not eventuate?

What is your 'Plan B'? Will you be happy with it? How long are you prepared to wait for your preferred career?

Which of your skills, strengths and knowledge could you apply in another profession? Take a look at the 'Writing a cover letter' resource to the right to discover top skills for 2020.

In the career story link to the right, read about author Liz Byrski and her career journey of 50 years.

? Writing a cover letter

? Career story: Building a career with creativity and resilience

? Career story: Changing career

? Career story: Follow your passion

? Career story: Where to now? Finding a career path

? Career story: Trying things out

Notes

Understanding ethical, cultural and social literacy

Literacies for Life encompass our respectful relationships with other people. To uphold ethically, culturally and socially acceptable behaviours and values in our personal and work lives, we need to know what is acceptable and how to enact it.

Ask yourself the questions below and look for opportunities to work or study with people from different backgrounds, communities and beliefs.

- *Do you accept responsibility for the results of your work, decisions and actions?*
- *Do you always uphold the ethics and values of your profession, community or workplace?*
- *Do you uphold and encourage responsible behaviour towards the community and the environment?*
- *Do you uphold and encourage responsible behaviour in your digital profile?*
- *Do you uphold and encourage ethical behaviour in digital domains?*

Challenge: Who are you?

In the digital space, we all leave a footprint. Google yourself (your name) and see what material is currently out there for everyone, including future employers, to see. Do you need to change anything? If so, do it now!

? **What's your career vision?**

Acknowledgments

The *Literacies for Life* model was developed by the Developing Employability Initiative at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia.

Many items within the self-assessment tool are drawn from or informed by extant sources; these are acknowledged to the right.

The six *Literacies for Life* combine to enhance employability and Inform personal and professional development.

Educators can receive an anonymised, aggregated, cohort-wide profile summary and assistance with the workshop and reflection process. The self-reflection tool and profile is made available without charge.

For more information, please visit developingemployability.edu.au or contact Professor Dawn Bennett at d.bennett@curtin.edu.au.

Ethical considerations

Equipping and enabling educators to embed employability across higher education has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (number HRE2017-0125). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

When completing the personalised profile tool, students choose whether or not to include their anonymised responses in the research database. The database is hosted securely and all institutional, program and personal details are removed prior to analysis. The consent and information form can be accessed here.

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