

## 2. CURTIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

At Curtin, **excellent learning and teaching** is founded on and aspires to:

1. Student learning through an outcomes-focused approach;
2. Flexibility and innovation;
3. Creative and appropriate applications of technology;
4. Appreciation of cultural diversity; and
5. Research-based pedagogical practices.

Curtin students' **learning experiences** include:

1. Intellectually challenging learning outcomes;
2. Engaging learning environments;
3. Flexible learning opportunities;
4. Assessment which aligns with learning outcomes; and
5. Systematic evaluation of teaching and learning.

Within the Curtin **learning partnership**, staff and students:





1. Pursue expertise and innovation in their disciplines;
2. Are self-directed, motivated and active learners;
3. Demonstrate exemplary learning and teaching practices;
4. Reflect on improving learning and teaching practices; and
5. Work within Curtin's Guiding Ethical Principles.






There are three linked keys to teaching and learning at Curtin: the graduate attributes and the triple-i curriculum and the iPortfolio (for information on the iPortfolio see page 9).

### Curtin's Graduate Attributes

The learning outcomes for all Curtin courses are derived from and reflect the graduate attributes. At Curtin, the graduate attributes are contextualised, embedded and assessed as learning outcomes in every unit and course. Curtin graduates demonstrate evidence, as appropriate to their disciplines, that they can:

**Figure 1 Curtin's Graduate Attributes**




	<b>1. Apply discipline knowledge:</b> Understand theoretical underpinnings and ways of thinking; extend the boundaries of knowledge through research.
	<b>2. Thinking skills:</b> Apply logical and rational processes to analyse the components of an issue; think creatively to generate innovative solutions.
	<b>3. Information skills:</b> Decide what information is needed and where it might be found using appropriate technologies; make valid judgements and synthesise information from a range of sources.
	<b>4. Communication skills:</b> Communicate in ways appropriate to the discipline, audience and purpose.

	<b>5. Technology skills:</b> Use appropriate technologies recognising their advantages and limitations.
	<b>6. Learning how to learn:</b> Use a range of learning strategies; take responsibility for one's own learning and development; sustain intellectual curiosity; know how to continue to learn as a graduate.
	<b>7. International perspective:</b> Think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives; apply international standards and practices within a discipline or professional area.
	<b>8. Cultural understanding:</b> Respect individual human rights; recognise the importance of cultural diversity particularly the perspective of Indigenous Australians; value diversity of language.
	<b>9. Professional skills:</b> Work independently and in teams; demonstrate leadership, professional behaviour and ethical practices.

### Curtin's triple-i curriculum

Curtin aims to produce highly employable global citizens with an education beyond their first discipline. These are the three main aspects of the curriculum which Curtin emphasises through its triple-i curriculum:

**Figure 2 Curtin's triple-i curriculum**

	<b>Industry (graduate employability)</b>	achievement of all Curtin's graduate attributes, ensuring assessments throughout the course provide students with comprehensive and coordinated opportunities for work-integrated and career development learning, scenario-based problem-solving, and critical reflection on real or simulated work-based experiences related to their course and aspirations
	<b>Indigenous Intercultural International (global citizenship)</b>	achievement of Curtin's graduate attributes 7 (international perspective) and 8 (intercultural understanding) ensuring assessments throughout the course provide students with opportunities to demonstrate Indigenous cultural competence and consider issues from a global perspective, and respect and value diversity and social justice
	<b>Interdisciplinary (rich educational choices)</b>	providing students with rich educational choices beyond the narrow confines of a single discipline, including opportunities such as achieving interdisciplinary majors, working in cross-disciplinary or interprofessional teams to solve complex problems, and completing elective units or modules

## **Curtin's teaching and learning priorities in 2010 and beyond**

The University's Teaching and Learning Enabling Plan 2009-2013 sets the direction for teaching and learning at Curtin. The Plan identifies the objectives to be achieved and specifies the performance targets against which success and progress are measured. The Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education through the University Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Board have overall accountability for the execution of the Plan. Strategic priorities include:

### **Assessment**

Assessment priorities for Curtin for the period 2009-2013 aspire to improve the quality of formative and summative assessment with particular focus on the provision of feedback.

There are a number of sub-themes to this initiative, which are to:

- develop and disseminate guidance on effective practices in assessment and feedback;
- develop and implement an assessment moderation policy (completed 2009);
- enhance the role and scope of computer assisted assessment;
- promote support for the development of academic integrity; and
- develop and implement plagiarism recording and management reporting tools (online reporting of Level I cases of plagiarism became possible in July 2009).

For more information, see <http://otl.curtin.edu.au/assessment>

### **Graduate employability and work-integrated learning**

Graduate employability is about more than graduates getting jobs - it's about assisting graduating students to achieve employment-related capabilities (a subset of our graduate attributes), and to be confident about their achievement of those capabilities. There are two main ways to support graduate achievement, Firstly, ensure the overall course curriculum is designed to maximise achievement of the attributes and capabilities most appropriate to related professions - and include opportunities for work-integrated learning (WIL) and authentic assessment; and secondly, encourage or require students to take responsibility for gathering, creating and sharing evidence of their learning achievements using the iPortfolio.

Work-integrated is "an umbrella term used for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum" (Patrick et al., 2008, p.v)<sup>2</sup>. Until recently at Curtin many WIL strategies have been 'extra curricular' (offered through supplementary and voluntary student experiences). Highly structured and assessed WIL activities are well established in some courses, such as, clinical placements in Health Science courses, and far less so in others. Integrating more formal assessable WIL activities, and transforming assessment tasks which more closely resemble professional tasks (commonly called authentic assessment) are strategic priorities at Curtin; as is the triple-i curriculum with its focus on industry and graduate employability.

Development in this area is reported through the Work-integrated Learning subcommittee of the University Teaching and Learning Committee which includes representation from all Faculties. See [www.graduateemployability.curtin.edu.au](http://www.graduateemployability.curtin.edu.au).

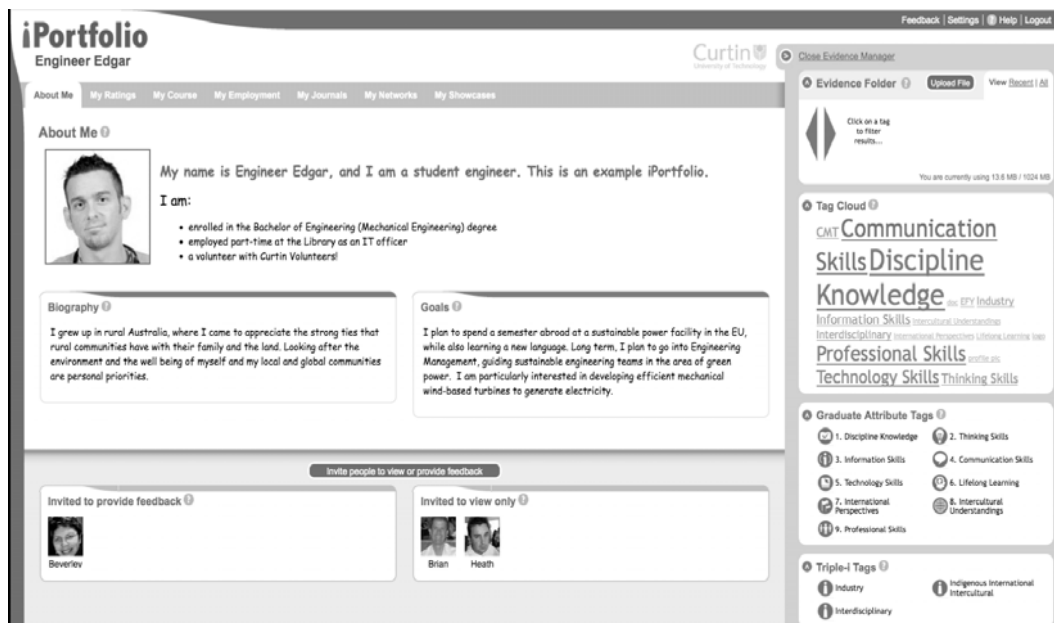
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<sup>2</sup> Patrick, C-j., Peach, D., Pocknee, C., Webb, F., Fletcher, M., Pretto, G. (2008). *The WIL [Work Integrated Learning] report: A national scoping study [Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Final report]*. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology. Available online at: [www.altc.edu.au](http://www.altc.edu.au) and [www.acen.edu.au](http://www.acen.edu.au)

**Fieldwork:** At Curtin, fieldwork is an aspect WIL. Curtin's Fieldwork Education Policy states that fieldwork education activities are normally conducted in unfamiliar surroundings off-campus and outside of the classroom requiring an appropriate level of preparation and application to ensure that it is conducted safely and with minimal risk to students, staff and fieldwork education partners. See [www.fieldworkeducation.curtin.edu.au](http://www.fieldworkeducation.curtin.edu.au).

**Curtin's iPortfolio:** The iPortfolio is an online space designed to enable students and staff to perform a range of self-directed learning tasks including: self-assessment of their achievements of the graduate attributes and triple-i curriculum; sharing of works-in-progress and getting feedback from peers; and, showcasing their achievements with others within and beyond Curtin (see Figure 3) – ensuring a strong link with graduate employability. See [www.iportfolio.curtin.edu.au](http://www.iportfolio.curtin.edu.au)

Figure 3 Sample iPortfolio



## The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

SoTL is a strategic priority for Curtin with the Teaching and Enabling Plan. Development in this area is reported through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning subcommittee ([www.otl.curtin.edu.au/scholarship\\_teaching\\_learning/committee/committee.cfm](http://www.otl.curtin.edu.au/scholarship_teaching_learning/committee/committee.cfm)) which works with the following definition of SoTL at Curtin:

*The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Curtin is systematic inquiry, critique, research and development in teaching, learning, and the broader educational context which advances and publicly provides educational benefit to students, staff and the higher education sector.*

The Office of Assessment, Teaching and Learning offers support and assistance to all teaching staff in SoTL, as follows:

- Curtin Excellence in Teaching Awards (see Chapter 13)
- ALTC Awards, Grants and Fellowships (see Chapter 13)
- Publication in teaching and learning conferences and journals, including the Journal for Teaching and Learning in Graduate Employability, see [www.otl.curtin.edu.au/scholarship\\_teaching\\_learning/jtlge.cfm](http://www.otl.curtin.edu.au/scholarship_teaching_learning/jtlge.cfm)