Reflecting on Experiential Learning: Employability Development in Virtual Spaces

Acknowledgment of **Country**

The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country.

We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.

Contributing to the session

Miro Board available at:

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOyu3Uvo=/

1. Feel free to use (and add) sticky notes for your thoughts / comments during the session
2. There will be time to discuss ideas throughout and at the end

Who we are

56,000+
students

20,000+
international students

21,600+
postgraduate students

6,900+
staff

300,000+
graduates

14,500+
PhD graduates

Where we are

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

Darwin

Cairns

Queensland

Brisbane

UQ St Lucia
UQ Gatton
UQ Herston

Perth

Sydney

Adelaide

Canberra

Melbourne

Hobart
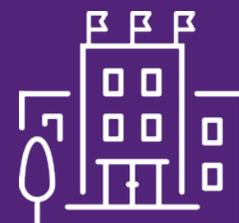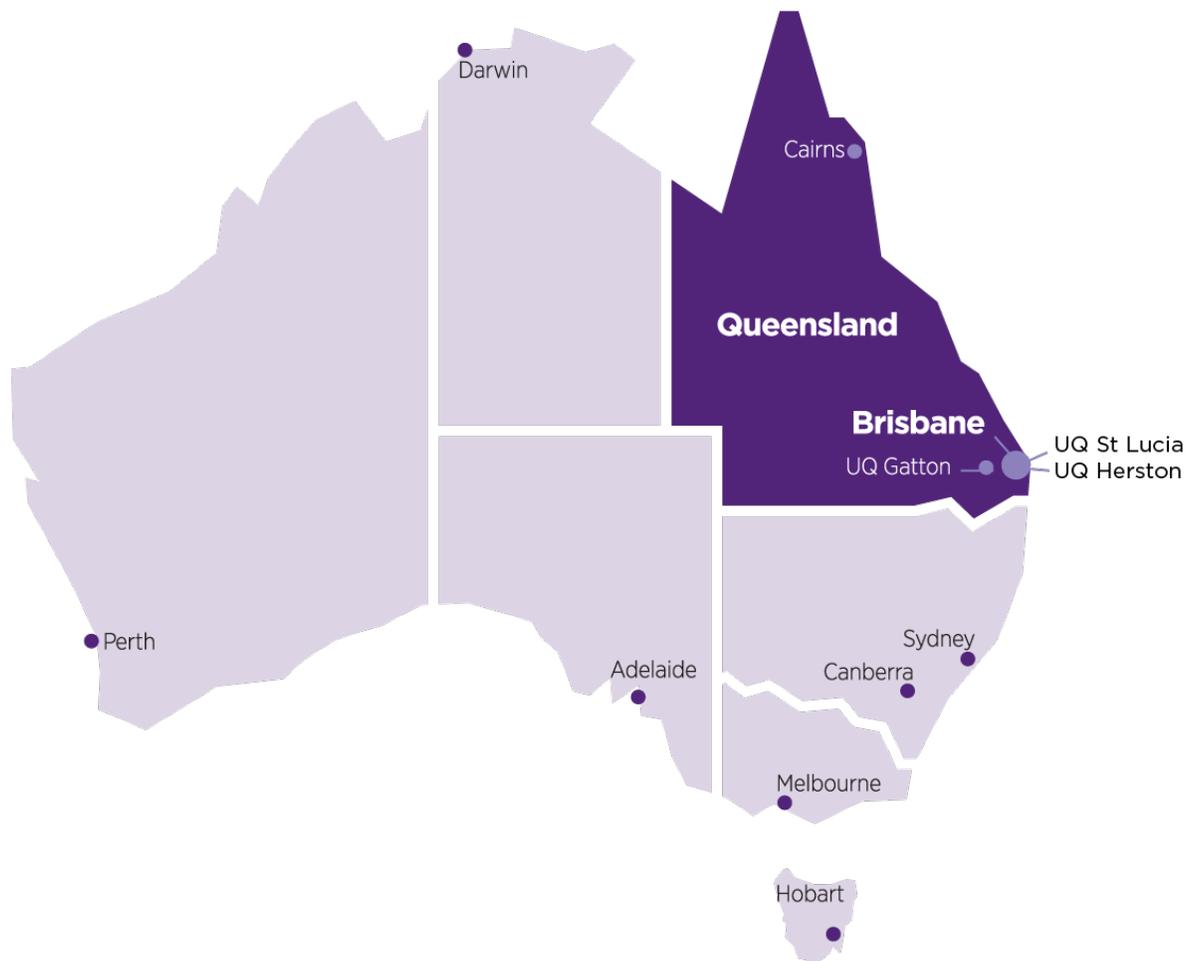
3
campuses

6
faculties

30+
teaching and
research sites

8
research
institutes

UQ's approach to employability

1. Fundamental focus on **experiential learning**: recognising the importance of **self-reflection** for personal and professional development

2. Developing the **capabilities and mindsets** that allow an individual to navigate the developing world of work and perform effectively whatever they do.

3. Departure from previous focus on the technical skills of the recruitment process, although the importance of **value articulation** remains a consideration.

4. **Holistic approach** shaped by individual programs and embedded in existing processes

5. Ongoing development **and life-long (and life-wide)** learning
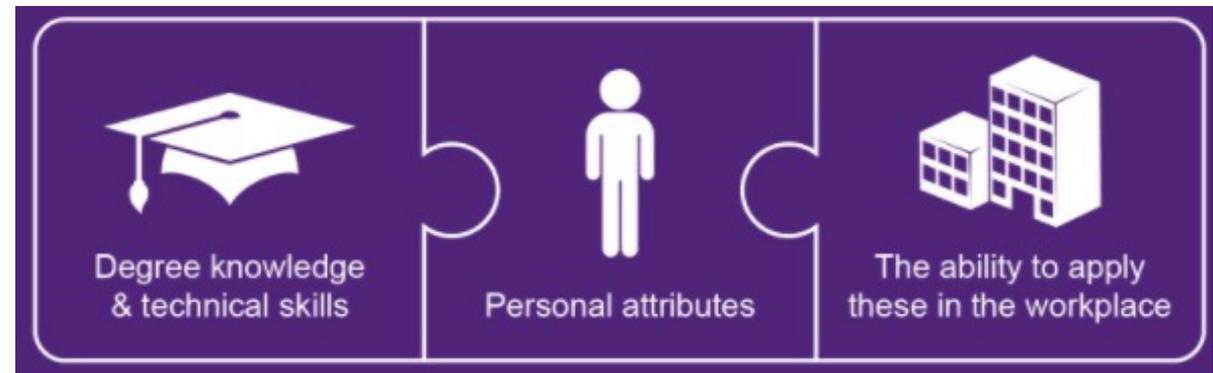
Degree knowledge & technical skills | Personal attributes | The ability to apply these in the workplace

UQ Employability Framework

An employable UQ graduate has engaged in the following stages of employability development:

AWARENESS — Understanding that employability is about the development of both discipline knowledge and personal attributes that guide workplace performance

EXPERIENCES — Engaging with a range of experiences to develop the capabilities and attributes for enhanced employability

LEARNING — Using self-reflection to translate experiences into employability development

TRANSFER — Communicating employability effectively in the recruitment process and transferring learning into workplace performance

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SEAL process of self-reflection

SITUATION   EFFECT   ACTION   LEARNING

S = SITUATION	What happened during the event, incident, activity, or task?
E = EFFECT	What were the new experiences you had to deal with or the challenges you faced, and what impact did they have on you?
A = ACTION	What action did you take or strategies did you employ to deal with the challenge/s? And why did you take the actions you took?
L = LEARNING	What can you now do as a result? What do you need to do to handle a similar situation again in the future? How has the experience added to the ones you have already had in terms of your development?

Self-reflection in extra-curricular experiences

Student-Staff Partnership Projects

Student-Staff Partnership Projects (SSP) aim to create cultural transformation at UQ whereby students and staff connect as equal partners and collaborators on projects that seek to enhance the UQ community.

A team of students work with one or more staff members on a project that enhances the UQ student experience.

Core Values

Co-creation, co-delivery, and/or a collaborative effort premised upon mutual learning, accountability and shared responsibility.

Student and staff partners are valued as colleagues and equal partners.

https://employability.uq.edu.au/student-staff-partnerships

#UQ

CRICOS code 00025B

Summer Research Program

The Summer Research Program provides students with an opportunity to gain research experience working alongside some of the university's leading academics and researchers.

It is an opportunity for students to gain exposure to a research environment and to explore options for a future career in research.

Allows students to apply discipline specific skills in a research environment, and to connect with researchers across UQ and nationally.

https://employability.uq.edu.au/summer-winter-research

Application in extra-curricular space

How self-reflective practice was applied face to face

- Resources (SEAL template) to guide the reflective process individually

- In person workshop to take participants through the reflective process in relation to program activities – with volunteers sharing reflections

How self-reflective practice was applied in the virtual space

- Resources (SEAL template and video) to guide the reflective process individually

- Use of tech to enable and create cohort feel and build community.

  ➤ Jam boards – can contribute at any time during the program

  ➤ Small debrief groups online – sharing only what they felt comfortable with

  ➤ Chat channels

CRICOS code 00025B

What we learned

- Cohort cohesion plays a huge part in the extent of learning from an experience.

- Sharing reflections allows for students who have engaged in the same or a similar program to consider other learning opportunities and ways of managing situations. Where sharing was inhibited, less learning from other's experiences could occur.

- Participants were much more likely to share their own learning with their cohort when trust has been built. Therefore, this needs to be factored into the virtual program from the start.

- SSP participants are a highly motivated, self-selecting cohort. They are familiar with virtual space and less reserved (concepts of power dynamics and working as a collaborative team are addressed at the very early stages of the program, and are embedded in the program principles) therefore there is better engagement in self reflection in the virtual space for this cohort vs Summer Research cohort.

What we learned

What we will continue to use moving forward:

1. **Trust**

    a) Allow time for the cohort to gradually build trust.

    b) Create opportunities for informal collaboration /conversation.

2. **Time**

    a) Use tech that will allow students to contribute over time.

    b) Students can make their contributions later if they don't feel comfortable doing so at the time.

3. **Empowerment**

    a) Allow the cohort to create community themselves in ways that are meaningful *for them*

Next steps

Wider impact of self-reflective practice:

1. ECRs

2. Staff Development

3. Embedding in student experiential learning across UQ

4. Stress importance of self-reflection as a critical career management tool: transition pedagogy as frame

Questions?
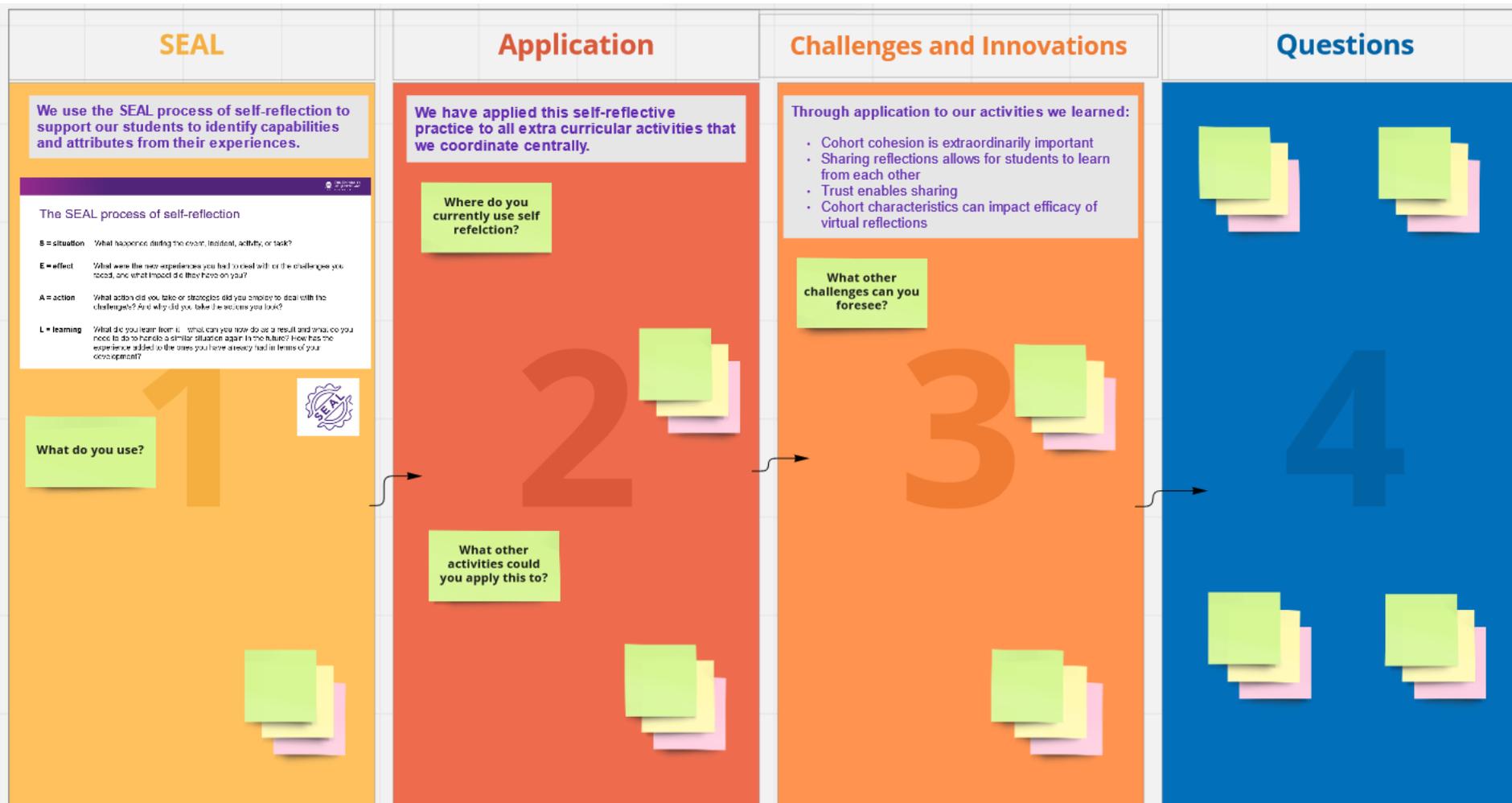
Thank you

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