

# Why take a networked approach to graduate employability?

for students and graduates



## Professional relationships

Professional relationships have long been central to career development, collaboration for creativity and problem solving, and professional learning. In 1995 Mark Granovetter reported that 60% of jobs were obtained through informal, social means. However, between 80 and 90% of graduates apply for jobs only using direct application methods such as applying for advertised jobs on Seek. Around 70% of learning in the workplace happens informally, and about 90% of this learning is socially based. However, social learning skills are not commonly emphasised in university courses.

In the 21st century era of global connectivity and networks, the potential impact of social relationships on employability is even greater: LinkedIn now has 300 million users, which represents 1 in 3 professionals worldwide. One study from 2013 (Broughton et al., 2013) reported more than 93% of recruiters and employers used LinkedIn to screen potential applicants. Online networks are also increasingly used for collaboration, to crowdsource resources and ideas, and as a '1-to-many' platform for personal branding and career networking (Bridgstock, 2016).

## The opportunity that professional connectedness represents for learning for employability

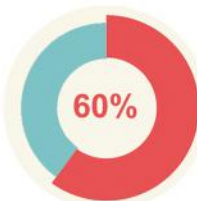
Despite the evident centrality of professional relationships to employability, my 2016 survey of 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students across multiple disciplines in two Australian universities shows that students are not at all well connected into professional networks.

2nd and 3rd year students across all disciplines

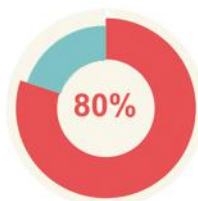
### Survey Results



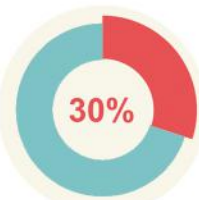
8 in 10 **do not have** an up-to-date **LinkedIn** profile



60% **do not think** of any of their **teachers** as being industry active



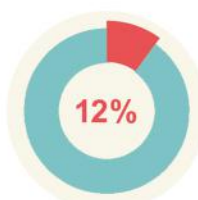
80% **do not have** an **online portfolio** of their work of any kind



On average they had met one employer in their field/s of interest (most often a WIL employer), and **30% have met 0 employers**



93% **wanted more information** about how to improve their **networks** and **networking skills** for professional purposes



82% are on Facebook every day, but **only 12% use social media** regularly for **professional purposes**

a random sample of 192 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students across all Faculties and disciplinary areas n=192

developing professional connectedness and connectedness capabilities

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## Graduate Employability 2.0

Graduate Employability 2.0 seeks to foster students' professional connectedness capabilities for success in life and work. These capabilities include:

- **Building a connected identity** - career identity, branding, social media presence
- **Growing connections** - growing networks, networking, weak ties
- **Strengthening and maintaining connections** - strengthening networks, strong ties, collaboration
- **Working with connections** - for innovation / problem solving, for career development, for learning
- **Developing social network literacy** - the ability to reflect upon and articulate **(i)** the roles that social networks play in professional life, & **(ii)** how professional social networks operate; the ability to navigate social networks strategically and effectively

## Key pedagogic approaches

Certain key pedagogic approaches rely heavily on the university's external relationships and professional networks. These approaches have complementary strengths, and **each program should ideally employ a combination of these approaches**, to maximise graduate employability and curriculum relevance:

1. **Work integrated learning** - learning that occurs at the intersection and engagement of theoretical and practice learning – for-credit learning that incorporates key elements of the workplace, including internships and work placements, industry / community partnered projects, trans-disciplinary student projects, enterprise and entrepreneurship learning, start-ups, study tours.
2. **Industry teaching** - direct industry teaching into programs, including guest lectures, career mentoring programs, networking events and online networking sites, sessional teaching by industry-active staff, informational interviewing
3. **Alumni engagement** - with pedagogies as for 'industry teaching' above, with a specific emphasis on graduates of the program or broader disciplinary area.
4. **Co-curricular activities** - facilitation, support and recognition (formal or otherwise) for activities undertaken by students outside the 'formal course curriculum', such as volunteering, student leadership roles, community engagement and service learning, and paid work.
5. **Student-student and student-university collaborations** - students work with one another, and/or university-based collaborators to enhance learning and teaching, the broader student experience, or other university functions. Includes 'students as partners' initiatives, clubs and societies, university ideas jams, student representation of the program / faculty / university at external events. These collaborations may or may not be included in co-curricular support and recognition schemes.
6. **Online professional identity building** – development and maintenance of a professional online presence, e.g., through e-portfolios, LinkedIn and social media
7. **Connected learning** – learning online through open, industry-authentic social networks (e.g., blogs, twitter)

Universities can **improve** the efficacy of these **pedagogic approaches** by enacting a series of 6 programmatic, organisational area, and university-wide enabling strategies for connectedness. These strategies **support the university to connect and partner** with industry, community and internal stakeholders effectively, which in turn **improves the professional connectedness of students**.

For more about the connectedness capabilities, pedagogic approaches, and enabling strategies, including a model of connectedness learning and practical toolkit for educators, please visit:

[www.graduateemployability2-0.com](http://www.graduateemployability2-0.com)

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