# INFO90010 Technology Innovation Project

## Assessment Task 1 – Group Project Proposal

**Group details**

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| Group Name | | Group E (E-Mind) | | |
| Group Members  Names, email addresses, and roles in project team | | | | |
|  | **Name** | | **Email address** | **Major role on project** (e.g., contact person; user/customer research; creative lead; software developer; project manager) |
| **Group member 1:** | Ahmad Qusyairi Anuar | | anuar@student.unimelb.edu.au | Project Manager |
| **Group member 2:** | Muhammad MD NASREIN | | muhammad.mdnasrein@student.unimelb.edu.au | Contact Person & Customer Research |
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**PART A - Brainstorming about the topic**

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| Project Topic  What is the problem you plan to investigate and innovate for?  Why is this problem important? | **AI-Driven Support System for International Students: Addressing Practical and Social Challenges**  International students face significant challenges, including language barriers, cultural adaptation difficulties, social isolation, financial struggles, and academic pressure, all of which hinder their ability to integrate socially and academically (Ambrósio et al., 2017). These difficulties contribute to insecurity and isolation, making it harder to establish connections and navigate new environments effectively (Windle et al., 2008; Arthur, 1997). Even before COVID-19, international students were a vulnerable group due to these factors, and recent global disruptions have worsened their situation (Altinyelken et al., 2020).  The urgency of addressing these challenges is reinforced by the growing number of international students, projected to reach eight million by 2025 (Wang et al., 2023). Without adequate support, students may struggle academically, withdraw socially, or face prolonged adaptation difficulties. Nussbaum’s capabilities approach highlights the importance of fostering an environment where individuals can flourish, yet systemic barriers often limit students’ full engagement in academic and social life (Nussbaum, 2011). While universities provide support services, students frequently face obstacles in accessing them due to bureaucratic hurdles, lack of awareness, and adjustment difficulties. Language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and financial constraints further complicate their ability to seek help. Additionally, university support services often experience high demand, leading to long wait times, while external assistance remains expensive and inaccessible (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2024).  This project proposes an intelligent support system to help international students navigate university life more effectively. By streamlining access to academic resources, financial guidance, visa information, and cultural adaptation support, the system can reduce barriers students face daily and promote social integration by recommending activities, student groups, and networking opportunities. However, several challenges must be considered in its implementation. Ensuring accessibility for diverse student populations requires designing an inclusive system that accommodates various languages, cultural backgrounds, and levels of technological proficiency. Privacy and data security concerns must also be addressed, as handling sensitive student information requires strict compliance with ethical and legal standards. Additionally, while technology can enhance access to resources, it is essential to ensure that it complements rather than replaces existing human support networks, maintaining the value of personal interactions and mentorship (Islamov, 2021; Chan & Hu, 2023). |
| People  Who are the main people affected by the problem you plan to innovate for?  Who are your intended users? Who are the other stakeholders (i.e., other people affected by, or involved in, the design context)? What do you think might be the concerns or priorities of your intended users and stakeholders? | The following are the identified stakeholders for this innovation:   1. **International students at the University of Melbourne.**   This innovation is primarily intended for use by the international students at the University of Melbourne. International students face practical and social struggles, especially when they need to adjust towards new cultural and academic environments. These identified struggles have affected the quality of the student’s social connections, academic success, general well-being and overall quality of life in Melbourne.  The priorities the students have are an overall improvement of academic life with a strong emphasis on practical guidance, student experience, cultural relevance, and sensitivity. Students want to reduce isolation and establish genuine friendships among peers and, at the same time, have the ease of accessing support resources on campus.   1. **University of Melbourne’s student clubs, societies and organizations.**   Student clubs and societies at the University of Melbourne are key in promoting cultural awareness and understanding at the university. Students’ organizations are aimed to form the bridge that connects peers from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles and drives student engagement activities.  The priorities that can be identified would be an increase in club membership, visibility and event participation amongst international students. Besides, the clubs will also prioritize to close the social gaps between international and local students, as well as effectively communicating their activities and resources across campus. Lastly, they would expect to have a simple integration with digital platforms that can promote clubs’ events on campus.   1. **Academic Staff such as tutors and professors.**   Academic staff such as tutors and lecturers will indirectly benefit from this innovation through students improved overall wellbeing and cultural integration. This leads to a high level of academic concentration and classroom participation.  The academic staff’s priorities revolve around learning outcomes and effective student engagement in the classroom environment. Moreover, they expect the students to feel comfortable seeking practical and academic support throughout their university journey.   1. **University of Melbourne’s admin and support staff.**   UoM’s admin and support staff, such as academic advisors, student engagement and welfare officers, and university administrative personnel, are affected by this innovation as they are responsible for maintaining and providing a safe and well-integrated student experience.  The priority they have is to improve the existing academic environment and engagement across different cultural and social backgrounds and to ensure no student feels isolated in a diverse academic space. Furthermore, another priority that can be assumed is to ensure the innovation can be easily integrated with university’s existing resources and support services.   1. **Guardians or families of students.**   International students who are struggling with practical and social wellbeing such as financial worries and social isolation might have an indirect effect on family members abroad. Family members invested in their children’s studies will feel uneasy and anxious knowing they can only provide limited meaningful support.  The priorities they have would be peace of mind knowing their children have the necessary, effective and practical support to adjust in Melbourne and get the best of student experience abroad.  Stakeholders’ mapping and their respective concerns can be referred from Figure below. High resolution of image can be accessed here**:** [**Stakeholders' map and concerns**](https://unimelbcloud-my.sharepoint.com/:i:/r/personal/anuar_student_unimelb_edu_au/Documents/INFO90010%20-%20TIP/Canva%20Deck/Stakeholders%27%20mapping.png?csf=1&web=1&e=oS3EMT) |
| Tasks and goals  What are the key tasks that people might be trying to achieve in this situation? | **Tasks/Activities and Goals**  To overcome **language barriers**, international students often participate in additional language classes and spend extra time outside the classroom to strengthen their language proficiency. Being more fluent and proficient will make lectures and academic materials easier to understand without constantly relying on translation tools, and they can feel more comfortable participating in class discussions and presentations.  **Cultural adaptation** is another major challenge international students face. They must understand local cultural norms and etiquette and be aware of unspoken social rules and behaviors. This helps them get along with classmates and group members and integrate more smoothly into the local community.  International students often experience **feelings of isolation**, especially at the beginning of their university life. Joining school clubs is an effective way to build and expand social networks, as these clubs often organize various activities and events. Students can meet many people through these events and form supportive groups that accompany them throughout their academic journey.  **Financial struggles** are also a significant concern for many international students. Although scholarships and grants are available, they often only cover part of the costs. The most direct way for students to support their living expenses is to find part-time jobs or seek assistance from the university in the form of financial aid or counseling services. Alleviating financial stress can greatly reduce the overall burden of studying.  **Academic pressure** is one of the most prominent issues international students face. The pressure mainly comes from the consequences of failing classes and delayed graduation, which is extremely impactful to international students. They must meet high academic expectations, maintain and improve their grades, and adapt to unfamiliar educational and assessment systems. Academic success is crucial for international students because it is essential for their future career prospects in the host country.  Overall, these are the main tasks and activities international students engage in to adapt to local culture and community life and to succeed academically. It is essential that universities and communities offer timely, affordable, and tailored support and resources to help meet their unique needs.  **Challenges**  Despite their efforts, there are several challenges that prevent international students from fully engaging in these activities. Additional language classes can be expensive, and joining club events may take up valuable study time. Job opportunities are often limited due to visa restrictions. Furthermore, students have to cope with culture shock, homesickness, and potential discrimination. There is also the internal pressure to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to a new one.  Students may also face personal struggles, and it can be challenging to find like-minded individuals to connect with. Although universities often provide various forms of support for international students, there are still barriers that prevent them from accessing and fully benefiting from these resources. |
| Technologies and prior innovations  What previous innovations have been introduced to address this problem? What technologies and tools are *currently in use* in this setting (that you are aware of)? [Tip: you can include any tools here, including paper-based resources] What do you believe are the limitations of existing tools? | There are a range of existing technologies and prior innovations that were developed to address the problem and support students generally in terms of interaction and engagement. However, these innovations do not pinpoint in solving the practical and social struggles experienced by the international students and instead were created for more generic purposes. The key technologies that the intended users have access to are smartphones, laptops, university-sourced IT infrastructures and social media platforms.  In reference to this context, these technologies pose a few notable limitations. Such existing innovations are the following:   * **Social & Networking Sites**   Recent studies show that social media platforms aid international students to socialize and improve academic environment in a new environment (Dong, 2023). It is very common among them to consume WhatsApp and Facebook accounts to connect with their peers originating from the same home countries, to obtain practical guides such as rental housing advice, or form virtual communities that shared similar interests.  However, the identified limitations are the following:   1. FB groups or WhatsApp groups can produce an overwhelming and inconsistent flow of information for the students, especially when it is difficult to authenticate the reliability of interactions across online platforms. 2. The current social media platforms lack online safety and verification features, with limited ability to foster meaningful connections among users. Due to the anonymity of certain unverified online users, the social platforms can cause an unsafe and unhealthy space for international students who are genuinely seeking support. 3. The current social media applications do not systematically connect the students with practical resources available at the University of Melbourne. This unfragmented information makes the community-building effort challenging and impossible. 4. Lastly, the lack of existing tools that can target a specific group of people who share the same struggles causes a huge limitation to the existing technology. Since the innovation will serve only international students from UoM, the sense of belonging will be greater, and students will be more comfortable seeking help and validations.   Studies show that international students who actively use social media platforms and engage with just their peers from their home-country networks tend to feel more isolated and dissatisfied (Joep Hofhuis, 2023). Hence, relying deeply on existing technologies to address the problem may be counterproductive, as studies suggest it could negatively impact the socio-cultural adaptation of international students. Furthermore, research shows that interactions via social media platforms happen to be superficial as they offer limited meaningful communication (Lin Li, 2019). Thus, existing innovation hinders the cultural adaptation needs of international students due to a lack of personalized practical support and non-authentic local integration.   * **University’s Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**   CAPS is UniMelb’s centralized support center, which offers free, confidential psychological support as well as online resources. Services such as wellbeing webinars and self-help resources can offer students the practical and social needs they need to address with their adaptation struggles.  Even though CAPS offers free and tailored counseling-oriented services to University of Melbourne students, it has a few limitations, such as the following:   1. CAPS are highly demanded at the University of Melbourne, and the lengthy wait list could result to a lack of effective and immediate practical support. 2. CAPS required the students to proactively book sessions through the platform which can be a tedious process. Moreover, potential cultural differences with the professional counsellors might discourage the international student from seeking help even for practical and social consultations.  * **University’s Learning Management System (LMS)**   The readily available university websites and LMS provide a centralized hub for academic resources, event calendar and information. While this is a common interactive application for students to seek resources and study tips, it has several limitations in this context. The following are the identified limitations for the tool:   1. The resources on LMS are specifically for students to get help on academic matters and do not address the practical and social challenges. The university’s LMS are not tailored enough and have limited interactivity towards international students with adaptation struggles. 2. This existing innovation was not aimed at catering community-building capabilities. Students have limited interaction only with peers who are enrolled in the same subject and generic information can be overloaded on the university’s website.   Observations backed by research indicate that passively interactive platforms like LMS and standard university websites do not facilitate the international students becoming more socially integrated in the ways they need to be. Studies suggested that universities should have their LMS revamped so that it has dynamic social and targeted networking systems instead of the static broadcasting feature it has now (Jade Sleeman, 2020). This problem can be tackled by developing a digital learning platform that includes the capabilities of social network site elements. Hence, this promotes connections and online presence of the students inside a digital learning platform. |
| Innovation expectations | The team is tackling this problem with an AI-powered application that offers a variety of features designed to help international students overcome personal struggles and ease their cultural transition in a more effective way. Some of the ideas we have brainstormed for the application's features include (but are not limited to):  1. **One-stop center for social connection, support, and information powered by smart AI**: This feature enables users to easily connect with relevant people and university organizations, as well as find the resources they need without unnecessary hassle.  2. **AR/VR AI-Powered Assistant or Buddy**: A personalized digital companion that provides guidance and support to users as they navigate university life.  3. **Voice- or text-based virtual support**: Similar to a discussion forum, this feature includes AI-driven matchmaking that forms rotating support groups based on users’ needs and shared interests.  4. **Voice-based story exchange**: A platform where users can anonymously share and listen to audio stories. This helps users practice and enhance their English-speaking skills while fostering connections with others through shared experiences.  5. **AR-enhanced events around campus**: A feature that promotes social interaction by encouraging participation in campus events through gamified rewards.  These ideas are based on our preliminary research into the challenges faced by international students. A more thorough investigation will be necessary to determine which features users would most value and find beneficial in the application. |

PART B – PLANNING THE PROJECT

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| Investigating the topic  What do you need to learn about the topic/problem you are investigating and innovating for?  How will you go about this investigation? | **Investigating the topic**  To investigate this topic, we have identified 4 important areas to focus on and the key questions that arise in each of the areas:   1. **Using digital apps for social interaction**    1. What types of social interactions (e.g., peer support, professional networking) are most effectively facilitated through digital apps?    2. How do privacy concerns and the anonymity offered by apps influence the willingness of users to engage in social interaction?    3. What are the long-term benefits or limitations of relying on support provided through digital apps?    4. How willing are the students to engage with digital apps for social interaction? 2. **How effective is using digital apps vs. physical interaction for cultural adaptation?**    1. To what extent do digital mobile apps support or hinder deeper emotional connection compared to face-to-face interaction?    2. How do different cultural backgrounds affect the interpretation and effectiveness of digital apps?    3. What is the optimal balance between digital and physical interactions for facilitating successful intercultural adaptation among international students?    4. What communication elements are lost or altered when interaction is mediated through mobile apps?    5. How do individuals perceive trust and empathy through app-mediated communication? 3. **What advantages do digital apps offer for physical interaction?**    1. Can apps help overcome social cliques or cultural silos in physical environments, ensuring diverse social interaction?    2. How do apps help connect individuals with similar interests who may have been unaware of each other in real-world settings?    3. Can digital apps increase social confidence, thereby enhancing the quality of in-person interactions?    4. Can mobile apps enhance physical interaction by acting as bridges, or do they risk replacing meaningful connections altogether? 4. **What other struggles do international students face?** 5. Which practical and social struggle impact students the most/least? 6. **How does AI reliably match personal struggles with the relevant resources and match people interests?**    1. What ethical considerations should guide the development and implementation of AI-powered support systems for international students?    2. How can the effectiveness of online cross-cultural communication aids be measured and improved?    3. How can AI matchmaking be ethical, unbiased, and inclusive when matching people or finding relevant resources?    4. What are the challenges in using AI to understand and interpret cultural nuances, personal preferences, and contextual factors when recommending resources or social opportunities?   **Rough Outline to investigate the topic:**  1. Conduct research on all the related areas by gathering academic papers.  2. Consult professionals or people with related experience for insights, advice, and technical support such as university student support groups, university clubs, professors, and experts in the IT field.  3. Conduct surveys with the university’s international students and gain a better understanding of their preferences.  4. Interview potential users (among the university students) and learn about their needs. |
| Risks and constraints  What potential risks or constraints could delay or limit your project?  Consider uncertainties that may impact your investigation or innovation.  How will you mitigate these risks? | * **Privacy and Ethical risks**   Since this innovation requires the collection, processing, and monitoring of practical and social issues, anonymity and transparency of the study are crucial in protecting this data. International students’ inputs are essential for data training and modelling, and they might perceive these social and practical challenges as sensitive. Students who are just starting their semester and struggling to adjust to a foreign environment might be hesitant to discuss their social challenges openly. Such consequence limits the accuracy of the data collected and ultimately affects the output of the solution the team is innovating.  To mitigate this risk, not only does this innovation need great amounts of trust from the intended user, but also to have robust privacy and ethical elements in the ecosystem if technological solutions were to build upon the data collected. Additionally, the research questions that will be delivered to the international students should be framed clearly to focus only on practical and non-sensitive matters. The surveys and investigation outputs should be clearly communicated in terms of anonymous response guarantee, and the research team must explicitly state that confidentiality and transparency are built around the innovation.   * **Cultural sensitivity and language barriers**   Newly arrived international students may face language barriers when interpreting the research questions and not incorporating diverse cultural backgrounds into the investigation method might produce unsatisfied responses. Different cultures might have different preferences in responding to research methodology, and hence, cultural sensitivity is important in getting accurate results.  To mitigate this constraint, the research team should ensure the surveys and interviews are culturally neutral, clear, and easy to understand. Translating the research questions into predominant languages can capture the nuances of the problem the team is trying to solve. Moreover, small-scale pilot test surveys can also be conducted with multiple diverse student representatives to investigate the clarity of the research linguistics before moving towards a full-scale research approach.   * **Inadequate resources**   This innovation needs a well-thought-out strategy in terms of deliverables, human resources allocation, and project timeline. This project solution requires a massive amount of data from participants with diverse cultural backgrounds, and given the limited time for project completion, these resource constraints might affect the quality and scope of the project’s investigation.  To ensure the smooth running of the project, this risk can be mitigated by defining a clear project timeline with agreed-upon milestones and focusing on allocating resources efficiently. The project can adopt the agile methodology to ensure the team can respond to evolving project requirements and promote increased collaboration among stakeholders.   * **Low user engagement and response in research methodology**   Another identified constraint in this project is the low level of user engagement. International students who are already struggling with their practical and social needs might have limited time and motivation to participate in the research. Elements such as social discomfort, financial pressure, and academic anxiety might give them a difficult time engaging genuinely in these studies.  From the early stage of the investigation, a careful and culturally sensitive approach is required to accurately mitigate these constraints. Engaging students from diverse backgrounds in a collaborative workshop will validate the innovation’s cultural relevance. Besides that, offering small tokens of appreciation, such as gift cards or vouchers, might motivate the international students to participate in focus groups or interviews. Lastly, the ability of the team to paint the project’s potential practical benefits might attract intrinsic motivation and genuine interest in diverse populations of international students. Established mediums, such as university students’ clubs, can become a source of collaboration to gain participants and trust for the research.   * **Limited accessibility with stakeholders**   As this innovation depends on various stakeholders, such as academic staff, student organizations and administrative officers, difficulties in getting their cooperation and engagement would prevent a solid understanding of how to craft a comprehensive solution to the problem.  To ensure that the innovation gets the collaboration it needs, engaging these stakeholders early in the project phase with transparency and clear communication on project’s objectives will mitigate this constraint. Furthermore, the innovation shall develop a secondary plan, if the stakeholders are not available given the tight project timeline. Online sources and existing studies that address similar concerns to this project can serve as secondary data sources. |
| Milestones  What are the key tasks you intend to complete before the week 7 progress presentation (14th April)? What are the key tasks you need to complete between weeks 7 and 12?  How much time will each milestone require? How much time do you have available to you each week this semester?  How will you ensure you meet your key milestones? | **Proposed Project Timeline**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Task** | **Expected Time Taken** | **Week** | | Form Groups | 1 day | Week 1 | | Discuss and Brainstorming Session for Proposal | 7 days | Week 1-2 | | **Submit project proposal** | 1 day | Week 3 | | Receive and review initial feedback on proposal | 5 days | Week 3 | | Conduct research and gather user insights | 7 days | Week 3-4 | | Analyse findings and define problem statement | 7 days | Week 4-5 | | Draft initial findings and plan progress presentation | 7 days | Week 6 | | **Progress presentation** | 1 day | Week 7 | | Brainstorm ideas and refine concept for solutions | 5 days | Week 7 | | Start developing prototype | 7 days | Week 8 | | Prototype checkpoint #1 (test, feedback) | 1 day | Week 9 | | Prototype further development based on feedback | 7 days | Week 8-9 | | Prototype checkpoint #2 (test, feedback) | 1 day | Week 9 | | Finalise prototype | 7 days | Week 10 | | Prepare prototype and presentation video | 5 days | Week 8-10 | | **Video presentation** | 1 day | Week 11 | | Compile findings and write final report | 4 days | Week 9-11 | | **Submit final report + individual reflection** | 1 day | Week 12 |   **Gantt Chart** |

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**PART C - COMPLETE THE GROUP CONTRACT (SEE LMS)**

**Technology Innovation Project (INFO90010): Team Agreement**

**Date**: 11/3/25

**Tutor**: Yan Zhang

**Group name**: E-Mind

**Group members**: Ahmad Qusyairi Anuar, Muhammad MD NASREIN, Kevin Liew Kar Kit

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| GOALS: What are our **team goals** for this project?  What do we want to accomplish? What skills do we want to develop or refine? |
| Our team aims to develop a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) that integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) into an application. We strive to meet all project deliverables while remaining flexible to changing requirements. Additionally, we seek to enhance our app development skills and refine our project management capabilities throughout the process. |
| EXPECTATIONS: What do we expect of one another in regard to attendance at meetings, participation, frequency of communication, the quality of work, etc.? |
| We expect 100% attendance at all meetings, ensuring active participation and contribution from every team member. Team members should be proactive in sharing ideas and providing constructive feedback. In case of any issues or challenges, we encourage open communication and prompt action to address them. The quality of work produced should be satisfactory and align with the team’s overall expectations. |
| TEAM RULES: What rules do we agree on to help us meet our goals and expectations? |
| To ensure we meet our goals and expectations, all team members must respond promptly to questions or queries. Slacking and procrastination should be avoided to maintain productivity. Everyone is expected to be well-prepared for meetings and to actively contribute. We will hold each other accountable for our responsibilities and ensure that we remain punctual in all project-related activities. |
| COMMUNICATION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT: What tools will you use to communicate and manage tasks? How will project progress be recorded and communicated? |
| To ensure effective communication and project management, our team will utilize multiple tools. Discord and WhatsApp will be used for quick discussions and updates, while Trello will help in tracking project progress and task assignments. Figma will be employed for UI/UX design collaboration, and Jupyter Notebook will be used for coding and data analysis. We will store and manage project files using GitHub, OneDrive, and Google Docs to ensure seamless document sharing and version control. |
| CONSEQUENCES: How will we address non-performance in regard to these goals, expectations, and agreed processes? |
| If a team member does not meet the agreed-upon goals, expectations, or processes, we will first address the issue through an **internal discussion** to find a workable solution. If the issue persists or requires further intervention, we will seek guidance by consulting the **teaching staff** for advice. |

We share these goals and agree to these expectations, rules, and consequences.

Q

Ahmad Qusyairi Anuar

MDF

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KLKK

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