



MACQUARIE
University
BUSINESS SCHOOL
SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA

The Bachelor of Commerce Capstone

AGILITY AND EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Macquarie University is situated, the Wallumattagal people of the Dharug Nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land since time immemorial. We also acknowledge the Elders, past and present, and pay our respects to them. We further honour and pay our respects to the spirits of this land and its waterways. We humbly ask that all members of the Macquarie University community are granted the capacity to wingaru (think), to learn and to walk safely upon this ngurra (land).

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A photograph showing a group of students in a modern study area. A man in a light-colored shirt and dark trousers stands, gesturing towards a laptop screen. Several other students are seated around tables, looking at screens or working together. Large windows in the background provide a view of greenery.

Introduction

The Capstone

Launched in 2021, with 550-650 students each semester, the **Bachelor of Commerce Capstone (MQBS3010 – Agility and Excellence in Business)** is a mixed-major Capstone across 12 majors.

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE MAJORS

MAJORS FOR A PROFESSIONAL CAREER PATH

Accounting Business Analytics

Business Information Systems Cyber Security Governance

Economics Entrepreneurship

Finance Human Resource Management

International Business Management

Marketing Marketing Insights & Analytics

Inspired by the World Economic Forum (2020) report, the Capstone brings extra-curricular employability skills and extra-curricular employability events into the curriculum. We've transformed this final subject of the degree by infusing it with a scalable, dynamic, and contemporary employability skills program.

In this Capstone, students develop the transferable employability skills of – communication and cross-functional teamwork, professional practice, data and information skills, critical thinking and problem solving, an ethical, global, and sustainable mindset, and inter-disciplinary thinking, mapped to Macquarie Business School's Competency Goals.

MQBS COMPETENCY GOALS

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS



COMMUNICATION AND
COLLABORATION



PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICE



DATA AND INFORMATION
RELATED SKILLS



CRITICAL THINKING AND
PROBLEM SOLVING



GLOBAL, ETHICAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
CITIZENSHIP



DISCIPLINE-RELATED
KNOWLEDGE

Students are placed in cross-disciplinary teams whose projects advance a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, by synthesising their knowledge.

This Capstone program is supported by weekly live industry panel guest lectures. Each semester, more than 50 industry guests from the world of business, commerce, science, and technology – advise students on their projects and inspire students about their employability endeavours, keeping the content engaging, applied, and current.

In tutorials, students apply their learning from pre-readings and the industry guest lectures to create authentic assessments. Students showcase e-portfolios via elevator pitches to potential employers.

Overview

The Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) Capstone (the Capstone) – MQBS3010 – is the culmination of each student's journey in the BCom degree. The pedagogy of the Capstone is based on **Assessments for Learning and Assessments as Learning**.

The first 2 weeks are spent on a **Reflective Essay** – students reflect on how far they've come in their BCom journey and identify any gaps in their skills that they want to address in the Capstone as they prepare to graduate. Students also summarise their Reflective Essay as a one-page infographic to share with their team when teams are formed in Week 3.

In Week 3, students are placed in inter-disciplinary teams of 5-7 students, where their team meeting and teamwork are completed during the scheduled 2-hour tutorial time. From Weeks 3-13, students progressively work on authentic assessments by following a suite of tutorial activities that have been constructively aligned. As students complete these assessments, they populate their e-portfolios.

Students are fore-warned that mid-way through the semester that they will experience an unknown shock – the **Agility Exercise** assessment. This is to emulate

real world shocks and exercise the employability skill of agility. Students are required to solve a consulting-based business problem for a client over a 9-day period – giving students skills in consulting, business agility, and personal agility.

At the end of the semester, students submit a **Capstone Report** – an inter-disciplinary report on their business problem and solution to advance a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, where each chapter is written by one team member who takes on the role of a department in an organisation, while the introduction and conclusion are written collaboratively – an inter-disciplinary team effort.

Leading up to the Capstone Report, students submit a draft **Interim Pitch** as a formative assessment.

Finally, students submit a **Capstone Presentation** which is a three-minute elevator pitch video to a potential employer. Students speak to their e-portfolio of skills during this presentation, evidencing their employability skills with the authentic assessments created in the Capstone and across the BCom. Thus, the context of the Capstone is to set students for a win as they transition to the world of work.

Assessments for Learning & Assessments as Learning

SCAFFOLDED, FORWARD FEEDBACK, AUTHENTIC



Curriculum Transformation and Innovative Pedagogy



A

Positively impacted on student learning, engagement, and experience



The student e-portfolios discussed above are showcased to potential employers on *LinkedIn*. Students can also hyperlink their e-portfolio in their CVs or provide their hyperlinks in job application forms.

Organisations now reach out to the Capstone convenor, wanting to get engaged.

Recruiters such as *Randstad* and some of the ‘Big 4’ run recruitment drives within the Capstone program, paired with guest lectures on professional networking, navigating psychometric tests, interview success, and more.

After a trial in 2020, 2021 was the first year where the program ran in its intended format, with a team of 12 teachers across all Macquarie Business School (MQBS) departments. Each year, the Capstone has around 550-650 students each semester. The program has undergone incremental improvements each semester, including the expansion of the number of industry guest partners in the program. We now have 50+ industry guests who partner with the program via panel-based industry guest lectures, giving students advice to progress their projects, and advice on students’ transition to the world of work.

Students must apply, synthesise, and critique industry insights and feedback in their assessments, including the feedback of lecturers, peers, and Bachelor of Science Capstone students. The complex and constant inference requirements of the assessments – assesses the process and not just the product. This assists in upholding the academic integrity of these tasks in the age of artificial intelligence (AI). Students are still encouraged to use AI to assist in ideation, develop their draft models, create professional diagrams and charts, as well as the overall professional look of their report.

“

The MQBS Capstone Unit was a breath of fresh air in my BCom Degree. Interacting with students from other majors allowed me to view business in a more complete context. Learning concepts like team efficiency provided tangible, real-world ideas that I feel confident in adding to my tool kit when entering the professional workspace.

**BCOM CAPSTONE STUDENT
2021**

The Capstone was served by the Unit Representatives Program in 2021.

Constructive feedback was received via their Interim and Final Reports to improve the Capstone further. The **Learner Evaluation of Teaching (LET)** results are very favourable. For example, in 2022, in the S2 LET, the response rate was approximately 45%, and the average score for 13 of the 14 questions was between 4.8 and 5.0.



HIGHLY FAVOURABLE LEARNER EVALUATION OF TEACHING (LET) RESULTS

45%

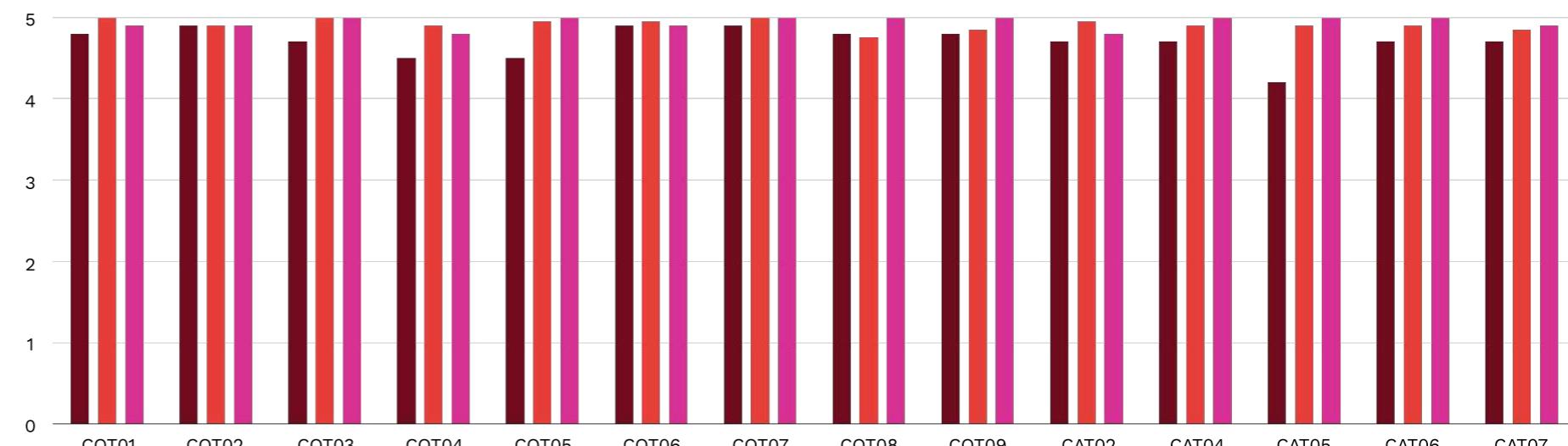
RESPONSE RATE
2022 S2 LET

93%

EXCELLENT RATING
13 out of 14 questions scored 4.8-5.0

BCOM CAPSTONE SURVEY RESULTS 2021 - 2023

● 2021 ● 2022 ● 2023



COT01

This teacher communicated well with the class.

COT04

This teacher stimulated me intellectually.

COT07

This teacher seemed helpful and approachable.

CAT02

This teacher encouraged students to participate in class.

CAT06

This teacher taught in a way that required active collaboration between students.

COT02

This teacher explained concepts clearly.

COT05

This teacher engaged me in active learning.

COT08

This teacher made constructive suggestions for improving my work.

CAT04

This teacher stimulated class discussion.

CAT07

This teacher facilitated my interaction with other students.

COT03

This teacher created a good environment for learning.

COT06

This teacher treated students with respect.

COT09

This teacher commented on my work in ways that helped me learn.

CAT05

This teacher provided opportunities for active learning in this class.

The Capstone has also been formally externally reviewed according to Macquarie University's **Unit of Study Review Policy**. The following statement from the external reviewer acknowledges the positive impact of the Capstone on student learning, engagement, and experience:

“

I would like to commend all those involved in the design, development and delivery of the Capstone unit for the following aspects:

DIVERSITY OF ASSESSMENT

The diverse range of engaging assessment tasks allow for both comprehensive assessment of learning and assessment for learning.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The unit's focus on creating solutions for United Nations Sustainable Development Goals underscores its commitment to addressing pressing global issues through the design of viable solutions.

INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION

The unit successfully integrates various disciplines within a business context, preparing students to tackle complex problems.

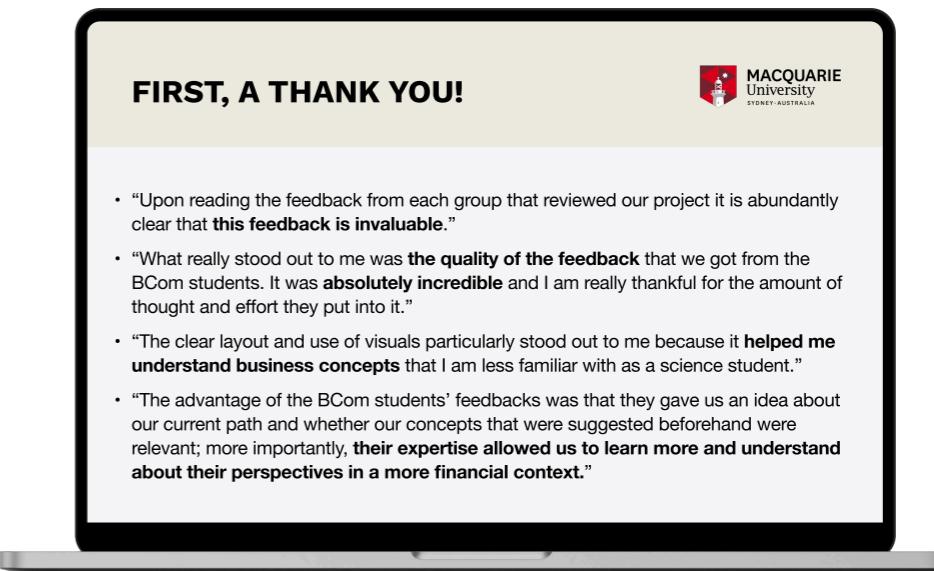
EMPLOYABILITY FOCUS

The incorporation of presentations and reports that showcase students' breadth of transferable employability skills and competencies is commendable. By allowing students to demonstrate their abilities through tangible artifacts, the unit enhances their readiness for the job market.

EXTERNAL UNIT OF STUDY REVIEW, ACADEMIC DIRECTOR, QUALITY AND L&T FUTURES, RMIT UNIVERSITY, 2023

From 2020-2021, the Convenor of the BCom Capstone (MQBS3010) – Agility and Excellence in Business – helped the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) design their own Bachelor of Science Capstone (FOSE3000) – Making Science Work for You and Society. FOSE3000 closely emulates our own Bachelor of Commerce Capstone – MQBS3010. Both capstones adopt an active learning style, with cross-disciplinary teaching, and mixed-major teams synthesising their knowledge together to advance a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (UNSDG) while showcasing their employability skills.

Furthermore, Bachelor of Commerce Capstone students and Bachelor of Science Capstone students cross-consult each other's projects to provide their unique expertise to their peers – over a period of three weeks. The Convenors of the two capstones also give cross-over guest lectures to the other cohort. The graphic below is a slide from the Convenor of FOSE3000 during a cross-over guest lecture, where this convenor shared their cohorts' gratitude to the MQBS3010 cohort for providing their science students with business acumen regarding the cross-Capstone consulting exercise:



Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Award for Educational Leadership

The exemplar of the BCom Capstone has been showcased across various fora in Australia and overseas, including conferences and peer-reviewed publications – listed in the Reference List of this document. The Commerce and Science Capstone teaching teams received Macquarie University's ultimate learning and teaching award in 2022 – the **Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Award for Educational Leadership** – for our venture into giving students a cross-Capstone consulting experience.

“

Thanks for all your help in advancing the BSc by offering extensive advice while we developed FOSE3000 for its first offering. Your leadership in developing an exciting cross-over between BSc and BCom Capstone students, where students consult and offer expert advice on the other disciplines' projects, was a highlight of the FOSE3000 offering for the BSc students. I also appreciate your guest lecture which helped the science students better understand the perspectives of BCom students. Your help last session is appreciated and valued.

BSC CAPSTONE CONVENOR
2022

“

Working with students and staff with diverse academic backgrounds in MQBS3010 was a unique and valuable experience for me. Working outside of my own academic bubble gave me a different perspective on what we can achieve as a business school from our learning and teaching activities. One recurring feedback I received from students is that this unit is different, especially the unique environment they are thrown into, where they need to open and adapt to their peers who think and work differently in order to achieve the common goal.

BCOM CAPSTONE TUTOR
2022

“

This was different to any unit I had done before, the learning was always hands-on, and I genuinely felt I was preparing for a future in the industry in every moment. We had the opportunity to form teams with members from all Commerce majors, giving me the opportunity to diversify my thinking and to understand how to leverage the strengths that we each brought to the team. I thoroughly enjoyed the collaborative nature of the classes, and the weekly teamwork made our final project feel like it had serious potential to become something more impactful than just a university assessment.

BCOM CAPSTONE STUDENT
2022



B

Gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and the community



THE BCOM CAPSTONE CONVENOR APPOINTED AS THE BCOM COURSE DIRECTOR

After successfully bringing all 6 MQBS departments and all 12 majors together as the Capstone Convenor, to create a successful capstone – the Capstone Convenor was honoured to be appointed as the Course Director of the largest course at Macquarie University. The Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) has approximately 5,500 students which amounts to 14% of the entire university's enrolment. In their role, the Course Director leads: 10 Heads of Major who look after 12 majors; 12 Capstone Teachers who look after the tutorial groups in the BCom Capstone; and 6 First-Year Lecturers. As the BCom is a faculty-level degree, the Course Director of the BCom is also a part of the Faculty Education Committee.

“

I want to congratulate you on the amazing work you are doing as Course Director of the Bachelor of Commerce. The leadership you have demonstrated in this role is a credit to you and highlights how incredibly valuable you are to MQBS and the university. The commitment you show to ‘Students First’ is inspirational. Your pedagogical knowledge is outstanding, and you engage and enthuse not just our students but also our staff. If we could bottle your energy and enthusiasm and spray it across the university, imagine the heights we could reach!

DEPUTY DEAN (EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT), FACULTY OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING
2024

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE EXTERNAL REVIEW

In 2022, the university enacted its new **Course of Study Annual Monitoring and Review Policy**.

The BCom was chosen as a pioneer – one of three initial degrees of the university to go through the new governance and re-accreditation process. With the support of a central university team, the Course Director led the course review as the Course Authority – writing a comprehensive 180-page report.

For this review, several stakeholders were consulted, interviewed, and surveyed including: 362 BCom students; 181 Capstone students including 12 Capstone focus groups run by 8 unit and tutorial representatives; 34 staff including 10 Heads of Major who in-turn consulted the other 107 unit convenors in the course; 10 industry experts in 2 focus groups, as well as a further 10 industry experts via 4 panel interviews; 18 alumni; 7 student experience teams; 5 sources of government and market data mined by our Global and Domestic Student Recruitment team; and 1 external research consultant, Hanover, surveying hundreds of students in Australia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The External Review Panel provided eleven commendations of the BCom, the first two were specifically commendations about the Course Director's (Capstone Convenor's) leadership and innovations:

EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL COMMENDATIONS



LEADERSHIP

The Course Director's leadership in driving innovation, industry engagement, and student-centred learning into the BCom and its learning outcomes.



EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness of the new BCom Capstone unit in enabling collaboration across interdisciplinary cohorts.

“

We'd like to start by commending you Prashan, for your leadership... you have been driving innovation and industry engagement... Our second commendation is that we took a look at the Capstone unit, which is also yours. It's worthy of a commendation in itself, in that it's enhancing interdisciplinarity.

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL
2022



MACQUARIE BUSINESS SCHOOL PRIORITY PROJECT

As part of activating the recommendations of the External Review Panel, as well as MQBS' own strategy for the BCom, the Business School decided to refresh the BCom throughout 2023 for a 2024 launch.

In doing so, we took inspiration from the BCom Capstone and infused the ideas of inter-disciplinarity, active learning, and employability skills from the Capstone throughout the entire Bachelor of Commerce – taking the best features of the Capstone and enhancing other aspects of the degree.

As a business school, we spent 2023 refreshing the BCom and building a brand new degree, the Bachelor of Business (BBus) – by synthesising the feedback of the Course Reviews and the learnings from the BCom Capstone – to refresh and build these two degrees. This included a complete overhaul of the first-year teaching model, to emulate the BCom Capstone tutorials; authentic and active engagement assessments as we had enacted in the Capstone; a purposefully scaffolded suite of employability skills across the curriculum including the creation of a new employability subject, Enhancing Employability Skills (MQBS2010) – a cornerstone second-year subject to complement the final-year Capstone; and signature student events across each year. In 2024, the combined BCom and BBus new enrolments are 25% higher than those in 2023, and the largest MQBS intakes of 2024.

AACSB RE-ACCREDITATION

The BCom and the BCom Capstone were important exemplars in securing the recent Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) re-accreditation of Macquarie Business School:

“

The Bachelor of Commerce and BCom Capstone unit, MQBS3010, were both chosen as exemplars for the AACSB CIR visit to MQBS. The Course Review report of the BCom demonstrated the depth of investigation undertaken when reviewing and redesigning a course. The unit materials were provided to the panellists to demonstrate the students' learning of sustainability knowledge and teamwork experience, while the school's CIR report also cited the unit as a key example of societal impact in curriculum, noting “The unit places students in mixed-major teams to solve real-world problems related to the UNSDGs”.

PROJECT MANAGER,
AACSB CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW (CIR)
2024

ALUMNI PARTNERS, INDUSTRY PARTNERS, AND VIP PARTNERS

Our industry guest lecturers have increased from 10 industry guests in 2021 S1 to 57 guests in 2024 S1 – most who voluntarily reach out to the teaching team when their interests get piqued via the LinkedIn showcases linked to the Capstone. Industry guests are willing to take part, because they are alumni who want to give back to the university, or because these industry guests gain direct access to potential talent via the interactive format of the program that allows them to engage with students.

Industry partners have included: 3M, The Academy of Entrepreneurs, The Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, The Australian School of Entrepreneurship, BDO, BMS Performance, Cochlear, Commonwealth Bank, Dell, Deloitte, Ebury, Ecolab, Everperform, EY, FindME, Koinly, KPMG, Macquarie Group, Nous Group, NSW Health, NSW Transport, NSW Treasury, PwC, Randstad, Salesforce, SAP, Suncorp, Sydney Football Club, Westpac, Women's Health Road, Yahoo, Youth Decide, and more.

In 2024, S2, we were honoured to host The Hon. Jacqui Munro, Member of the NSW Legislative Council (The NSW Senate) who gave students practical tips on the topic of Leadership and the topic of Diversity.



“

I have great appreciation for lecturers, professors, and course directors who recognize the needs of dedicated students and offer unique insights to help shape the young individuals who will transform the business world for the greater good.

SENIOR SOLUTIONS ENGINEER, SALESFORCE
2024

Accolades



ANNUAL UNIVERSITY LEARNING AND TEACHING FORUM

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Programs that Enhance Learning, 2024



HIGHLIGHTED AWARDS

RECEIVED BY
THE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE CAPSTONE

- Faculty of Science & Engineering Excellence Award for Inter-Departmental Collaboration, 2021.
- Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Award for Educational Leadership, 2022.
- Macquarie Business School Impact Prize, 2024.



AUSTRALIAN AWARDS FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING

NOMINEE

Programs that Enhance Learning, 2024



MACQUARIE
University
BUSINESS SCHOOL
SYDNEY-AUSTRALIA

Macquarie
Business
School



Shown creativity, imagination, and innovation



RECRUITMENT AND NETWORKING WITHIN THE CAPSTONE

Recruiters such as *Randstad* have run recruitment drives within the industry guest lectures, paired with guest lectures on up-to-the-minute industry trends and career workshops. Some of the ‘Big 4’ consultancies have hired students directly from Capstone lectures – where the industry guests scout for bright and engaged students – offering them interviews, internships, and full-time employment.

Additionally, as part of the overall BCom course experience design, each semester a signature structured networking event brings all guests back. This is an overall BCom event, held during the usual Capstone Week 11 industry guest lecture and supported by the wider MQBS team. In tables of 5, students get to spend 15 minutes with an industry partner, and repeat this round-robin networking, until students have connected with 6 industry partners. In 2024 S2, we had 31 industry partners at the event: **‘Accelerate your Career like a Boss with a Boss!’**



ACTIVE LEARNING AS AN EMPLOYABILITY SKILL

2020. 2021. Shocks. Disruptions. More. The world of work is agile.

Those that can navigate times of crises are those equipped with transferable skills in being active learners, where the World Economic Forum (2020) predicts that ‘active learning and learning strategies’ will be the Number 2 skill of 2025.

The Capstone prepares students for the world of work and leaves them with transformative memories of their time at Macquarie University. Students are provided frameworks for learning as well as scaffolded activities to help their projects progress. The teacher is their ‘guide-by-the-side’ and not a ‘sage-on-the-stage’ – facilitating student learning. Students are active partners and co-creators.

REIMAGINING THE CAPSTONE LEARNING



ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

The exemplary use of the university’s newly built active learning spaces for in-person streams, as well as all Zoom functionalities for online streams, using a unique blend of three learning methodologies to keep students actively engaged, applying the findings of Deslauriers, et al. (2019) to maximise: active learning, team-based learning, and problem-based learning.



SHOWCASE OF EXPERTISE

Periodically throughout the semester, teams are regrouped around majors, so that experts in disciplinary areas get to showcase how they have applied the knowledge from their majors in their respective projects – to light a spark in their disciplinary peers for their own Capstone projects.



INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Students actively learn from each other across 12 majors in the Bachelor of Commerce. Each student has typically majored in one of these areas (some students are double major students), and students get to learn about concepts and ideas from other majors from their team members.



PEER-TO-PEER CONSULTING

Periodically throughout the semester, teams of students are paired with each other to provide consulting expertise to other teams in their own tutorials.

TEACHING TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES WITHIN THE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE CAPSTONE

When students meet their team members in Week 3, *Lego Serious Play* is utilised as an icebreaker and as a teaching tool. Each team receives an identical *Lego* set. The aim is to build this model as fast as possible. Teams have 10 minutes to plan – delegate tasks and organise their workstation. Teams then race to see which team completes the task first. After all teams are complete, we reflect on what worked and what did not, which helps us discuss *Tuckman's Stages of Teamwork* – *Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning* – which sets the rhythm for teamwork throughout the semester.

Padlet is utilised for collaborative storyboarding of business plans and integrating each team member's role – where each team member represents a different department in an organisation.

Students choose to solve a business problem that advances one of the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs)*. They use their diverse knowledge and skills to achieve the chosen UNSDG

collaboratively, ethically, sustainably, and profitably (Bajada & Trayler, 2013). In doing so, the Capstone prepares students for ethical and sustainable leadership in their future workplaces, and the Capstone prepares students for ethical and sustainable leadership in society at large.

Canva and *Adobe Creative Cloud* are used to help create the consulting documents for the Bachelor of Science students – where students present their consulting solution as an infographic brochure – incentivising students to communicate commercial knowledge and business acumen using understandable language in a digestible format to engage, equip, and empower their stakeholders.

All of these assessment artefacts are then populated on each student's e-portfolio that is built via *Portfolium* or *Google Sites*. Students then use this portfolio to tape a video presentation to a potential employer. Students are also encouraged to showcase any or all of these artefacts via *LinkedIn*.

Innovative Teaching Toolset

CREATIVE, COLLABORATIVE, SUSTAINABLE



TUCKMAN'S STAGES OF TEAMWORK

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Adjourning



PLATFORMS AND APPROACHES



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

To celebrate International Women's Day (IWD), the two industry lectures which are immediately around IWD feature 4 female industry guests for each of the 2 industry guest panels. The host of each of the 2 panels is also a senior female colleague from the Business School – thus both panels are entirely female. As always, our panels are formed with a lens for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. By dedicating 2 weeks to the notable cause of IWD, we championed Women in Business while constructively aligning the curriculum to achieve the Capstone's learning outcomes.

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARD

For Inter-Departmental Collaboration, 2021



MACQUARIE BUSINESS SCHOOL IMPACT PRIZE

For the Bachelor of Commerce Capstone Industry Network, 2024



BACHELOR OF COMMERCE × BACHELOR SCIENCE CROSS-CONSULTING

An innovative design aspect of the Capstone involves an exciting and unique three-week cross-over between BCom Capstone and BSc Capstone students.

Teams are paired across the capstones. Each team consults and offers expert advice on the project briefs from the other cohort. This gives an opportunity for students to cross-consult across the different faculties – Business and Science. Science students receive feedback on their project through business, finance and/or marketing lenses and Commerce students receive feedback from the various science disciplines. Students produce a formal consultation document, giving them authentic experiences in consulting. When teams receive this feedback, they are to critique and/or incorporate this feedback into their projects. This initiative is forming the basis for even more integrated activities between the two faculties. Our team won the **Faculty of Science and Engineering Excellence Award for Inter-Departmental Collaboration, 2021**.

In 2022, we received the Educational Leader Award at the **Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards**.

“

His enthusiasm for a cross-over exercise between commerce and science students was energising. Prashan's [the Bachelor of Commerce Capstone Convenor] can-do attitude and positive 'yes-and' approach meant that we felt confident in going ahead with the inventive and challenging task that put students into the role of consultant on each other's projects. His follow-through in committing to the collaboration and iterative improvements to the design of the task has helped make it a highlight for students in both units. As a side comment, I was recently in a meeting where we were considering adding an MQBS unit to a degree. When someone asked who was teaching it and we answered Prashan, they said, well that's great then. His reputation is stellar.

**SENIOR LEARNING DESIGNER,
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
2023**

The panel commends your team for providing a strong example of a cross-disciplinary project that provides inter-course experiences for students. The panel particularly appreciated the leadership involved to sustain the development of Capstone units that provide a unique learning experience for students, while having a strong foundation of employability skills and focused pedagogy design.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS PANEL
2022**



D

Drawn on the scholarly literature on learning and teaching

The BCom Capstone is a multi-dimensional, cross-disciplinary, cross-faculty, complex programme that integrates contributions from several individual expert viewpoints to give the students a holistic and integrated learning experience.

The teaching approaches and methods reflect the course learning outcomes that revolve around Employability Skills, Cross-disciplinary Teamwork, and a Global Mindset – to future-proof graduates in the world of work (World Economic Forum, 2020) and develop graduates who are agile (Business Agility Institute, 2021). The teaching approach is agile and involves the teacher demonstrating and modelling the four categories of employability skills (McKinsey & Company, 2021): Cognitive, Interpersonal, Self-Leadership, and Digital – so that students gain a practical example of these skills in action and are empowered to emulate these in their own endeavours.

Students are encouraged and empowered to think critically and synthesise their knowledge at the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), to create new knowledge. The Capstone embodies active learning in a team setting, where teams work through a scaffolded activity each week but also have agency in directing their own projects. Studies show that students learn more when they experience active learning in the classroom (Deslauriers, et. al., 2019). Each activity's stimulus

materials guide students in the application of theories and frameworks to their chosen project. Students are free and encouraged to critique, synthesise, and create new ideas.

Students work collaboratively in cross-disciplinary teams, with peers and teachers to integrate their discipline-specific knowledge to address a societal problem. Students work in self-managing cross-functional teams to complete a semester-long project, preparing individual and group reports and presentations that are of showcase-quality. This teaching approach moves the students from being passive recipients to taking part in the teaching-learning nexus, thus enhancing their integrative learning (Morrison, 2014). This approach further heightens students' agency as well as their employability. Students also plan their next steps after graduation through an appraisal of personal achievements, identifying employability skills by connecting their university experiences to career aspirations. Students exit the Capstone with a meaningful and authentic reflection via their e-portfolio.



Deslauriers, et. al. (2019) explores active learning to challenge students. They show that students learn more in active classrooms, but students feel like they learn less because of the increased cognitive effort during active learning. It takes time for both teachers and students to get used to the unique and innovative format as well as the challenges of the Capstone. By around the third or fourth week, both parties realise the metacognitive benefits of active learning. Learning then occurs at two distinct levels: the synthesis of knowledge from different disciplines; and the development of transferable skills via active learning in itself. In effect, learning is not solely about the output, but also about the process. Emphasis on the process also assists in the validity of tasks in the age of AI.

Active learning is an employability skill in itself. The World Economic Forum (2020) lists ‘active learning and learning strategies’ second to ‘analytical thinking and innovation’ in their Top 10 skills of 2025. Some of our recent graduates have shared with us that they have been able to showcase their experiences and expertise gained from the Capstone during interviews and job applications.

The Capstone Convenor has presented the capstone’s innovations at several Australian and international conferences. As part of a *European Union, Erasmus+* project, a worldwide bid was undertaken in 2021 for case studies to be included in a handbook, *Shaping a Sustainable Future: Innovative Teaching Practices for Educating Responsible Leaders*. The work on the BCom Capstone was included as one of 23 case studies that is presented in this handbook:

Karunaratne, P. S.M. (2022). Agility and Excellence in Business – A Transdisciplinary Capstone Course on Sustainability Using the Knowledge and Skills of Commerce. In *Shaping a Sustainable Future* (pp. 257-272).



A LETTER FROM THE LEARNING INNOVATION MANAGER

The following email is an unsolicited email from the Learning Innovation Manager, sent to the MQBS Deputy Dean of Education and Employability. The email was sent after observing a Capstone tutorial conducted by the Capstone Convenor.



Dear Prashan,

I hope you are doing well. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend your MQBS3010 on-campus session on the 17th of Aug. Overall, it was a great experience due to the following observations that I had:

Atmosphere: the atmosphere in the learning space was consistently positive, welcoming, and inclusive, which kept the session lively; hence no one left the session, even during break time (Ramsden, 1979).

Engaging: it was evident from the level of participation from students that they were cultivated to cognitively, socially, and behaviourally engage with peers and learning content through structural relationships between the constructs prepared. The learning activities and content were carefully put together to stimulate participation and metacognitive absorption (Cook-Sather, A., et. al., 2014).

Autonomy: students were constantly – yet liberally – encouraged to participate actively through self-efficacy and self-esteem. The transformative learning approach employed during the session and within its inherent structural design empowered students to fearlessly interpret their own and others' perspectives to derive new meanings into their reasoning (Henri, D. C., et. al., 2018).

Expectations: the session plan was clearly communicated to students, including the learning activities and expected outcomes in a timely manner sufficient for proper preparation. Students were prepared well which enabled a smooth session flow (Goodyear, P., et. al., 2005).

Learning Outcomes: the session structure, learning artefacts, and formative activities were in line with all the ULOs outlined in the Unit Guide. The deliverables were explicitly communicated to students, and the learning delivery followed a holistic approach in preparing them to address the ULOs (Allan, J., 1996).

Prashan, I thoroughly enjoyed the exemplary student engagement in the session and frankly speaking, I have not observed any further improvements to be considered apart from the microphone battery running out, which we should provide you with the support on that matter!

Thank you for the opportunity once again, and I wish you all the fun with this unit :)

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