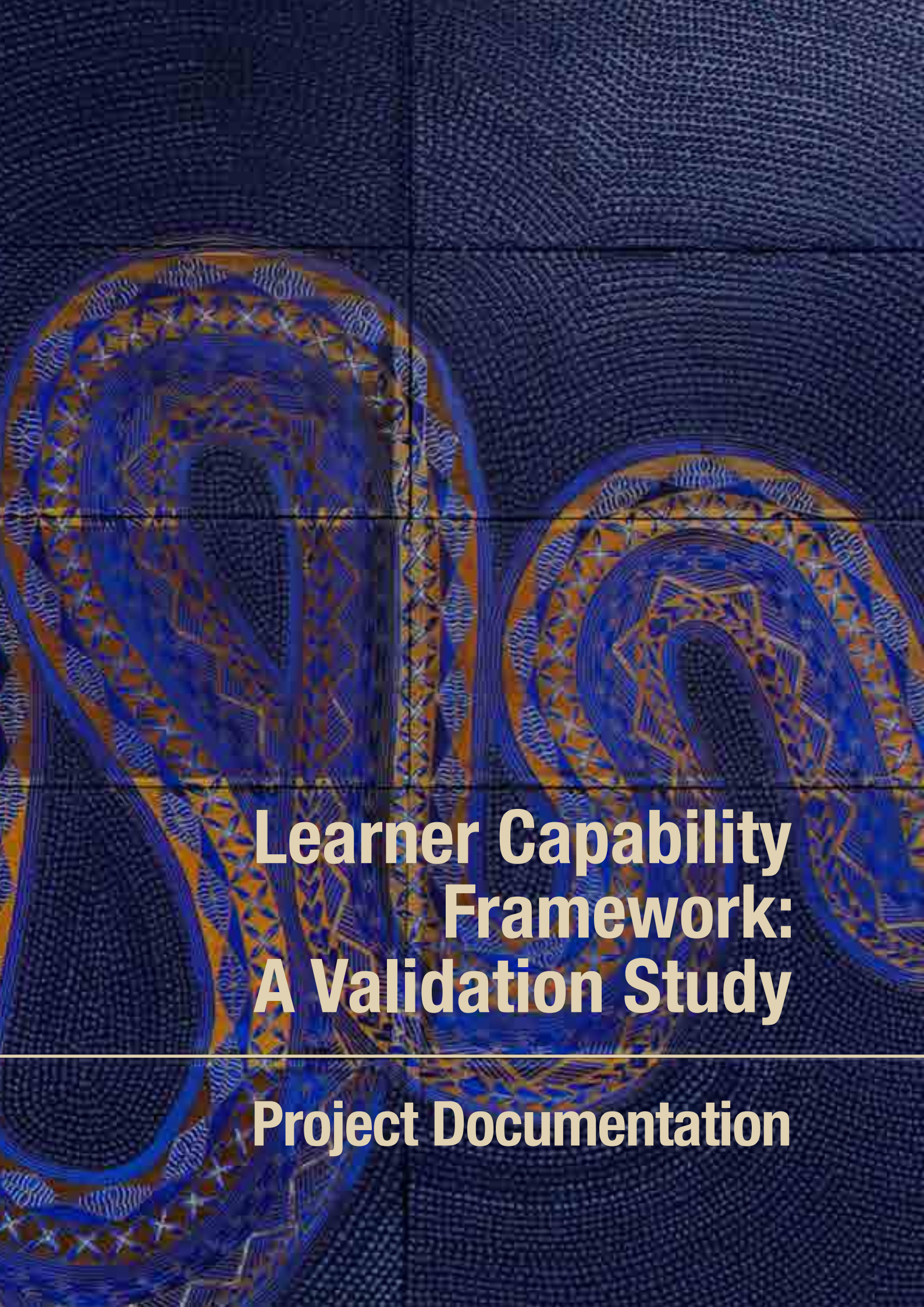


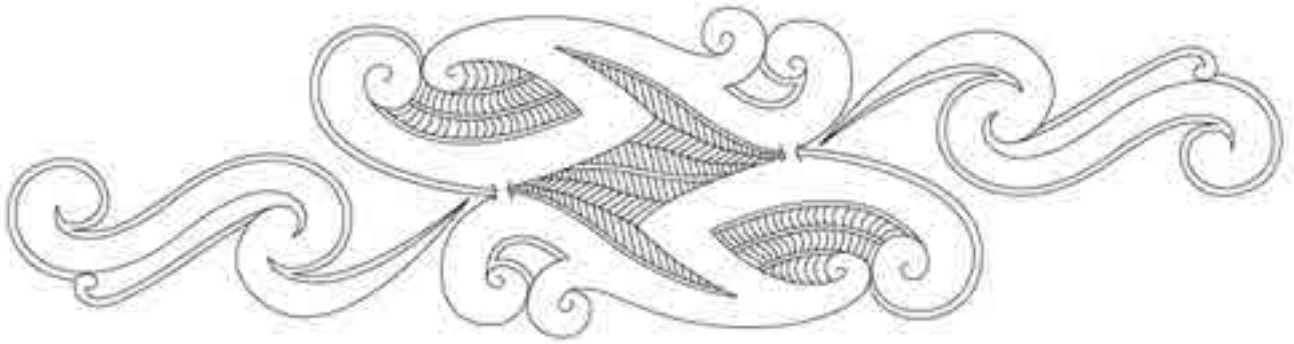
Learner Capability Framework: A Validation Study

Project Documentation

Learner Capability Framework: A Validation Study

Project Documentation

Front Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Journey Part Two*, 2013.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 2 x 4, (detail).



Kotahitaka (Unity)

Artist Dana Te Kanawa (née Russell), Kai Tahu

The overall pattern brings together landscape, seascape, Kai Tahu, Otago Polytechnic and the people from all of the places that come here to study. It symbolises unity and togetherness.

Acknowledgements

Otago Polytechnic acknowledges the valued support from Ako Aotearoa for this project. Without their support this project would not have extended to the scope and range that it has in providing an investigation of the relationship between capabilities and vocational education outcomes for learners and educators.

Several other individuals and organisations have been key to these outcomes. We extend a sincere thank you to Matt Kiore from Arai Te Uru Kōkiri Training Centre and Dr David McKay for their input and support of Arai Te Uru Kōkiri Training Centre partnership, and Virginia Nicholls from the Otago Southland Employers' Association for their input into considering the research in a current business context in the region.

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Special notes of acknowledgement for Dr Barry Law and Dr Behnam Soltani from the Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus (OPAIC), whose initial research to develop what capabilities in our setting might look like was undertaken in 2017. The research data they gathered was to be used to identify appropriate interventions and strategies to help redesign curriculum content to ensure Otago Polytechnic produce capable, work ready and globally employable graduates.

The findings of this Auckland pilot resulted in what has become known as the *iamcapable* project. It formed the basis for a validation process that has come to be known as the Learner Capability Framework tool, through which a more extensive investigation into learner capability and its impact on developing employable graduates for the changing nature of work has been possible.

A very sincere and special thank you to all the employers, stakeholders, staff researchers, transcribers, administrators, students, and alumni who took part in this study, shared their experiences and helped us to gain some understanding of how to develop and implement a Learner Capability Framework. The findings of this ambitious research project will go on to support learners in gaining the capabilities recognised by the workforces they wish to enter, as real, relevant and important.

This research report is a result of a team project undertaken by Leoni Schmidt, Michael Greaves, Liz Ditzel, Amber Paterson, Rhina Chan and Andy Kilsby.

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Learner Capability Framework: Research Project

LCF Research Project

Phase One Report: Introduction

Introduction

How can New Zealand teaching institutions equip learners to be more employment ready for the fast-changing world of future work? Which capabilities, or transferable skills, are priorities for employers / stakeholders when they consider graduates as employees?

These questions are central to the development of the Learner Capability Framework (LCF) at Otago Polytechnic. It has been internationally recognised during the previous two decades that the nature of the workplace, including the environment, technology, the economy and society, is changing. Key to supporting learners for this constantly changing environment is the development of capabilities, or transferable skills, that can be applied in multiple and fluid work situations.

In order to respond to these questions, the Research Team at Otago Polytechnic embarked on a multi-layered research journey which connected lecturers and others with employers and stakeholders across fifteen identified clusters of degree programmes. This initial scope was extended to include certificate and diploma level programmes as well, with a view towards identifying what a wide range of employers and stakeholders value in terms of capabilities relating to vocational pathways. A further aim was then to map and consider employer priorities with regard to capabilities into effective curriculum development. Otago Polytechnic's goal with this research is to equip our learners with prioritised capabilities, which directly relate to the world of work beyond the classroom. In doing so we will support them to develop these capabilities, understand their importance and be able to provide tangible evidence of having attained them in a format that is accessible to future employment opportunities. This work will help our students to thrive, adapt and be effective in their chosen professions, trades and workplaces.

This particular part of the publication, the first in a set of nine to disseminate a journey over three years, reflects the action research undertaken by Otago Polytechnic towards the development of a Learner Capability Employer Priority Index (LCEPI). The LCEPI is the keystone of the research and identifies for the learner and for educators the most desirable capabilities that have been indicated during semi-structured interviews with employers and other stakeholders.

> *"… action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to every-day, real problems experienced in schools [or other learning institutions], or looking for ways to increase student achievement." (Eileen Ferrance, 2000, no page)*

This research is a first step towards addressing any potential imbalances between discipline-specific competencies and workplace capabilities in Otago Polytechnic's curricula. The project as a whole – including the implementation of the research findings – will enable learners in any discipline and at all levels to gain validated evidence of their transferable capabilities. A portfolio reflecting their capabilities will complement the competencies gained in their programmes.

The research is only part of the project as it will support the mapping and implementation of the LCF into the existing curriculum and the development of the *iamcapable* online tool for learners. Through this process learners will be able to bring already identified and evidenced capabilities to the learning environment, and through supported classroom reflective practice they will be able to identify areas in which they need to develop.

The Learner Capability Framework research, curriculum development and the *iamcapable* tool are aimed at improving learners' understanding of capabilities and their value for employment. Learners could increasingly become self-reflective practitioners with a highly developed awareness of their own learning pathway and development. Using the Learner Capability Framework to document evidence of their capabilities could equip them to articulate to employers what they have acquired and how they have gained these for the benefit of the workplace.

> *"... learning and teaching cannot be understood without reference to context: the situated, social experience of the learner and/or teacher ... [reaching] beyond teaching and learning (and related activity) to values, what people perceive to be meaningful, important and relevant." (Nind & Lewthwaite, 2018, p.6)*

To accomplish the work, the Research Team agreed on a phased step process for collecting, analysing and reporting information. Phase ONE (documented in this particular part of the publication) identified the most desirable capabilities as suggested by interviewing a sample of employers across fifteen programme clusters. Phase TWO analysed the interview material and identified salient themes. Phase THREE gathered narrative information from our alumni about their experiences as students and as graduates in the workplace. Questions asked focused on how Otago Polytechnic had equipped alumni for their employment and how this work can be improved.

Programme case studies and learner observations were the focus of Phase FOUR. At this stage, the Research Team analysed how capabilities play out in classroom scenarios and in relation to experiences in the real world. We tested earlier findings and aimed to provide contextual information regarding the kinds of capability evidence expected from our learners.

> *"…[we] search for predictable patterns in the lived human experiences by carefully observing and participating in the lives of those under study… collect data in multiple ways for triangulation ... [our work] is dialogic [as comment can be gained from those observed and it allows getting] an insider's view of reality." (Sangasubana, 2011, pp. 567-568)*

Phase FOUR included a synthesis of the data collection to search for patterns of relationship between those engaged in the project. The aim of the synthesis was to better understand how the ideas discovered in the research impact on how both learners and staff are adapting to the LCF and to the idea of specific capability acquisition.

Further phases (FIVE and SIX) involved staff and students, while phase SEVEN focused on a concurrent mapping of our curricula to gauge the embedding of the research into Otago Polytechnic programmes.

Throughout the project, Otago Polytechnic also worked with our partners, the Arai Te Uru Kōkiri Training Centre (EIGHT) and the Otago Southland Employers' Association (NINE), whom we hope will benefit from the Learner Capability Framework research for their own purposes.

Regular reporting on milestones were lodged with Ako Aotearoa, while our responses to peer review reports, Ako Aotearoa's publication of our final report, and our self-review conclude the project in 2021.

The overall objective of the research is to validate the capabilities in support of their implementation in curricula and their evidence in an online tool available via *iamcapable* for students so that the Learner Capability Framework can enable students to gain success in employment.

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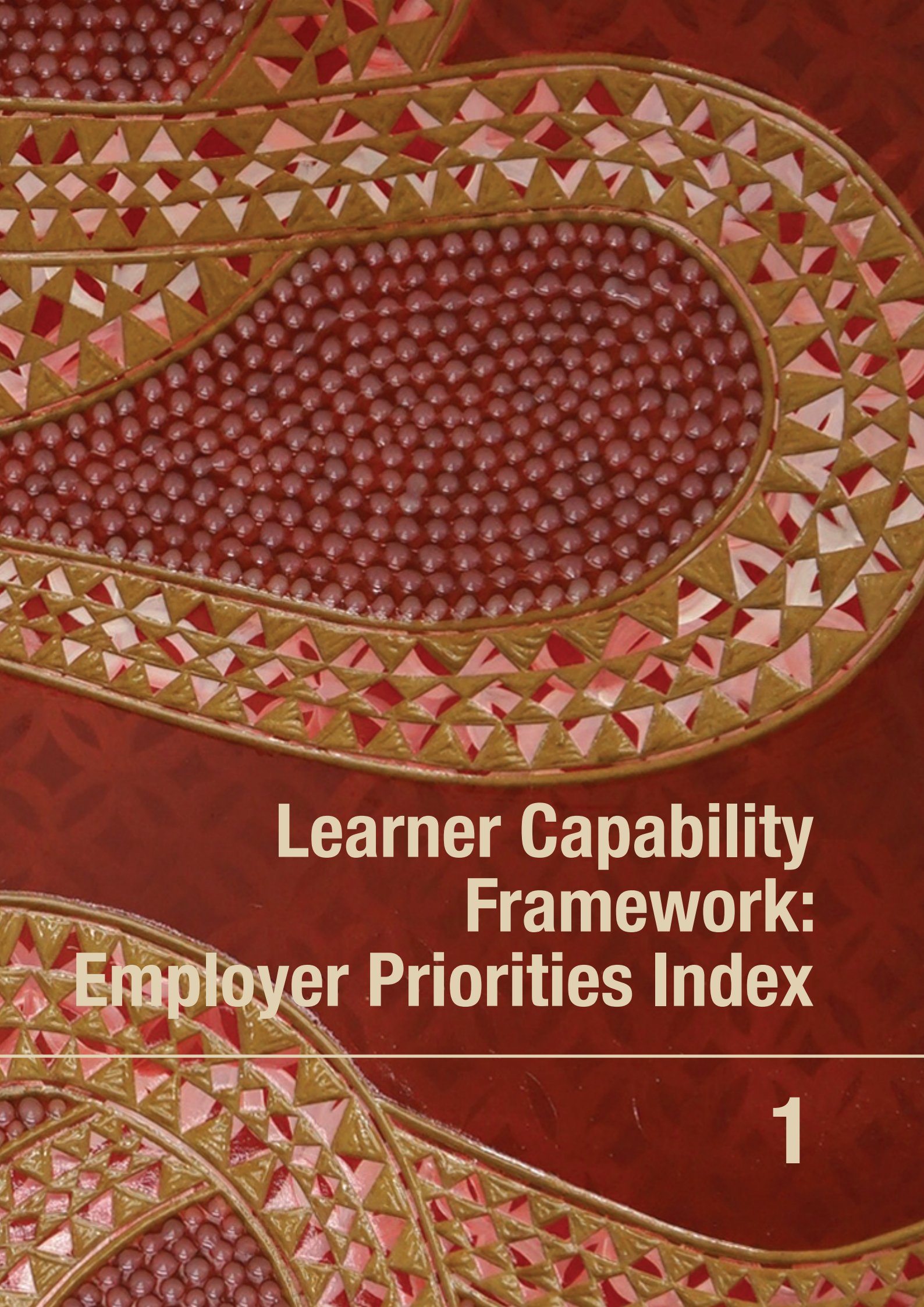
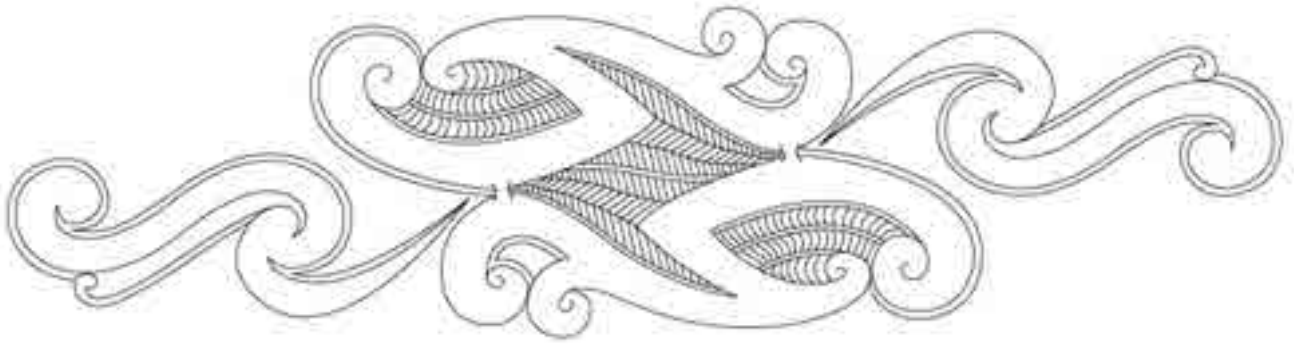


Learner Capability Framework: Employer Priorities Index

1



Learner Capabilities are ... 'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and economy'.

(Yorke & Knight, 2006)

The following pages introduce the 25 capabilities identified in previous research by *iamcapable* that started work on this at the Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus in 2016. The tables after this show the results of Phase One for 15 programme clusters. The image for the capability and the text accompanying this offers explanations, while the summary at the top of each table provides information about the kinds of workplaces where interviews were held.

Learner Capability Framework

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Mumu (red),* 2015.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 120 x 79.5cm.

The Learner Capability Framework

The initiative to embed transferable skills (learner capabilities) into all of our programmes is based on evidenced employer demand to have access to graduates who have these skills. It is part of Otago Polytechnic's commitment to our learners to equip them to be work-ready when they graduate.

The Learner Capability framework is based on national and international research, and is informed by an ongoing research programme driven by Otago Polytechnic.

'iamcapable' is a web-based tool that students and tutors access to enable learners to track the development of these capabilities and to produce verified evidence of these capabilities.

What are the implications of this initiative?

For staff

As an institution and as educators, we accept the challenge to maximise the opportunities for our learners to intentionally develop transferable skills. We commit to giving our students opportunities to evidence and articulate these capabilities.
This means that we need to ask ourselves:

Are transferable skills embedded in our programme and course design?

Are there learning outcomes which explicitly address these capabilities?

Are we using learning and teaching strategies that enable learners to develop these capabilities?

Are we robustly assessing the achievement of capabilities, as we do technical skills and knowledge?

Are we reporting the achievement of capabilities in a format accessible to employers?

If we can't answer a resounding 'yes' to each of these questions, the learner capability initiative provides us with a framework, tools and guidance to adapt our learning and teaching practice.
The Learner Capability project team and Learning and Teaching Development team are committed to supporting programme teams to embed learner capabilities in their unique learning and teaching environments.
The Learner Capability research initiative provides opportunities for staff to engage in research with industry. This strengthens academic-industry ties, and enhances professional academic capability.

For learners

The evidence-backed Capability Profile that our learners generate during their time at Otago Polytechnic is an assurance of their work-readiness.

Our learners become self-reflective practitioners who can articulate their capabilities.

Our curriculum and learning and teaching is grounded in the real world, generating opportunities for learners to develop transferable skills for employment and for life.

For employers

Employers tell us that they value evidence-backed capabilities, over and above CVs or transcripts.

We develop graduates that have the qualities employers have told us they are looking for.

We value and strengthen our relationships with employers.

We remain relevant and abreast of industry developments.

The Learner Capability Framework

CAPABILITIES	SUMMARY
Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
	Apply appropriate tone and style
	Read and understand information
Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
	Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
	Discuss professional issues orally
Communicates Effectively Visually	Use different methods and styles of visual language
Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
	Apply appropriate body language
	Overcome conflict
Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives
	Understand other cultures and engage appropriately
	Be responsible and manage behaviour
Displays Bi-cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context	Apply Te Ao Māori and tikanga Māori
	Incorporate mātauranga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi in decision-making
	Demonstrate an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi
Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
	Adapt and operate beyond comfort zone
	Act on instructions received
Works in teams	Build trust and collaboration
	Plan and complete projects by deadlines
Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
	Engage in reflective practice
	Pursue personal learning and change
Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
	Honour promises
	Avoid making excuses
	Accept responsibility for projects and results
Practises Health & Safety	Assure workplace safety
	Comply with health and safety procedures
	Reduce risk to personal safety and health

CAPABILITIES	SUMMARY
Demonstrates Digital Competence	Apply digital technologies in work contexts
	Digitally proficient online
	Use social media appropriately
	Calculate and analyze in a digital environment
Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
	Plan and prioritise
	Maintain wellness
Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions
	Maintain optimism under adversity
	Embrace new ideas and realities
Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
	Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
	Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
	Coach and support emerging leaders
Displays Leadership	Motivate, listen, co-create and value other people
	Challenge and resolve inappropriate behaviour respectfully
Inspires others	Motivate others to take opportunities
Enterprising	Make a difference
	Energise people for success
	Achieve bold new outcomes
	Undertake creative challenges
Practises Sustainably	Measure sustainability initiatives to determine impacts
	Advocate for change
	Model sustainable practice
Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically
	Maintain best practice and equity
	Maintain confidence and trust
Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
	Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
	Collaborate to solve problems
	Reframe problems as opportunities
Communicates Bilingually	Communicate orally in a second language
	Speak, read and write in a second language
Displays Work Life Balance	Work hard, keep active and enjoy life
	Laugh and show a sense of humour
Performs Community Service	Engage in community action

The Learner Capability Framework: Employer Priority Index

Employer Priority Index

Employers and stakeholders identified by lecturers in 15 programme clusters were asked to prioritise the top 10 Learner Capabilities – from the 25 identified through previous research – that apply best to their workplace or employment area. The results shown on the following pages reflect both the similarities and differences in capabilities required from graduates to be considered work ready as indicated by the employers/stakeholders interviewed.

Interviews Held

The table below shows the scope of the initial (employer/stakeholder) interviews for each programme cluster. The interviews resulted in recordings – in a few cases notes were taken – which were transcribed and analysed for the next phase of the project. Interviewers also arranged the order of capability priorities indicated by each interviewee. These were recorded onto separate summary sheets, and were then coded for importance and frequency of selection. This was done for each interview and collected into the programme clusters for which interviews were undertaken. These priorities are presented in the following pages as the 10 most desirable capabilities as indicated by the employers/ stakeholders interviewed. In some cases two priorities were ranked equal and this is shown clearly on the following pages.

Programme Clusters	No. of Interviewers	No. of Employers Interviewed
Applied Science (Sports)	4	10
Architecture	2	7
Business	5	21
Design – Communication	2	6
Design – Fashion	3	10
Design – Food Institute	2	7
Design – Product	3	6
Engineering Technology	2	9
Information Technology	3	11
Midwifery	6	13
Nursing	5	19
Occupational Therapy	4	10
Quantity Surveying	2	8
Social Services	4	13
Visual Arts	4	13
	51	163

Applied Science (Sports)

Applied Science (Sports) graduates may take up roles in both small and large organisations. Some may have a focus solely on performance training and development, while others work for groups or organisations and coordination related to this area. Employers for this cluster comprise a variety of different areas in the sports landscape, from national sports performance analysts, community centres and group coordinators to physical trainers working in schools and private organisations. Capability priorities in this are effective written communication, the ability to work in teams, demonstrating resilience, and practicing ethically.

1	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
2	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
3	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions
		Maintain optimism under adversity
		Embrace new ideas and realities
4	Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically
		Maintain best practice and equity
		Maintain confidence and trust
5	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
6	Inspires Others	Motivate others to take opportunities
7	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
8	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
9	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
		Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone
		Act on instructions received
10	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
		Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
		Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
		Coach and support emerging leaders

Architectural Studies

Architectural Studies graduates may work in architecture practices, mainly in architectural technology or interior architecture positions, as well as professions associated with the built environment. Problem solving, digital competency, thinking creatively and being able to work in teams encompass the top of the 10 most desirable capabilities for graduates from this area.

1	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
2	Demonstrates Digital Competence	Apply digital technologies in work contexts
		Digitally proficient online
		Use social media appropriately
		Calculate and analyse in a digital environment
3	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
4	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
		Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
		Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
		Coach and support emerging leaders
5	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
6	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
7	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
8	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
9	Communicates Effectively Visually	Use different methods and styles of visual language
10	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions

Business

Business graduates may perform specialised or multiple roles within any organisation including event management, marketing, accounting and tourism. The capabilities prioritised indicate that graduates from this area are required to work across teams, to communicate effectively verbally, to solve problems and to display effective interpersonal behaviour, demonstrate cultural competence and effectively organise.

1	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
3	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
4	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
5	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
6	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
7	Demonstrates Digital Competence	Apply digital technologies in work contexts
		Digitally proficient online
		Use social media appropriately
		Calculate and analyse in a digital environment
8	Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives
		Understand other cultures and engage appropriately
		Be responsible and manage behaviour
9	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
10	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
10	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
		Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone
		Act on instructions received

Design

Graduates of the Design suite of programmes at Otago Polytechnic span the spectrum of Communication Design, Fashion Design, Food Design, and Product Design. Capabilities prioritised by those interviewed for this cluster have been separated to reflect the different needs for each programme in the suite.

Communication Design

Employers interviewed range from industry and brand developers to advertising and digital technology developers, exhibition and museum designers, and game developers. Prioritised capabilities from this strand of design are the ability to communicate effectively both in writing and verbally, working in teams, and acting responsibly.

1	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences Discuss professional issues orally
2	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate Coach and support emerging leaders
3	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems Collaborate to solve problems Reframe problems as opportunities
4	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone Act on instructions received
5	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration Plan and complete projects by deadlines
6	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments Plan and prioritise Maintain wellness
7	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately Apply appropriate tone and style Read and understand information
8	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively Honour promises Avoid making excuses Accept responsibility for projects and results
9	Communicates Effectively Visually	Use different methods and styles of visual language
10	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions

Design

Fashion Design

Fashion Design graduates may find themselves in many areas of this large industry, ranging from garment manufacture and design to retail, accessory design and manufacture, advertising and magazine roles in both print and digital formats. They may work as a part of a team, or manage their own brand or design house. Workplace interviews in this area included all of these possible destinations for graduates and the most desirable capabilities prioritised for this area are effective communication through writing, digital competence, the ability to work independently and in teams.

1	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
2	Demonstrates Digital Competence	Apply digital technologies in work contexts
		Digitally proficient online
		Use social media appropriately
		Calculate and analyse in a digital environment
3	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
		Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone
		Act on instructions received
4	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
5	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
		Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
		Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
		Coach and support emerging leaders
6	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
7	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
8	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
9	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
10	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness

Design

Food Design

Food Design capabilities are relevant to a network of hospitality and food industry workplaces in which graduates find themselves post qualification. Large function management companies, hotels and catering services along with commercial enterprises in the food industry were interviewed and they prioritised the need for graduates to work in teams, display effective interpersonal behaviour, organise effectively, and act responsibly.

1	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
2	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
3	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
4	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
5	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
		Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
		Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
		Coach and support emerging leaders
6	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
7	Practises Health & Safety	Assure workplace safety
		Comply with health and safety procedures
		Reduce risk to personal safety and health
8	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
9	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions
		Maintain optimism under adversity
		Embrace new ideas and realities
10	Displays Leadership	Motivate, listen, co-create and value other people
		Challenge and resolve inappropriate behaviour respectfully

Design

Product Design

Product Design lecturers interviewed employers in design studios, industry manufacturing, start-up hubs and social community sustainability networks. Capabilities found to be most desirable for this programme area are creative thinking, problem solving, working in teams, and displaying effective interpersonal behaviour.

1	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
		Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
		Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
		Coach and support emerging leaders
2	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
3	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
5	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
6	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
7	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
8	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions
		Maintain optimism under adversity
		Embrace new ideas and realities
9	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
		Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone
		Act on instructions received
9	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
10	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results

Engineering Technology

Engineering Technology graduates may have positions within teams of larger companies offering many services, or they can be a part of the larger specific subcontractor roles associated with engineering and construction processes. Interviews conducted for this cluster included a cross-section of large service organisations and industry. The results reflect that employers need problem solving, the display of effective interpersonal behaviour, working in teams, and the practice of health and safety most.

1	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
2	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
3	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
4	Practises Health & Safety	Assure workplace safety
		Comply with health and safety procedures
		Reduce risk to personal safety and health
5	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
6	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
7	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
8	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
9	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions
		Maintain optimism under adversity
		Embrace new ideas and realities
10	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness

Information Technology

This area of the workforce is both critical and essential to the running of almost every workplace in New Zealand. Information Technology support and services are fundamental to connection and communication. Workplaces interviewed for this cluster ranged from organisations and companies to service providers and developers of information technology platforms for service. Results of the research indicate that working in teams and independently, solving problems and thinking critically are priorities for those interviewed.

1	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
2	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
		Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone
		Act on instructions received
3	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
4	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
5	Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically
		Maintain best practice and equity
		Maintain confidence and trust
6	Demonstrates Digital Competence	Apply digital technologies in work contexts
		Digitally proficient online
		Use social media appropriately
		Calculate and analyse in a digital environment
7	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
8	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
9	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
10	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict

Midwifery

Midwifery graduates are autonomous practitioners and work across primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the community, both in urban and rural areas. Similar to other regulated health professions, the competencies of the graduate are central to practice, and research findings around capability should support how these are applied in the professional situation. Participants included community midwives, midwifery managers, midwifery educators and consumers. The 13 participants interviewed ranked the following capabilities as most valued: reflection on performance and application of personal learning, effective verbal communication skills, effective interpersonal behaviour and cultural competence.

1	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
3	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
4	Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives
		Understand other cultures and engage appropriately
		Be responsible and manage behaviour
5	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
6	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
7	Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically
		Maintain best practice and equity
		Maintain confidence and trust
8	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
9	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
10	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions
		Maintain optimism under adversity
		Embrace new ideas and realities

Nursing

Graduates from Nursing find work in both large and small health focused organisations where their competencies are key to undertaking the role. Therefore, the findings of this research area focused on those capabilities that could support nursing graduates to navigate their area of work and the many challenges that it encompasses. High value is placed by those interviewed on resilience, working in teams, thinking critically, and displaying effective interpersonal behaviour in roles spanning hospital situations, community health care, senior, paediatric, and palliative and rest home care situations where interviews were held.

1	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions Maintain optimism under adversity Embrace new ideas and realities
2	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration Plan and complete projects by deadlines
3	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively Apply appropriate body language Overcome conflict
5	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences Discuss professional issues orally
6	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems Collaborate to solve problems Reframe problems as opportunities
7	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments Plan and prioritise Maintain wellness
8	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately Apply appropriate tone and style Read and understand information
8	Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives Understand other cultures and engage appropriately Be responsible and manage behaviour
9	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively Honour promises Avoid making excuses Accept responsibility for projects and results
10	Practises Health & Safety	Assure workplace safety Comply with health and safety procedures Reduce risk to personal safety and health

Occupational Therapy

Graduates of Occupational Therapy find themselves in many different roles in rehabilitation work, and this is reflected in the wide-ranging nature of employers and stakeholders interviewed from local and national health boards, including both practitioners and managers associated with these structures. Community and specific demographic outreach and wellness organisations and physiotherapists were also included, reflecting the multiple and complex facets of the occupational therapist's role. Cultural competence, displaying effective interpersonal behaviour, solving problems, and communicating effectively verbally were prioritised by those interviewed.

1	Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives Understand other cultures and engage appropriately Be responsible and manage behaviour
2	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively Apply appropriate body language Overcome conflict
3	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems Collaborate to solve problems Reframe problems as opportunities
4	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences Discuss professional issues orally
5	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone Act on instructions received
6	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness Engage in reflective practice Pursue personal learning and change
7	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately Apply appropriate tone and style Read and understand information
8	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions Maintain optimism under adversity Embrace new ideas and realities
9	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration Plan and complete projects by deadlines
10	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions

Quantity Surveying

Employers from this area work in building, plumbing, electrical and construction services and companies. Graduates from this area are important to the chain of the construction process, and often work between the different components of the wider process. Results from those interviewed in these areas indicate the need for employees to work in teams, to communicate effectively verbally, to solve problems and to act responsibly.

1	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
3	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
4	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
5	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information
6	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness
		Engage in reflective practice
		Pursue personal learning and change
7	Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically
		Maintain best practice and equity
		Maintain confidence and trust
8	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
9	Practises Health & Safety	Assure workplace safety
		Comply with health and safety procedures
		Reduce risk to personal safety and health
10	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions

Social Services

This area presents a range of employment opportunities for graduates, and findings from this initial phase of research present a wide view of the capabilities learners in this area of study require for active and successful participation in industry and workplaces. Employers and stakeholders interviewed work in community outdoor groups and services, support hubs and rehabilitation centres, including counselling and disability services. Capability for graduates identified by those interviewed highlights practicing ethically, effective verbal communication, working in teams, and displaying effective interpersonal behaviour. The high value placed on these capabilities reflect the people-centredness and reflective practice nature of the working environments in which Social Services graduates are active in supporting people in the community.

1	Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically Maintain best practice and equity Maintain confidence and trust
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences Discuss professional issues orally
3	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration Plan and complete projects by deadlines
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively Apply appropriate body language Overcome conflict
5	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments Plan and prioritise Maintain wellness
6	Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives Understand other cultures and engage appropriately Be responsible and manage behaviour
7	Practises Health & Safety	Assure workplace safety Comply with health and safety procedures Reduce risk to personal safety and health
8	Displays Bi-cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context	Apply Te Ao Māori and tikanga Māori Incorporate mātauranga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi in decision-making Demonstrate an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi
9	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness Engage in reflective practice Pursue personal learning and change
9	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems Collaborate to solve problems Reframe problems as opportunities
10	Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions Maintain optimism under adversity Embrace new ideas and realities

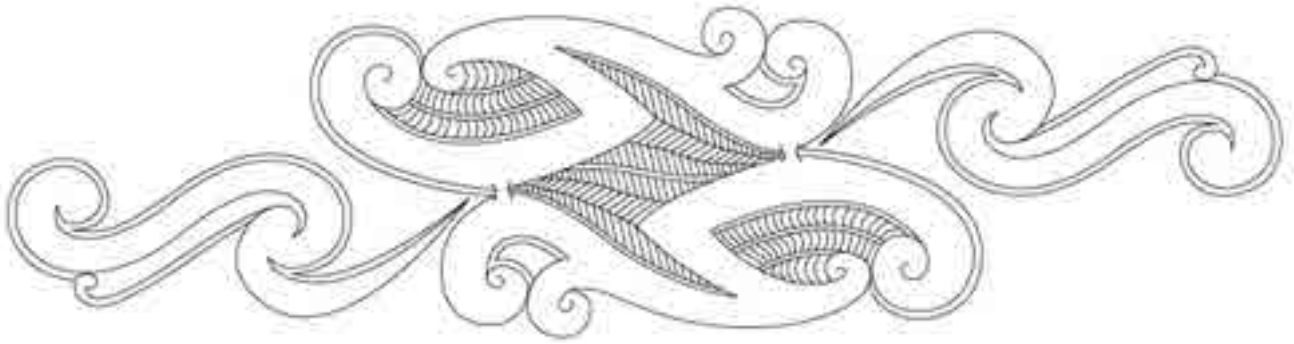
Visual Arts

The visual arts encompass a wide range of employment and industry links that graduates find themselves in post qualification. These include more traditional roles in the arts industry associated with curation, installation and other gallery-centric roles, as well as roles in technology and the film arts. Employer and industry stakeholders interviewed for this cluster ranged from gallery representatives, installation and curation workers in large public institutions and in smaller dealer galleries, in museums, teaching and learning roles and in other areas outside of the arts context in which graduates find work. The capabilities most desirable for those interviewed are effective verbal communication, creative thinking, effective organisation, and working in teams.

1	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately
		Apply style and types to suit diverse audiences
		Discuss professional issues orally
2	Thinks Creatively	Develop creative solutions
		Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions
		Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate
		Coach and support emerging leaders
3	Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments
		Plan and prioritise
		Maintain wellness
4	Works in Teams	Build trust and collaboration
		Plan and complete projects by deadlines
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively
		Apply appropriate body language
		Overcome conflict
5	Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles
		Evaluate information and research and act on conclusions
6	Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision
		Adapt and operate beyond my comfort zone
		Act on instructions received
7	Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives
		Understand other cultures and engage appropriately
		Be responsible and manage behaviour
8	Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively
		Honour promises
		Avoid making excuses
		Accept responsibility for projects and results
9	Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems
		Collaborate to solve problems
		Reframe problems as opportunities
10	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately
		Apply appropriate tone and style
		Read and understand information

Learner Capability Framework: Field Research Toolkit

2



Learner Capability Framework Research

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Pasifika Drums*, 2015.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 120 x 120cm.

1. Project – Phase One

Introduction

How can New Zealand teaching institutions equip learners to be more employment-ready for the fast-changing world of future work?

This large-scale and ambitious action research project began in 2017 by researchers at Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus and continued from 2018 by a larger research team at OP's Dunedin Campus.

The project aim was to investigate and address an imbalance between discipline-specific and technical competencies, and workplace capabilities, sometimes referred to as 'transferable skills'.

Ten discipline specific staff teams conducted interviews with employers (Phase 1) from August to November 2018. Phase 2 of the project involved interviews with staff, current students, and recent alumni.

Observations would focus on deeper exploration and analysis of the lived experiences of employers, students, graduates and staff in relation to learner development. Detailed analysis of the data would identify differences relevant to particular groups, including Māori and Pasifika learners and employers, with results reported separately and in the aggregate.

Pedagogical outcomes embedded the findings of the Learner Capability Framework research in curriculum content, programme redevelopment, assessment and teaching practice. Findings would also be used to test and improve Otago Polytechnic's innovative Learner Capability Framework.

The Learner Capability Framework and *iamcapable* tool would enable learners in any discipline and at all levels to gain evidence of their transferable capabilities. Credentialed capabilities alongside the academic transcript, will be an innovative additional service provided for learners, preparing them for a future of work in which they will need to be adaptable, engage in lifelong learning and further build evidence of capability.

The project is anticipated to transform teaching practice not only at this institution but across the secondary and tertiary sector.

The Researcher Toolkit contains the documents and explains the processes used to conduct this research. These can be used and adapted by others for their own research purposes.

2. Researcher Toolkit

Field Research Phase One: Employer interviews

Staff who volunteered to conduct the interviews were issued with a named research toolkit (Image 1). The toolkit itself was a hard-plastic A4 document file that clipped shut to keep confidential documents and other contents together for safe return to the project administrator.

Research Toolkit contents:
• Laminated Learner Capability cards (25)
• Notebook
• Pen
• Flash drive
• Portable voice recorder
• Spare batteries (2)
• Gift voucher for the participant

The included documents consisted of:
1. An information sheet for Employers (this is to inform potential participants of the scope of the project, its aims and the participation involvement of the employer/stakeholder)
2. A letter of invitation to participate
3. A consent form (this form outlines the specifics of the project including ethical matters and limitations)
4. The Learner Capability Framework (overview sheet)
5. The questionnaire (12 interview questions for the interviewer)
6. Summary of interviews template (researcher to complete at the end of the interviews)
7. Interview protocols – conducting an interview (the interviewer will have had a specific training session; this document reinforces the parameters of conducting the interview in a professional and ethical manner)
8. Interview protocols for Māori participants (this document was used in the Ngai Tahu context and will need to be reviewed with local iwi/Kaitohutohu to ensure partnership is actively understood and accounted for).

These documents are shown in Appendix 1.

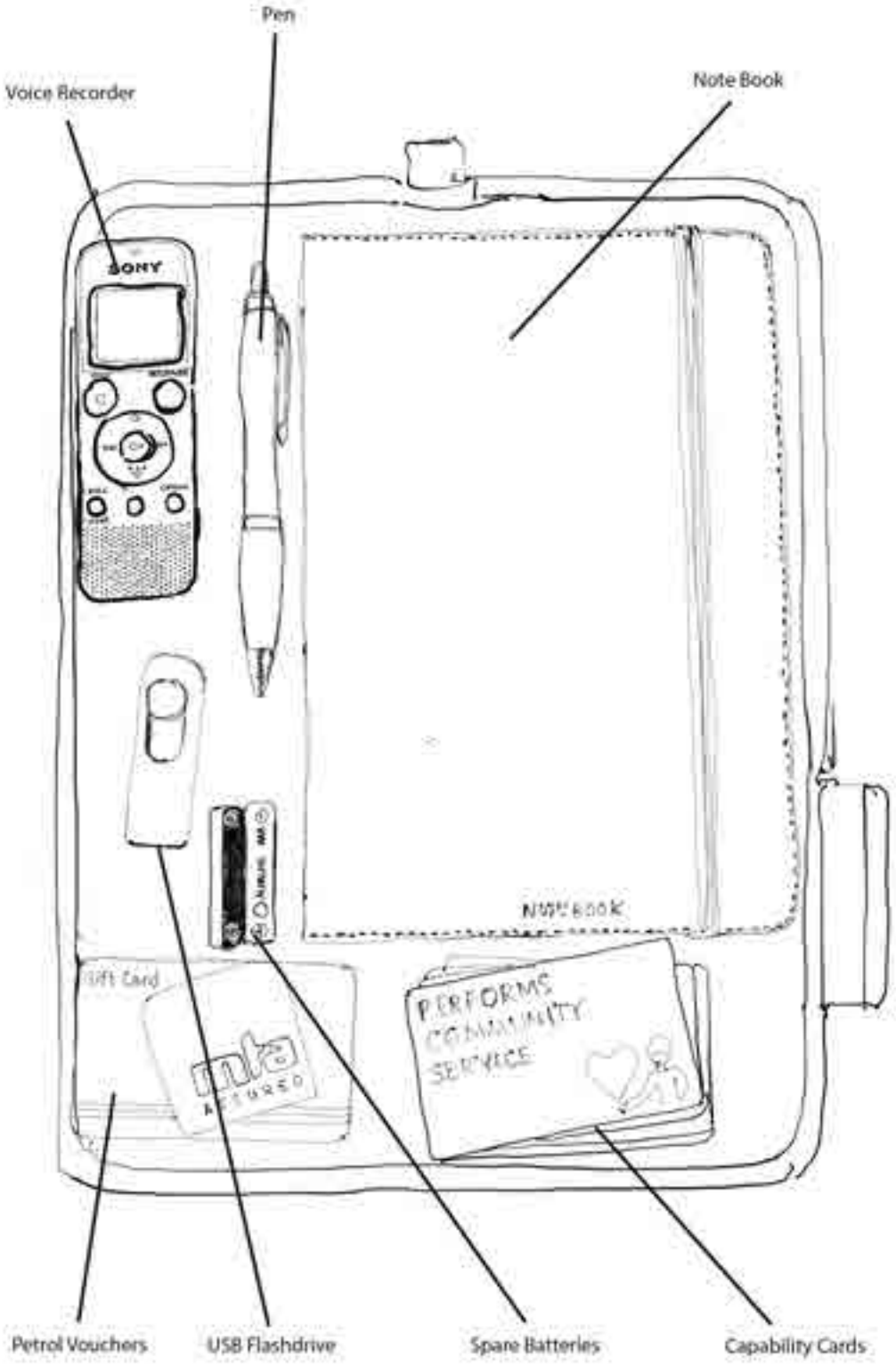
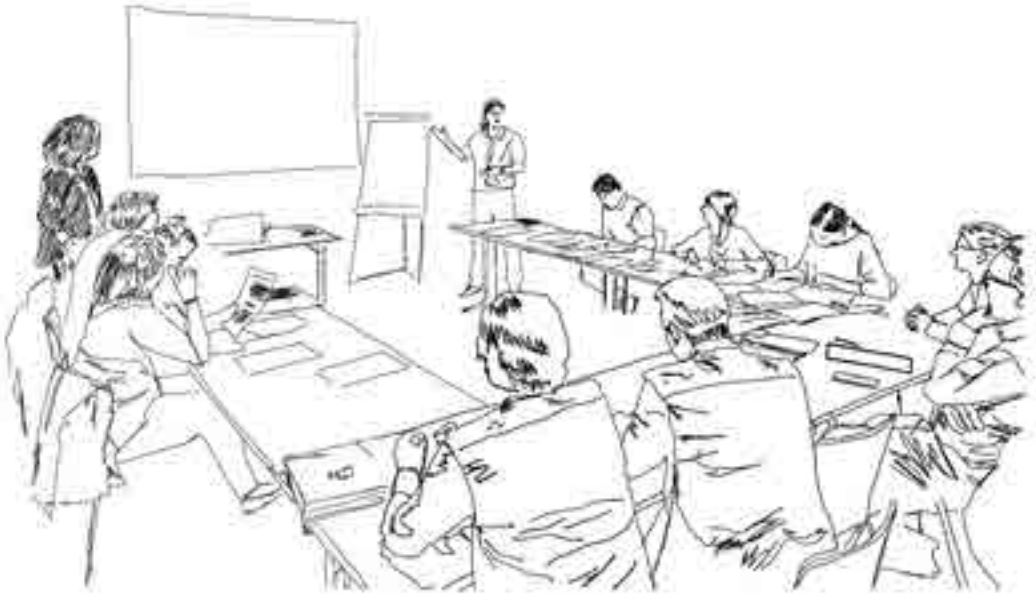


Image 1: Researcher toolkit.

Interview training

Before visiting the employers, staff attended a two-hour training session to become familiar with the protocols of conducting the interview including technical matters such as using the voice recorder (e.g., turning the recorder on and off, checking the audio quality and replacing the batteries). The researchers worked through the protocols for conducting interviews (Appendix 1); practiced asking each other interview questions from the interview guide and were introduced to the protocols for interviewing Māori participants by a Kaitohutohu[1] representative. The importance of having all of these things experienced in this way is central to the value of the collected data for the project. Emphasis around the ethical considerations of working with participants is stressed here including consent, particularly applying to completing the 'agree/do not agree' options verbally and in written formats.



[1] Office of the Kaitohutohu at Otago Polytechnic.

Interviews

Most interviews were conducted at the employers' workplace. Some distance and international interviews were conducted and audio-recorded on Skype or by telephone. More than half of the employers (N=163) who were contacted agreed to participate. Interviews were conducted by 51 academic staff over a four-month period.

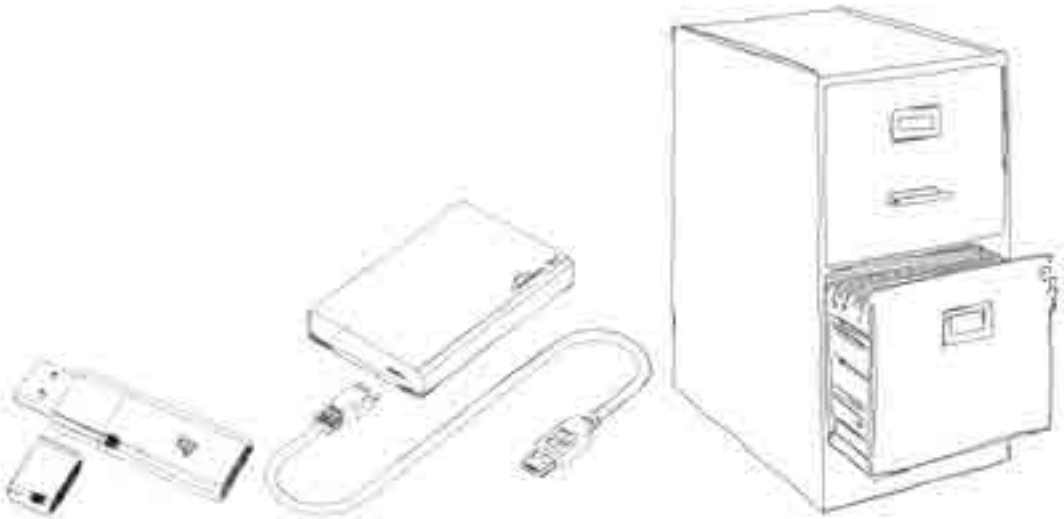
Mid-way through the interview employers were shown a set of laminated cards representing the 25 Learner Capabilities and asked to select and rank what they considered to be the top ten Capabilities for their workplace. For each choice, they were invited to give an example of how a new graduate could demonstrate this capability at work. An example of ten cards that may have been selected by the employer is shown in Image 2. Explanations of choices were valuable as these raised other salient views around capability that were important in the analysis.

Image 2: A set of top ten Capabilities selected by an employer.

Data management and interview transcription

The research toolkits were returned to the project administrator at the completion of each interview (or set of interviews as most researchers conducted more than one interview).

All project data was stored on a password protected computer and paper copies stored in a locked filing cabinet. Signed consent forms were collated and filed. Employers' requests for feedback and further information were also noted on an MS Excel spreadsheet.



Interview transcription

Interview sound files were saved on to USB flash drives, grouped according to subject cluster, one per USB drive.

The project administrator sent the original files and a blank USB to independent contractors for transcription to MS Word documents. Each transcriber had signed a confidentiality agreement.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions were then thematically analysed by members of the research team and a contractor Data Analyst who also signed a confidentiality agreement.

Appendix 1: Field Researcher Toolkit Documents

RESEARCHER TOOLKIT

Phase One

1. Information sheet for Employers

Learner Capability Framework Research

EMPLOYER INFORMATION

How could tertiary institutes produce capable, work ready and globally employable graduates? Whilst we know a lot about what capabilities employers generally say they are looking for in graduates, we do not have a detailed understanding of what is required of graduates for specific occupations.

This project identifies the capabilities that employers deem essential in their workplace environments. The project then informs tertiary institutes about the information and context for designing and implementing appropriate interventions and strategies so that we produce the capable, work ready and globally employable graduates required.

As a next step one of our researchers will contact you. If you agree to participate, they will invite you to an interview between [date] and [date]. In the interview, you will be invited to share your thoughts with us regarding the salient capabilities required in your workplace. The interview will not take longer than 60 minutes. If you agree, the interview will be digitally recorded. Only the researchers will listen to the recording and no one else except the project administrator and a transcriber (who both sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to it. We will conduct the interview in a place most convenient for you.

The hard copy data from this project will be stored in locked cabinets. Electronic data from the project will be stored on password protected computers and password protected files to which only the abovementioned personnel will have access. Data collected by our researchers will be kept for seven (7) years at which point it will be destroyed by the research team.

You can withdraw from the research any time before data analysis starts on [date] and can choose not to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You can also ask for the recorder to be turned off any time you want to. Your identity will remain confidential, the researchers will keep the personal information you give them private, and your real name and that of your workplace will not be used in the research and later on in the publications, except if you agree to it being used. The researchers will not use your name nor that of your organisation without your consent.

The findings of this research are important because they establish the significance of stakeholder-institute collaboration so that we produce final year students with the transferable capabilities they could use in the workplace, rather than delivering on outcomes that tertiary institutes assume are important in workplaces.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of [organisation]. Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries.

Principal Investigator	[name]	[email]
Research Administrator	[name]	[email]
Senior Research Fellow	[name]	[email]
Research Assistant	[name]	[email]

2. Letter of invitation to participate

[on letterhead paper]

[date]

[name]
[company]
[address]

Dear [name]

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN EMPLOYER RESEARCH

On behalf of [organisation] I am inviting you to participate in the research component of our Learner Capability Framework project. The project aims to explore employers' views on the capabilities they need in future employees. We are embarking on a mission towards making our graduates more work-ready in the future and your participation will make a real difference to the success of this initiative.

Being mindful of your precious time, participation will not exceed one hour on a date between [month] and end of [month] this year.

As a next step, one of our researchers will follow up on this invitation by contacting you for an appointment in your workplace during which an interview will be held with you at a time convenient for you and recorded (if you consent to such a recording). A consent form will also provide you with the options to remain anonymous or to be quoted personally and/or on behalf of your workplace. Participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any stage. Withdrawal does not have to involve the researcher who will contact you, but can be done directly by email to me.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to find an hour in your busy schedule to help us with this important project.

With appreciation,

[name]
Principal Investigator
[organisation]
[cellphone]
[email]

3. Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYER RESEARCH INTERVIEW

All my questions have been answered and I understand I can ask more questions at any time.

I understand that consent will be sought by the researcher to digitally record my voice during the interview, and that only if my consent has been given will such recording occur.

I understand that, should I not agree to my voice being digitally recorded during the interview, my consent will be sought for written notes to be taken by the researcher.

I understand that the researcher can only reveal my name and that of my organisation with my written permission. I also understand that, should I not agree to either or both, pseudonyms will be used at all times to refer to me and my organisation during the research, in notation of the research findings and in all publications.

I understand that I can ask the researcher to stop the recording (whether digitally or in writing) at any time, and that I may ask the researcher to delete any part of the conversation on the recording. You can withdraw from the research any time before data analysis starts on [date].

I understand that any digital recording of my voice from the interview will be transcribed (typed up as text), checked against the digital recording by the researcher, and an opportunity will be provided for me to review and confirm the transcript as true and accurate to the interview for the purposes of this project, Only the researchers and transcribers will listen to the recording or will have access to it.

I understand that all digital recordings, written recordings and other documents related to this project will be kept confidential, and only be used for this project as agreed by participants and that these will be securely stored in locked cabinets. Electronic data from the project will be stored on password-protected computers and password-protected files to which only the research team will have access. Data collected by our researchers will be kept for seven (7) years at which point it will be destroyed by the research team.

Please mark or circle the selected option(s)

- I agree / do not agree (please circle one option) to participate in this study under the conditions outlined in the information sheet.
- I agree / do not agree (please circle one option) that this interview can be recorded. If I disagree, I agree that notes can be taken by the interviewer (please circle if you agree).
- I wish / do not wish (please circle one option) to review my transcripts from the interview.
- I understand that I can ask for any section of digital recording, written notes and/or transcript to be deleted or withdrawn from this study at any time before analysis commences on [date]
- I agree / do not agree (please circle one option) that my real name can be used in this study.
- I agree / do not agree (please circle one option) that my organisation's name can be used in this study.
- I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time before data analysis commences on [date]

Employer Signature:
Date:
Full Name – printed:
Researcher:
Full Name:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of [organisation]

4. Learner Capability Framework and *iamcapable* overview

Learner Capability and iamcapable

OTAGO POLYTECHNIC

i am capable

The initiative to embed transferable skills (learner capabilities) into all of our programmes is based on evidenced employer demand to have access to graduates who have these skills. It is part of Otago Polytechnic's commitment to our learners to equip them to be work-ready when they graduate.

The Learner Capability framework is based on cultural and international research, and is informed by an ongoing research programme driven by Otago Polytechnic.

'iamcapable' is a web-based tool that students and tutors access to enable learners to track the development of these capabilities and to produce verified evidence of these capabilities.

What are the implications of this initiative?

As an institution and as educators, we accept the challenge to maximise the opportunities for our learners to intentionally develop transferable skills. We commit to giving our students opportunities to evidence and articulate these capabilities. This means that we need to ask ourselves:

- Are transferable skills embedded in our programme and course design?
- Are their learning outcomes which explicitly address these capabilities?
- Are we using learning and teaching strategies that enable learners to develop these capabilities?
- Are we robustly assessing the achievement of capabilities, as we do technical skills and knowledge?
- Are we reporting the achievement of capabilities in a format accessible to employers?

If we can't answer a resounding 'yes' to each of these questions, the learner capability initiative provides us with a framework, tools and guidance to adapt our learning and teaching practice.

The Learner Capability project team and Learning and Teaching Development team are committed to supporting programme teams to embed learner capabilities in their unique learning and teaching environments.

The Learner Capability research initiative provides opportunities for staff to engage in research with industry. This strengthens academic-industry ties, and enhances professional academic capability.

For students

- The evidence-backed Capability Profile that our learners generate during their time at Otago Polytechnic is an assurance of their work-readiness.
- Our learners become self-reflective practitioners who can articulate their capabilities.
- Our curriculum and learning and teaching is grounded in the real world, generating opportunities for learners to develop transferable skills for employment and for life.

For employers

Employers tell us that they value evidence-backed capabilities, over and above CVs or transcripts.

- We develop graduates that have the qualities employers have told us they are looking for.
- We value and strengthen our relationships with employers.
- We remain relevant and abreast of industry developments.

Otago Polytechnic Learner Capability Framework

CAPABILITIES	SUMMARY
Communicates Effectively in Writing	Use written language appropriately Apply appropriate tone and style Read and understand information
Communicates Effectively Verbally	Use verbal, non-verbal language appropriately Apply style and tone to suit diverse audiences Discuss professional issues orally
Communicates Effectively Visually	Use different methods and styles of visual language
Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Listen actively Apply appropriate body language Overcome conflict
Displays Cultural Competence	Respect and embrace diverse perspectives Understand other cultures and engage appropriately Be responsible and manage behaviour
Displays Bi-cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context	Apply Te Ao Māori and tikanga Māori Incorporate mātauranga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi in decision making Demonstrate an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi
Works Independently	Organise commitments to meet deadlines without supervision Adapt and operate beyond comfort zone Act on instructions received
Works in teams	Build trust and collaboration Plan and complete projects by deadlines
Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Develop self-awareness Engage in reflective practice Pursue personal learning and change
Acts Responsibly	Respond proactively Honour promises Avoid making excuses Accept responsibility for powers and results
Practises Health & Safety	Ensure workplace safety Comply with health and safety procedures Reduce risk to personal safety and health

The 25 Capabilities of the Otago Polytechnic Learner Capability Framework

CAPABILITIES	SUMMARY
Demonstrates Digital Competence	Apply digital technologies in work contexts Digitally proficient online Use social media appropriately Calculate and analyse in a digital environment
Organises Effectively	Improve and manage physical environments Plan and prioritise Maintain wellness
Demonstrates Resilience	Persevere and plan actions Maintain optimism under adversity Embrace new ideas and realities
Thinks Creatively	Develop creative collaborat Test and evaluate new ideas and solutions Inspire, collaborate, communicate and delegate Coach and support emerging leaders
Displays Leadership	Motivate, listen, co-create and value other people Challenge and resolve inappropriate behaviour respectfully
Inspires others	Motivate others to take opportunities
Enterprising	Make a difference Energise people for success Achieve bold new outcomes Undertake creative challenges
Practises Sustainably	Measure sustainability initiatives to determine impacts Advocate for change Model sustainable practice
Practises Ethically	Manage my behaviour and act ethically Maintain best practice and equity Maintain confidence and trust
Thinks Critically	Identify opportunity and overcome obstacles Evaluate information and research and act on compliance
Solves Problems	Identify underlying causes of problems Collaborate to solve problems Reframe problems as opportunities
Communicates Bilingually	Communicate orally in a second language Speak, read and write in a second language
Displays Work Life Balance	Work hard, keep active and enjoy life Laugh and show a sense of humour
Performs Community Service	Engage in community action

5. Questionnaire

Learner Capability Framework Research

EMPLOYER INTERVIEW GUIDE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

- ✓ Thank participant for taking the time to talk to you.
- ✓ Define the concepts of transferable skills that lead to capability and being work ready.
    - o Transferable skills - They are skills you have acquired that are transferable and applicable to different workplace environments and disciplines. They are the combination of skills that reflect your emotional intelligence.
    - o Work ready = combination of knowledge + skills + attitude. It is having the capabilities for work, being recruitable, understanding your role within a workplace. Being capable is being prepared for the culture of work and having the ability to adapt to change in the workplace.

- ✓ Discuss: Successful graduates need to be equipped for:
    - o The changing nature of work
    - o New careers yet to be created
    - o Essential skills to participate in work
    - o Just in time learning to adapt to workplace changes
    - o National and international mobility.

- ✓ Explain the purpose of the interview and how it fits within the LCF research.
    - o Engagement with employers to gain feedback on core capabilities and the behaviours they expect from new employees in their sector
    - o Validation of our Learner Capability Framework.

- ✓ We are interested in learning about employers' perspectives on the core, recommended, and optional capabilities that employers wish to see in graduates.
- ✓ Assurance of confidentiality where required.
- ✓ Have the consent form signed before you start asking questions and before you start recording
- ✓ Ensure recorder is working before you start the interview.

Questions

1. What capabilities are essential in your workplace environment?
   (Probe further by asking what capabilities they think are important and if they could provide examples)

2. Why are these capabilities important in your workplace environment?
   (Draw on examples given above and/or introduce examples of capabilities he/she has already identified to discuss here, probe which capabilities are seen as effective and why)

Present the Learner Capability Framework

3. Please review the Learner Capability Framework (Provide LIST). Please select the core capabilities that you think are essential for your workplace and please prioritise 10 capabilities.

4. Please comment one by one on what these capabilities mean to you in your work context.

5. What evidence would potential employees need to show you to determine they are capable.
   (Probe for good examples of the types of evidence employers are looking for in graduates)

6. When employing graduates how useful would an online tool that describes and identifies the evidence graduates have to determine their capability be to you during a recruitment / employment process?
   (Probe to determine to what extent the profile would be helpful and what changes can be suggested that would make it even more useful)

7. Are there any specific capabilities that you would like to see in international graduates?
   (Probe further by saying what special capabilities could be expected from international graduates)

8. Can you please explain how you engage with difference and diversity in your workplace environment? What are the benefits of having people from various backgrounds?
   (Probe for what kinds of diversity are salient in specific contexts)

9. Finally, can you please explain how you build capabilities among your own staff?
   (Probe what role this plays in fostering wider workplace capability)

Summary and Concluding Section

10. Is there anything you would like to add to what we have discussed?

11. Can you validate our Learner Capability Framework?
    Yes or No or Partly. If No or Partly, please explain briefly.

12. If you can validate it, could you provide us with a usable quote in this regard?
    (This only if consent has been given and Yes to the previous question)

Thank participant for their time, reiterate contents of the consent form, mention that the participant will be invited in due course for an event to celebrate the Learner Capability Framework in action.

6. Summary of interviews and additional feedback

Learner Capability Framework Research

INTERVIEW SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Researcher Name:

Programme Cluster: (e.g. Visual Arts, Social Services)

List of Employer Names and Workplaces Visited:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
(Add if more than 5)

I have interviewed the employers listed above and they have prioritised 10 capabilities as follows:

Employer 1:			
1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

Example:

Employer 1: NAME			
1	Practices ethically	6	Thinks critically
2	Works in teams	7	Inspires others
3	Solves problems	8	Thinks creatively
4	Performs community service	9	Displays Work Life balance
5	Organises effectively	10	Enterprising

(Add more tables here if needed)

Send to: Research Administrator at [email].
If in doubt about anything, please contact the Principal Investigator [name] at [email].

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK / COMMENTS FROM EMPLOYERS
(AND ANYTHING WE SHOULD FOLLOW UP)

1. Employer / Workplace:

2. Employer / Workplace:

3. Employer / Workplace:

4. Employer / Workplace:

5. Employer / Workplace:

7. Interview protocols – Conducting an interview

Introduction

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around a topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses. Usually open-ended questions are asked during interviews.

Clearly articulate to yourself what problem or need is to be addressed using the information to be gathered by the interviews. This helps you keep clear focus on the intent of each question.

Preparation for Interview

1. Choose a setting with little distraction. Avoid loud lights or noises, ensure the interviewee is comfortable (you might ask them if they are), etc. Often, they may feel more comfortable at their own places of work or homes.
2. Explain the purpose of the interview.
3. Address terms of confidentiality. Note any terms of confidentiality. (Be careful here. Rarely can you absolutely promise anything. Courts may get access to information, in certain circumstances.) Explain who will get access to their answers and how their answers will be analysed. If their comments are to be used as quotes, get their written permission to do so. See consent form.
4. Explain the format of the interview. Explain the type of interview you are conducting and its nature. If you want them to ask questions, specify if they're to do so as they have them or wait until the end of the interview.
5. Indicate how long the interview usually takes.
6. Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to.
7. Ask them if they have any questions before you both get started with the interview.
8. Don't count on your memory to recall their answers. Ask for permission to record the interview or take notes if recording is not consented to.

Types of Interviews (ours are a combination of these below)

1. Informal, conversational interview - no predetermined questions are asked, in order to remain as open and adaptable as possible to the interviewee's nature and priorities; during the interview, the interviewer "goes with the flow".
2. General interview guide approach - the guide approach is intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee.
3. Standardised, open-ended interview - here, the same open-ended questions are asked to all interviewees (an open-ended question is where respondents are free to choose how to answer the question, i.e., they don't select "yes" or "no" or provide a numeric rating, etc.); this approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analysed and compared.
4. Closed, fixed-response interview - where all interviewees are asked the same questions and asked to choose answers from among the same set of alternatives. This format is useful for those not practiced in interviewing.

Sequence of Questions

1. Get the respondents involved in the interview as soon as possible.
2. Before asking about controversial matters (such as feelings and conclusions), first ask about some facts. With this approach, respondents can more easily engage in the interview before warming up to more personal matters.
3. Intersperse fact-based questions throughout the interview to avoid long lists of fact-based questions, which tends to leave respondents disengaged.
4. Ask questions about the present before questions about the past or future. It's usually easier for them to talk about the present and then work into the past or future.
5. The last questions might be to allow respondents to provide any other information they prefer to add and their impressions of the interview.

Wording of Questions

1. Wording should be open-ended. Respondents should be able to choose their own terms when answering questions.
2. Questions should be as neutral as possible. Avoid wording that might influence answers, e.g., evocative, judgmental wording.
3. Questions should be asked one at a time.
4. Questions should be worded clearly. This includes knowing any terms particular to the program or the respondents' culture.
5. Be careful asking "why" questions. This type of question infers a cause-effect relationship that may not truly exist. These questions may also cause respondents to feel defensive, e.g., that they have to justify their response, which may inhibit their responses to this and future questions.

Conducting Interview

1. Occasionally verify the recording device (if used) is working.
2. Ask one question at a time.
3. Attempt to remain as neutral as possible. That is, don't show strong emotional reactions to their responses. Patton suggests to act as if "you've heard it all before."
4. Encourage responses with occasional nods of the head, "uh huh"s, etc.
5. Be careful about the appearance when note taking. That is, if you jump to take a note, it may appear as if you're surprised or very pleased about an answer, which may influence answers to future questions.
6. Provide transition between major topics, e.g., "we've been talking about (some topic) and now I'd like to move on to (another topic)."
7. Don't lose control of the interview. This can occur when respondents stray to another topic, take so long to answer a question that time begins to run out, or even begin asking questions to the interviewer.

Immediately After Interview

1. Verify if the tape recorder, if used, worked throughout the interview.
2. Make any notes on your written notes, e.g., to clarify any scratchings, ensure pages are numbered, fill out any notes that don't make sense, etc.
3. Write down any observations made during the interview. For example, where did the interview occur and when, was the respondent particularly nervous at any time? Were there any surprises during the interview? Did the recorder break?
4. Thank the participant and indicate any further steps to be taken.

https://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm

8. Interview protocols for Māori participants

Manaakitanga – Mā wai e manaaki tēnei kaupapa?

The concept of manaakitanga encompasses a range of meanings in a traditional sense with a central focus on ensuring the mana of both parties is upheld. In this context it is associated with notions of cultural and social responsibility and respect for persons.

Minimum Standard: Cultural Sensitivity

The minimum standard for manaakitanga acknowledges a person's inherent dignity and the responsibility that people have to act in a caring manner towards others. The responsibility to protect and care for people with aroha and be aware of issues of cultural sensitivity comes to the fore. In this context it includes access to appropriate advice (e.g. kaumātua (elder, advocate)) and respect for concepts of privacy and confidentiality.

Concepts of privacy and confidentiality are altered when the individualised notion of autonomy is removed. Information is shared to provide support and increase the transparency and accountability between members of the community. While recognising the appropriateness of privacy and confidentiality to safeguard any harmful effects from disclosure of information, in many situations, the level of confidentiality can be negotiated with communities and participants. This may simply involve participants consenting to be named as part of the study and giving them the opportunity to remove or de-identify particular comments from the final report.

Questions asked should include:

- are the participants being treated with dignity and respect?
- will the participants have access to appropriate advice?
- is privacy and confidentiality being applied appropriately?

Good Practice: Cultural Safety

A higher standard of manaakitanga or cultural and social responsibility can be achieved by recognising, in addition to the issues above, the importance of collective participation in establishing the goals and benefits (tūmanako) of a research project and its culturally safe implementation. This is enhanced by considering the inclusion of Māori tikanga, te reo Māori, indigenous values and concepts, and the presence of whānau tautoko.

Questions of relevance include:

- are Māori values or concepts used within this research project?
- how will Māori protocols be observed as part of this research project?
- are whānau able to support participants within this project?

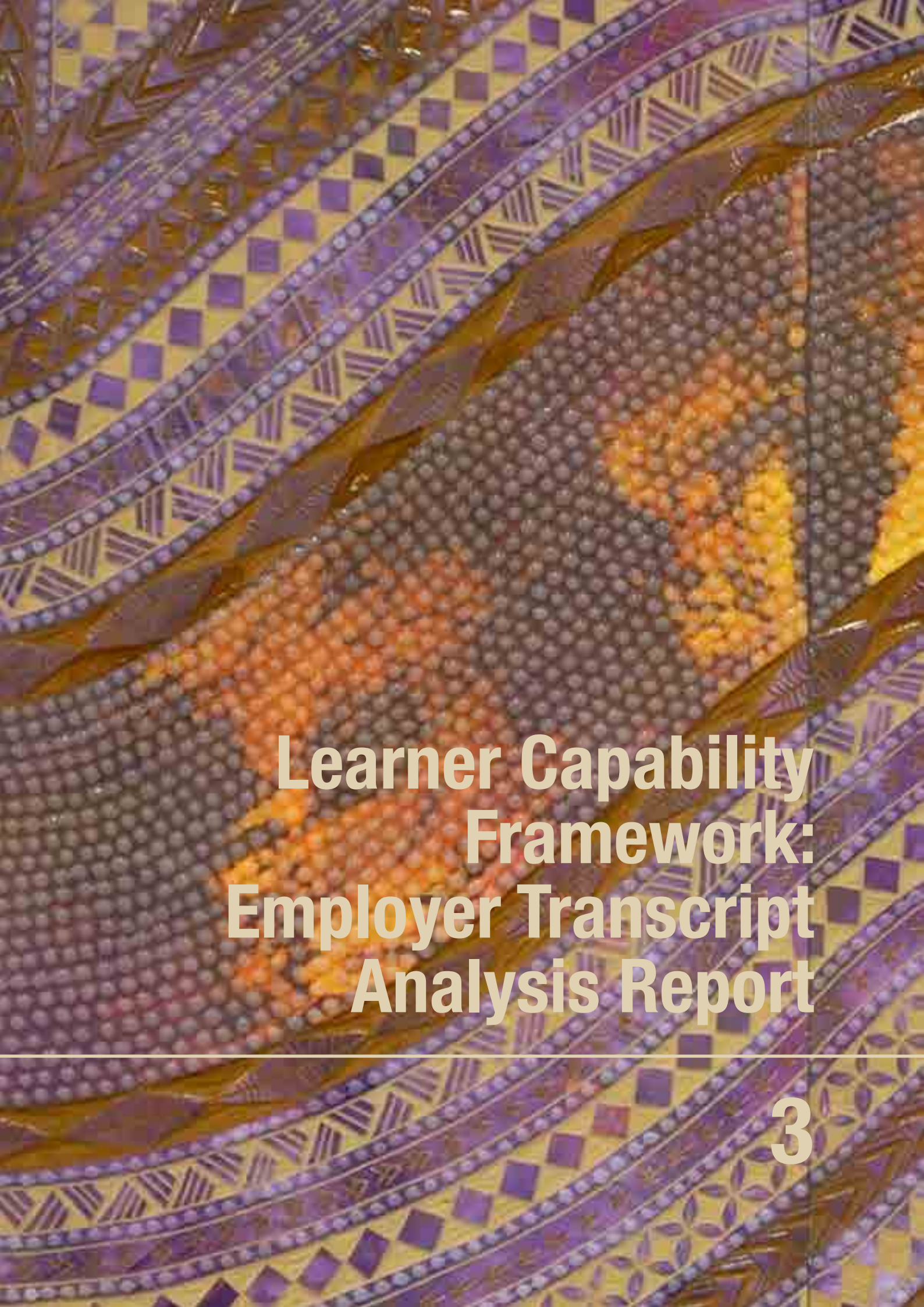
Best Practice: Māhaki

Manaakitanga is fully realised in the concept of relationships. Here, mana akiaki (empowerment) empowers quality partnerships, enhanced by the level of the parties' faith and trust in each other (whakapono). Extending beyond cultural safety, māhaki (respectful conduct) acknowledges the importance of recognising spiritual integrity, Māori philosophy, and may include processes like whakawātea (realignment) within the research project.

Questions of relevance include:

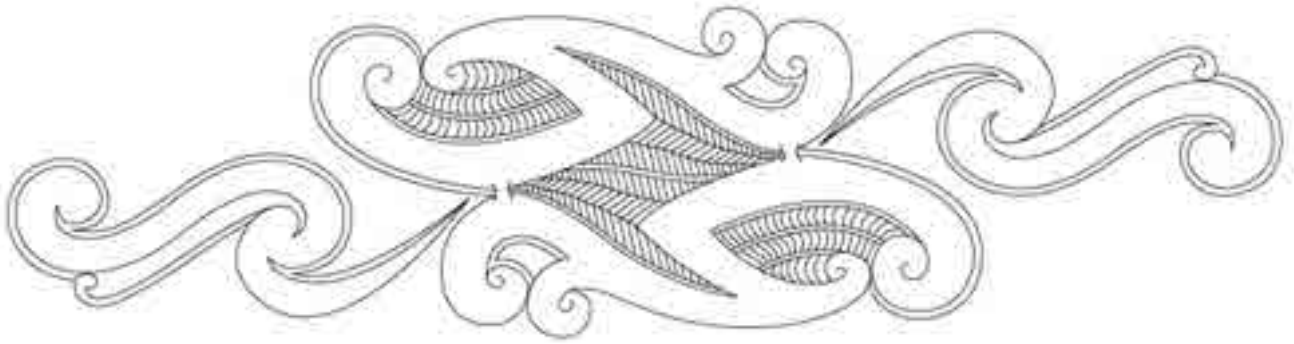
- are kaumātua required to guide the research team?
- how will researchers ensure the safe application of protocols?

Adapted from Hudson, M., Milne, M., Reynolds, P., Russell, K., and Smith, B. 2010. Te AraTika Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members.
http://www.hrc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/Te%20Ara%20Tika%20Guidelines%20for%20Maori%20Research%20Ethics.pdf



Learner Capability Framework: Employer Transcript Analysis Report

3



Learner Capability Framework

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Reading between the lines,* 2015.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 77 x 215cm.

Employer Transcript Analysis Report Introduction

Summary Analysis of Transcripts for 15 Programme Areas

During the Phase One research detailed notes and recordings were taken of the Employer Interviews. These identified both the ten most desirable capabilities that related to the research clusters, and also a wealth of information relating to the different nuances associated with this phase of the study and the workplace. This part of the process analyses the longform interview and extrapolates further nuanced information from the employer's interview that gives colour to their choices for the ten most desirable capabilities. It also provides other interpretations of the ideas of capabilities in the workplace, and for graduates. The findings will inform the research team going forward and the implementation team around the mapping of the tool into the classroom.

The following pages present the Summary Analyses of interview transcripts for each programme area. The priorities mentioned above can be recognised in these analyses but more information is also made available. For example, the employer/stakeholder views on complexities around capabilities, and impressions of the Learner Capability Framework as a whole. It also canvases their experiences of Otago Polytechnic graduates, ideas about the online tool for tracking evidence of capabilities, and reflections of Otago Polytechnic education for capabilities and competencies. Salient comments by employers/stakeholders are included.

Applied Science and Sports Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following document summarises and offers analysis of eleven interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's Applied Science and Sports courses. These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP before moving on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews.

Learner Capabilities

All interviewees spoke positively of the LCF. As employers, the formal credentials (certificate, diploma or degree) of potential employees are often seen as just 'ticking a box'. What would make a candidate stand out is their experience:

> … what gym owners / gym managers want to know, is what experience do you have as a personal trainer. I'm way more interested in that … (Interview 9, Lines 501-503).

A potential contribution of a standardised framework is that it enables employers to not only learn about a potential employee's experience, but also to compare it to that of other applicants:

> I think giving an individual a framework where they can kind of show their wares or their skills and their strong points through there … [and] something that is comparable across people I suppose as well, if I'm kind of picturing it about right. (Interview 2, Lines 281-284).

Clear themes emerged from the interviews both with regard to the capabilities most valued by the interviewees and how these capabilities were understood by the interviewees. The following 20 capabilities were discussed by the interviewees. I group these into four broader categories in order to remain succinct. The 20 capabilities were:

- Personal/professional practice
  - Organises effectively
  - Acts responsibly
  - Reflects on performance and applies personal learning
  - Works independently
  - Demonstrates resilience
  - Practices ethically
  - Practices health and safety
  - Demonstrates digital competence
- Thought processes
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
  - Thinks creatively
- Interpersonal skills
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Communicates effectively visually
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Works in teams
  - Displays leadership
  - Inspires others
- Cultural competencies
  - Displays cultural competence
  - Displays bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context

Personal/Professional Practice

Organising Effectively

All interviewees stressed that being an organised worker is extremely important. The workload can be demanding and multitasking is required.

> …if you weren't organised within this role, you basically would be falling flat on your face…if you're not organised, things are going to go all over the place… (Interview 3, Lines 59-62).

> Being able to keep track of what's going on, following up when needed with clients, keeping in control of their diary – their bookings, what they've promised their clients and actually being on time and all that kind of stuff (Interview 11, Lines 73-75).

Acts Responsibly

Closely connected with being organised is acting responsibly. Here, however, the interviewees emphasise the importance of employees' accountability for their conduct not only at work but also outside of working hours, as it may have implications for their workplace:

> … your behaviour – it reflects on everything you do. So, if you go out on a Saturday night and make a bit of mess of yourself and a bit of a fool of yourself, that reflects quite badly on our business…with my staff, before I hire them, I say look, our expectations are not just that you live a clean and healthy life style in our space, I can't tell you what to do outside of our space, but you are starting to represent what we have here outside of this space, so please be mindful of that (Interview 9, Lines 118-142).

Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning

Self-reflection is very important. Having this capability allows employees to improve quickly and maintain high standards.

> I saw her in here and I was like, okay – I gave her a skill, demonstrated the skill and her and about four others didn't quite get it right first time, second time up, bang she was all over it and then every other time I've seen her do it, the skill is exactly the same, it's like wow, cool, takes on feedback really quickly, locks it in and it's there forever (Interview 9, Lines 228-231).

> …if there was an incident where maybe the way you dealt with somebody wasn't so great, having a critical look at that and say well next time I'll try this and taking that through as well. But also I think with that would be celebrating some success you've had…
> (Interview 2, Lines 122-125).

Works Independently

Very often, training, instructing or running a sports programme is a one-person job, which makes independent working essential.

> …the way we roll here, we'll have one junior instructor on the floor at a time and sometimes they'll be sole charge in here, so I think kind of bringing into that, is a wee bit of trustworthiness as well and the fact that I can trust those staff that are on the floor, they aren't just sitting in the office on their phone (Interview 2, Lines 83-86).

> A lot of the time the trainers or instructors will be by themselves, so being able to actually still just get on and do some other work and not have to rely on others to help them out
> (Interview 11, Lines 66-68).

Demonstrates Resilience

Sometimes things don't go right and there are difficulties and challenges. That's when resilience is very important for workers.

> …not letting their experiences with my students affect the rest of their day. I understand that sometimes my students can present themselves in a bit more of an intimidating way, and if the Polytech students aren't quite used to that, then having the ability to not let it affect themselves and put themselves off coming back the next week (Interview 1, Lines 106-110).

> …you're going to get knocked about a huge amount of time and so it's just the ability to basically get back up … and you're going to get knocked down, but take yourself out, give yourself an upper cut and do what you need to do to refrain yourself and then come back into the environment and have a plan to make sure that you can do that. Whatever works well, whether it be exercise, sleeping, lying down, meditation, whatever it is, just find some way to get yourself back on point (Interview 6, Lines 180-185).

Practices Ethically

Working with people and clients makes ethical practice very important for employees, especially since the clientele is often diverse.

> I treat everybody exactly the same and I do not tolerate anybody who doesn't … [It means] first of all, treating everybody exactly the same, like regardless of race, colour, religion, people are people (Interview 9, Lines 68-70).

> You have to have certain values that they can bring to the table, so values of theirs, it can't be my values, it's got to be theirs. It's a product that they're going to build or a brand that they're going to build, so they have to have their values. So, that covers honesty, punctuality and that type of stuff, you know, they have to have those. (Interview 4, Lines 23-26).

Practices Health and Safety

The practice of sports and training requires a high level of awareness of and proficiency in health and safety issues. This refers to both the physical and mental aspects of sports.

> Obviously a big part of what we do here [involves health and safety]. Right down from our check list that we do, taking those seriously, being thorough with those as well, and also picking up on potentials or possible kind of trends that might be developing and the behaviour of the customers in and around that. And also voicing any sort of concerns as well, so the ability to voice those (Interview 2, Lines 58-62).

> I think that's quite important, because it is about the well-being of young people and I feel that responsibility to get those things right ... physical, mental, emotional – the whole person needs to feel safe. So, if we go to a tournament, and a young person has got some mental health issues, how will you manage that and do they get excluded because they've got mental health issues or do we try and put a framework around them to make sure they can actually participate (Interview 5, Lines 189-197).

Demonstrates Digital Competence

Somewhat unexpectedly, perhaps, quite a few participants mentioned digital literacy as an important capability that they would look for in an employee. It seems that the value of digital competence has become more evident to some of the participants just recently, mostly when the work has to do with promotion and online presence, but also with communication.

> When I came into the job 10 years ago, it doesn't matter so much, and I would say that my skills are a lot better than they were. A phone is on me all the time and you know things have improved, so I think it makes your job easier if you can show that competence ... One of my skills is photography. So, that's a big way I will communicate and promote the school through taking photos and helping design websites… (Interview 5, Lines 165-175).

Thought Processes

Thinks Critically

Closely related to willingness to learn is critical thinking. This is particularly important to ensure constant improvement and progress.

> There's a space for being able to think critically about the programmes that we evaluate…I think it ties in with reflection as well, if what we're doing is best practice and can we adapt it and deliver it in a better way to meet the needs of the community that we're servicing…It's quite important, otherwise you just become quite stagnant and do the same things over and over (Interview 10, Lines 128-133).

Solves Problems

A related capability to working independently, which was mentioned above, is problem solving.

> It might be a customer issue, it might be a piece of equipment issue or something like that, you have to be able to think on their feet and think about solving those problems as they occur (Interview 2, Lines 105-107).

> …being able to sort out a situation if an issue arises either with a client or there's something wrong in the gym or the equipment's not working properly, being able to take the appropriate steps and the initiative to get that solved (Interview 11, Lines 81-83).

An important component of problem solving is flexibility and adaptability to changing circumstances.

> …just in case a client walks in and the trainer has got a session planned to do A, B & C, but the client walks in and they've had a bad day, they've sprained their ankle or hurt their arm or something like that and then they've got to change their A, B & C to something that is going to be more for the client's benefit to either help them with their injury, get them through that session or look at other ways of training them (Interview 11, Lines 26-30).

Thinks Creatively

Being creative is important for a gym to keep the clients interested and engaged. Doing the same thing over and over again does not do the job for many clients.

> Practical skill sets is an example where members come in and they train with personal trainers. If we're going to deliver the same sessions or the same way it's very easy to lose that client. So, for us it's being able to practical skills to make our session variable and not the same type of session (Interview 4, Lines 70-73).

This is true for a school environment as well:

> Trying to think outside the box sometimes, you know, stuff will come along and trying to solve this problem or how do we engage kids, you know, maybe it's Year 11 girls are dropping off in sport, trying to be creative about that … And it is thinking outside the square a bit, away from traditional sports (Interview 5, Lines 121-135).

Interpersonal Skills

The set of capabilities that all participants described as among the most important are those relating to interpersonal skills. This is due to the nature of work being mostly with trainees and clients.

Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour

The interpersonal behaviours mentioned include listening abilities, body language and an ability to connect with people.

> [The job involves] connecting with people and again, that's a pretty massive part of what we're doing. We're trying to convince people that they should train with us or train in our gym and that they've chosen us for a reason and so being able to connect with people goes a long way (Interview 9, Lines 105-108).

> ...the tone of voice, how they walk around the room, how they interact with other people inside of our space…[it] is being able to connect with people very quickly and having people like you, therefore they trust you… (Interview 9, Lines 12-14).

As a direct extension of interpersonal behaviour, all three modes of communication are mentioned as vital, with verbal communication being the most important.

> Communication skill set is a really big one that you have to have (Interview 4, Lines 6).

Communicates Effectively Verbally

Effective verbal communication is described as an ability to engage in conversation with, and communicate messages clearly to, a wide range of clients and people in general.

> That's probably the skill that we would use the most in this role. As being able to effectively communicate with people verbally … unless you can clearly speak to the concept that you're trying to get across, then what you're trying to communicate and say is not very effective, so you have to be able to communicate the concepts that you want quite simply, plainly and clearly and you have to be able to deliver it to a wide range of audiences (Interview 10, Lines 77-82).

> Here, I think it's really important to have people that are personable…I'm looking for people that come in and walk up to someone that they don't know and start a conversation and facilitate a conversation. But also, to pick up on the cues when it's time to stop that conversation and let the person get on with what they want… (Interview 2, Lines 8-13).

> …a big part of the job is having those discussions with kids, discussions with teachers, talking to parents, so it's really important that you can actually have those discussions, depending on what it is and change from a serious discussion with your school principal to a conversation with a parent… (Interview 5, Lines 156-159).

Communicates Effectively Visually

A second type of communication is visual.

> If you've got a hundred people and you need to get them to move in a specific way and you lose a microphone, then visually you need to be able to demonstrate what you want them to do without verbally being able to explain why (Interview 9, Lines 91-93).

Communicates Effectively in Writing

The third type of communication is the written one. It is important in the procedural parts of the job.

> … Texting, emails, programmes and that type of communication, it's in a secondary role. So, they have to know how to write those properly, as in professional processes. You know, for us it has to be a professional process across the board (Interview 4, Lines 13-19).

Working in Teams

Often employees work within teams, requiring a willingness and ability to do so.

> Here we focus on the culture of the team, so actually everybody is all one. So, that person needs to be able to fit in with everybody, so get along with them, work with them, share ideas, and listen to ideas (Interview 11, Lines 70-72).

> Working in teams is very much a big part of the job, you've got your PE team here, who do a lot of sport, so you've got the teachers in charge, you've got the parents, you've got the kids themselves and you've got senior leaders. So a lot of the time you're not working in isolation… (Interview 5, Lines 110-112).

Displays Leadership

Leadership is often described by the participants as taking initiative and assuming ownership of the work and the workplace.

> …we're a pretty small business, so everybody that works here has to take some form of responsibility as far as leadership is concerned. I'm not there all of the time and when I'm not, I need everybody that's there to act the way that I would act in there, so, leadership wise that's like really important (Interview 9, Lines 63-66).

Inspires Others

Inspiring others is about setting an example and motivating clients and team members.

> Inspires others is a massive part of what we do as well. If we're selling the dream of a clean and healthy life style, then it's pretty important that the staff that we have here, are living that life style, therefore members that we have coming through are inspired by what they see when they walk through the door, that's again a pretty important part of being able to go with people on that level (Interview 9, Lines 112-116).

Cultural Competencies

Diversity takes different forms in the work environments of the participants. It can be in age, culture or physical abilities, among others. This requires the staff to be able to work with a wide range of clients, co-workers and stakeholders, to accommodate these diversities and cater to different needs.

> I suppose we do have diverse range of clientele that come in as well, so I'm thinking along the lines of age groups as well, which we get a lot of different ones. We have different staff from your younger school leaders, university age right through to middle age, later to middle age type people…Culturally that's probably one thing I could look at a wee bit more as well coming through there (Interview 2, Lines 210-214).

> …there is a huge benefit and I think that's probably one of our strengths at [my school], is that anybody can play sport and so we definitely have kids who are changing gender and being able to feel comfortable and safe to continue playing and engage in sport and supported with changing rooms and uniform and open discussions – having an openness to that. And that's one example of diversity (Interview 5, Lines 242-246).

Most participants, however, see diversity as an advantage, rather than a challenge.

> I'd rather put my hand in a jellybean jar with multiple flavours than just one. It's better to have different upbringing and different backgrounds and varied belief systems and having all those in the mixing pot when you're actually having a conversation about something and collaborating on something or working as part of a team, I think all those different experiences and beliefs make a pretty awesome melting pot for our environment (Interview 6, Lines 229-233).

Displays Cultural Competence

Still, working in a diverse environment requires cultural competence.

> …cultural competency kind of goes across multiple barriers for us … I mean first and foremost, you've got the different ethnicities and so forth…also nowadays more commonly is with our Rainbow community…then also having a balance between the roles of men and women in play and in our environment. So we definitely have to make sure that there is parity across our platforms, no favouritism in those areas as well (Interview 6, Lines 108-119).

Displays Bi-cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context

Bi-culturalism in the NZ context is a specific cultural competence, which is important as well.

> …for me that's really important…I guess I do put quite a lot of work into the kids of Māori descent, because I've done cultural analysis and I have a strong and good understanding of why Māori are not achieving, of who are in our prisons etc. So encouraging and supporting and by putting that whole whanau concept around kids, not just Māori kids, but other as well, I think that's really important (Interview 5, Lines 140-145).

Other Findings

International Students/Employees

As part of having a diverse work environment, some of the participants employ international workers or students. Most participants stress that besides having good proficiency in English and willing to learn local culture, they don't see much difference between local and international employees.

> …a good grasp of the English language even if it was a second language or the ability to improve current levels I suppose, that would be one…And just the same skill sets as everybody else... Culturally that's probably one thing I could look at a wee bit more as well coming through there (Interview 2, Lines 203-214).

There are also advantages to being an international employee. Some participants think that being an international student or employee is an indicator of some of the 25 capabilities OP has identified.

> …what I can already make assumptions on is, that if we've got an international student here, then they're flexible and they're open to change and they're open to exposing themselves to really uncomfortable situations, coming from another country to train here in Dunedin, which is in NZ, which is miles away from anything else, instantly I know they've got like about six or seven of these skills already (Interview 9, Lines 320-324).

Additionally, international employees may be able to develop client bases that are currently underexplored.

> There's a Chinese guy at the gym and he would love to be a trainer, he trains the house down, he's unbelievable, but I can't understand him and neither will the bulk of our clients. So, I'm helping him to try and find a client base that's Chinese, because that could work (Interview 9, Lines 306-309).

Attitude and Work Ethic

A repeating trait expressed by many interviewees is positive attitude, which is interrelated with work ethics. Although this may not be considered as a capability as such, and indeed it is not included in the current LCF, it seems to be a fundamental requirement of employees:

> A right attitude being a positive attitude. It's real basic stuff – smile. Like that initial meeting of people – smile, clean, tidy, on time – very basic things is what I initially look at (Interview 9, Lines 10-12).

> I would like them to just be wanting to be here. I don't suffer – oh, I'm sick today, I can't come in, you know. You either want to be here or you don't want to be here. For this role, you've got to have the passion for it (Interview 3, Lines 102-104).

Positive attitude is specifically important in the gym industry due to the nature of the clients, who need constant motivating and encouragement:

> The right attitude with this type of demographic is really important and these people are quite used to being low in energy, not so motivated and so having students that are high and motivated and really increase the dynamics and really bring out the best in my trainees as well (Interview 1, Lines 6-9).

Business Mind-Set

Another capability that is not currently included in the LCF is possessing a business mind-set, which can be seen as orientation towards the needs of the clients:

> They have to work when it suits the hours of the clients and members. I guess for us, the gym is our lounge, so we need to really make sure that our workers are welcoming them in to our lounge … a real good business mind-set [is] about how we can get members and clients through that process of enjoying the environment, enjoying the product that they have, and potentially staying (Interview 4, Lines 31-36).

How Soft Skills May be Assessed by Employers

Most participants prefer a face-to-face interview as a primary means of assessing capabilities. However, they also mention some additional ways of assessment, such as written assignments or practical demonstration of a training session, for instance. An online tool, which was suggested by the interviewer was seen as potentially a good idea, as long as it comes with additional evidence and not as a substitute.

> The biggest one would be the communication through an interview process. So, we do use the emails a wee bit in the initial stages and then also once they are face to face in an interview, being able to actually talk through and elaborate a bit more on what they've put down on a piece of paper. So, basically being able to back up what's on the paper…in those initial stages, it's more around that communication and getting the vibe if they're trainable around all the other areas… (Interview 11, Lines 102-110).

> I think that [an online tool] would be quite useful, but also I think it needs to be with other ways, if it was an interview, you've got that as an online tool, but also meeting the person and getting an idea of what they're like as a human being rather than just I've done this, I've done that. Because some of these are quite – communicates effectively verbally – okay you might be able to stand up and give a presentation, but I'd like to see that myself… (Interview 7, Lines 119-123).

Architectural Design Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of seven interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's architectural design courses. These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews.

Learner Capabilities

Interviewees were positive about OP's Learner Capability Framework. All interviewees endorsed the framework at the conclusion of their respective interviews. The 25 capabilities identified in earlier parts of this project were described as valued within the architectural design industry. Some interviewees had difficulty selecting only ten capabilities, noting that all 25 were important. No interviewee expressed that any important capabilities had been excluded. However, one interviewee noted that "Displays Bi-cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context" could be transformed to focus on multiculturalism. While OP's efforts to identify capabilities valued in its graduates were applauded, numerous interviewees noted that such soft skills cannot account for technical skills or knowledge.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Three broad sets of capabilities, and one specific capability, were seen as particularly important. These are:

- Thought processes
    - Thinks creatively
    - Thinks critically
    - Solves problems
- Communicative skills
    - Communicates effectively in writing
    - Communicates effectively verbally
    - Communicates effectively visually
- Demonstrates digital competence
- Social skills
    - Works in teams
    - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour

Thought Processes

Interviewees valued capabilities that spoke to a graduate's thought processes due to how design (defined broadly to include architecture and city planning, etc.) is understood by the interviewees.

> Essentially, design is solving problems – strategic problem solving. In order to solve problems, you need to think critically and creatively at the same time (Interview 1, Lines 124-125).

> …problem solving – it's got to be fundamental to our business (Interview 5, Line 199).

In fact, some interviewees seemed to not include such capabilities in their selected top ten, as they viewed it as too obvious.

> Thinks creatively – well, that's an obvious because they wouldn't be in the job if they didn't (Interview 7, Line 118).

In any case, the ability to think creatively, think critically and solve problems were some of the most commonly selected capabilities chosen by interviewees in forming their top ten lists. Naturally, these qualities were seen as overlapping. E.g. solving problems requires creative thinking.

The relationship between critical and creative thought, as understood by the interviewees, is an interesting one. In some instances (Interview 1, Lines 88-89) critical thought is seen to identify problems, while creative thought solves these problems. In others (Interview 4, Lines 335-337) creative thinking is seen to be ambitious thought (in terms of generating ambitious designs), whereas critical thought is what hones creative ideas to make them implementable, etc. Interviewees stressed the need to utilise both creative and critical thought.

Communicative Skills

All but one interviewee included one or more capabilities relating to a graduate's ability to communicate. Perhaps surprisingly, written, verbal and visual communication seem to be valued close to equally, with visual communication being slightly elevated. The emphasis on communicative skills was typically framed in the context of communication between employee and client. Multiple interviewees noted that the process of design was often a back-and-forth between client and designer. Designers need to be able to present/express a design via multiple mediums to make ideas accessible to clients.

> …being able to get your ideas, sell it them and then pin it in the writing, so that it is there in front of the person, is huge (Interview 6, Lines 91-92).

> …verbally – definitely. That's really important because people need to adapt their different styles and types [of communication] to suit the diverse audiences… we get young people [employees] that get 80 year olds [clients], so it's really important that they can gauge who they are talking to (Interview 7, Lines 121-122).

Moreover, designers need to be able to interpret the communication of others.

> …really, really listening – you're almost like conduits or translators – really listening to what these clients want and sometimes they can't describe it, but you've got to go through the process (Interview 4, Lines 72-74).

Finally, it is worth noting that visual communication skills are, perhaps, valued most highly. This relates to the time required in developing visuals.

> …effectively, if they weren't able to communicate verbally or in writing as well, I could kind of cover that for them, because I could take on that load, but I don't have the time myself to be doing the drawings (Interview 1, Lines 163-165).

> …visually would be number one, because I can handle these – I kind of learnt over the years how to handle verbal and writing. People have trust in me as a business owner to communicate verbally and in writing. And that's the thing that takes more time – that visual communication (Interview 4, Lines 106-109).

Demonstrates Digital Competence

Interviewees acknowledged that digital design software is increasingly widely used within the industry and, therefore, the ability to use these tools is vital.

> It is the way the world is moving (Interview 6, Lines 101-102).

> Digital competence – well that's just a fact of life now (Interview 3, Lines 49-50).

While often spoken about as a technical skill, e.g. the ability to use specific software, this clearly relates to soft skills also. The ability to communicate visually is predicated on the visuals one can produce and the ability to generate quality visuals using digital software is part of this.

> Digital competency – that's quite a vital skill I think at a practical level and constantly in terms of the output of drawings (Interview 4, Lines 176-177).

Despite this, numerous interviewees suggest that digital platforms should be valued upon how they help achieve desired outcomes (such as communicating ideas). They are not valuable in and of themselves. I.e. they cannot replace written and verbal mediums of communication. For example, one interviewee describes debates within the industry over which software to use in the following manner:

> [it's] like getting a builder all excited about using DeWalt or Hitachi or Makita – you know, who cares? They just pick up a saw and they cut a nice straight line (Interview 2, Lines 104-106).

Another interviewee suggests:

> Sometimes we're reliant, a little bit too much, on the digital format of programming, rather than going back to the written and selling the idea verbally to people (Interview 6, Lines 102-103).

Social Skills

Other capabilities that are valued by interviewees include Works in Teams and Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour. These are often seen to go hand in hand, although some discussion had by interviewees suggests that teamwork is perceived as a narrower concept applying only to colleagues. On the other hand, effective interpersonal behaviour could include interaction with customers, contractors, etc. These capabilities are seen as valuable for two reasons.

First, social skills are simply seen as a prerequisite to the smooth running of a business.

> Works in teams – is really important because there's always three staff on at a time and they have to be able to communicate with all the different jobs going on and working as a team is really important with such a small space (Interview 7, Lines 106-108).

Second, collaboration is seen as having creative potential:

> …in the beginning of a project, it's always good to work to kind of throw around ideas without being too fixed on any one particular outcome between a group of us (Interview 4, Lines 153-154).

Other Relevant Findings

On top of the capabilities included in OP's Learner Capability Framework, interviewees highlighted a number of personal characteristics that they valued. These characteristics are captured in part by the 25 capabilities, but not in their entirety. These characteristics included:

- A flair or eye for design – spoken of as an unquantifiable characteristic, such as having good taste.
- A solid work ethic.
- Initiative/being proactive – not just working independently on instructed tasks, but also seeking new ones.
- Willingness to learn/humility – this includes resilience to learn from mistakes and criticism.
- Confidence – confidence, without arrogance, in one's work, etc.
- Flexibility/adaptability – in terms of being willing to undertake tasks outside your job description in order to expand one's skill set. Also, the ability to negotiate a final design with a client.
- Passion and energy for the profession.

With regard to international students, there were few additional capabilities desired. The one point raised on multiple occasions was the need for internationals to have adequate English language skills. Generally speaking, diversity was viewed as valuable to a creative industry.

Technical skills and knowledge were emphasised. These included:

- Using relevant software – Photoshop, SketchUp and various CAD softwares mentioned.
- With regard to architecture, there was reference to knowledge of building/planning code requirements.
- A sound knowledge of materials used in the design process.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

When assessing applicant suitability interviewers look for:

- A strong portfolio – however, one interviewee notes that these can be misleading. E.g. could the candidate produce the drawings found in their portfolio while under time constraints, etc.?
- Strong interview performance.
- Good cover letter.
- Good references - one interviewee has sought references from a graduate's tertiary tutors in the past.
- Strong, accurate CV.
- Strong academic achievement.
- If the applicant has not worked before, a description of how they see themselves as part of a team.
- A description of software the applicant can use.
- A list of past experience, where applicable.
- General preparedness for an interview. Being timely and bringing appropriate materials.

Things that interviewees said they would like to look for if they had more time, etc., were:

- Evidence of a self-guided project that the applicant designed and followed through with.
- Setting the applicant a small problem-solving challenge.

The seven interviews analysed here demonstrate that communicative skills are not only important once in a job but also important to getting a job. For example, a well written cover letter conveys not only effective writing skills, but also a sense of formality/professionalism.

Potential for an Online Tool

Interviewees were unanimous in their support for an online tool. This was usually spoken of in terms of being able to access examples of a student's work and their academic grades, etc. One interviewee notes that this could ease employers' concerns over hyperbolic cover-letters and CVs written by the candidates themselves. OP providing verifiable information on how the student has been trained, technically and with regard to soft skills, would be useful.

> …if it were actually something where it was a kind of standard evaluation and that went alongside what their transcripts or whatever else they were providing as evidence, that could be quite helpful (Interview 1, Lines 249-251).

OP Practice: Criticisms and Commendations

Generally speaking, interviewees did not offer comments expressing their views on broader OP practice. Certainly, such comments did not amount to any discernable themes or trends in the transcripts. In the absence of such explicit themes, the discussion of which capabilities the interviewees most desired should be seen as indicative of the interviewee's suggestions for OP practice. I encapsulate these here as follows and offer them as concluding remarks also:

- Creative and critical thinking, as well as problem-solving skills should be emphasised.
- Communicative capabilities are key. This is, in a sense, the other side of the coin to creativity; the ability to formulate creative ideas/concepts in ways that others can access.
- Team work and positive interpersonal behaviour skills should be emphasised, both in terms of work-place etiquette and collaborative creative processes.
- Digital competence is paramount but should be coupled with skills to communicate design through other mediums.

Additional findings that should be heeded are:

- Solid technical skills and knowledge are, unsurprisingly, viewed as important. Examples include digital competency, knowledge of building/planning codes and processes and a knowledge of materials used for design in the relevant industry.
- Valued personal characteristics in graduates include a high work ethic, initiative, passion for the profession, confidence in their abilities, a willingness to learn and flexibility/adaptability. There is no doubt that instilling these characteristics is a tall order.
- With regard to the recruitment process, students should be taught skills such as interviewing techniques, cover-letter and CV writing, and formal/professional writing more generally.

Business Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 20 interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's business courses. These 20 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

The commentary of the 20 interviewees indicates that non-technical skills, or capabilities, are recognised as an important determinant of employability. Capabilities are vital to businesses and employers are attuned to determining applicants' capabilities during recruitment processes. Correspondingly, the commentary of these 20 interviewees supports OP's efforts in developing the LCF.

> Evidence of soft skills can be hard to find so something that provides evidence or segues into a discussion about specifics on them would be very beneficial (Interview 4, Lines 219-220).

> Yes, I think it's an absolutely great idea. It is the thing we struggle with and I do a lot of it [assessing capabilities during recruitment] by gut and I tend to meet someone, get a gut feel as to what the sort of person they are… So, having some framework to have it actually would make my life easier, because then we can look at the framework and we can actually assess before meeting with people, what sort of people they are to then work out where they would fit and work from there (Interview 19, Lines 560-567).

Similarly, interviewees were supportive of the potential for an online tool to convey a graduate's capabilities to employers. This is discussed further in the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Nine capabilities were seen as particularly important by interviewees. I group these into four categories in order to remain succinct. These were:

- Communicative/interactive skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Thought processes
  - Solves problems
- Personal/professional practice
  - Organises effectively
  - Reflects on performance and applies personal learning
  - Digital competence
- Cultural understanding/awareness
  - Displays cultural competency

Communicative/Interpersonal Skills

The four capabilities included under this heading were seen by interviewees as highly inter-related. Communication and effective interpersonal behaviour are required for successful teamwork, for example.

Communicative skills (written and verbal) were highlighted as being particularly important, as providing satisfactory service to clients often depends on effective communication. Moreover, the smooth operation of almost any business relies on effective communication between colleagues.

> …mainly now we're tending to sway towards more oral communication skills because I'm trying to push the team to get out and about and meeting more of the clients rather than being accountants that sit behind their desks…that ability to stand in front of somebody and have a genuine conversation, whether that's small talk or whether that's actual business talk, they just need to be able to have those soft skills to have communication with their clients at all levels (Interview 18, Lines 12-18).

> …having effective writing skills is an important skill these days and it's just an extension of your verbal communication skills and this might be in a new graduate or they have to draft up a letter and you've got to understand how to communicate properly in non-jargon terms, to make things understood. And also to actually be able to plan the letter as well, I think that's important (Interview 17, Lines 91-95).

Similarly, effective interpersonal behaviour speaks to an ability to relate to clients and colleagues in an appropriate way. Interactions that exhibit customer service, professionalism, as well as an ability to de-escalate tension or conflict, were emphasised.

> …it's just a given, given the fact that it doesn't matter what you are doing here, whether you are a housekeeper or reception or whatever it might be, you need to interact with each other and obviously with guests so that becomes pretty critical for us (Interview 2, Lines 67-70).

> …'effective interpersonal behaviour' is at the heart of guest service in the tourism industry (Interview 3, Lines 81-82).

> …we are face to face with lots of individuals of different personalities, but also different hierarchies. So, you are dealing with everything from your key note speaker, who could be a Knight or a Dame, down to the cleaner that you have to ask to see if they can clean the toilets or whatever. And I expect them to be treated equally…you will get people who come at you, especially conferencing, aggressively and you have to be able to disarm them in a professional, personable way. So, that's important to me (Interview 6, Lines 52-60).

Almost always, communicative skills and effective interpersonal behaviour must be harnessed into a team effort to achieve a business's goals.

> …we prefer the strength that's behind shared decision making. Working in isolation, you know working independently is a great skill, but working in isolation is a weakness. So, we prefer that team approach which sometimes means that you sit down at your desk and work, but you're never independent, you're always connected in some way to the bigger picture and that's the way we like it (Interview 15, Lines 198-202).

> …regardless of your degree of technical nous, you always need to be able to draw others into helping you to achieve the end game (Interview 16, Lines 284-285).

> So, working within our team but also working with other teams, not just the Manager, understanding it's a collective (Interview 11, Lines 106-107).

Thought Processes

Due to the unexpected challenges that any organisation, or their clients, face, problem-solving skills were considered highly desirable. Problem-solving and the ability to think critically were often viewed as overlapping. Problem-solving is not only an ability but an attitude by which people show initiative in tackling issues that arise.

> …they have to have the ability to solve problems for not only our own work place but for our clients (Interview 18, Lines 60-61).

> Like people, clients of ours generally come to us because they have a problem, in a lot of cases. So, ultimately the skills that we want to develop in our people, is to be able to work through the various factors that are giving rise to that situation, to toss things around and ultimately to come up with a solution that works for the client (Interview 16, Lines 312-315).

> …it doesn't matter what role you're doing in the place, you come up against problems that you just weren't expecting. Having effective people out there who go, rather than just ignore a problem or go around it and going, well I'm here, I'd rather fix while I'm on the spot (Interview 14, Lines 108-111).

Personal/Professional Practice

The commentary of the 20 interviewees indicates that a high degree of organisation, a willingness and aptitude for ongoing learning, and an ability to use digital instruments/platforms is needed among employees. Organisation and digital competency are required by the realities of workplaces that are often busy, demand multiple tasks of employees and utilise various digital tools. Reflection on performance and ongoing learning are required for ensuring that the best possible service is provided to clients, that an organisation is at the forefront of change within an industry and that an employee experiences professional development.

> …that goes without saying. So, that's understanding the processes, and the culture of the organisation and how we organise and be able to, as I said, juggle, because you are dealing at different levels with multiple conferences on the go (Interview 6, Lines 76-78).

> …being able to input correctly into [digital] booking systems and being able to take bookings is an important functional skill to have. In fact when they have it [digital competence] you don't notice that they've got it but when they don't have it that's when you notice (Interview 4, Lines 65-68).

> Your ability to look at your performance and go, actually what I need to develop and what I need to work on, is critical… what I've found is that those that are self-aware of how they're tracking, what they need to work on and how their performance is going, are more likely to take more responsibility for developing themselves than those that sit back and go, it should be given to me (Interview 19, Lines 258-267).

Cultural Understanding/Awareness

Many of the interviewees noted that their organisation caters to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. For this reason, understanding and accepting cultural difference is important. Moreover, for those businesses operating in the tourism field, an understanding of NZ's culture was seen as important. Clients often want a New Zealand experience and hope to engage with staff that are knowledgeable of NZ's natural and social history and culture. Finally, cultural diversity within employees was seen as both normatively preferable and operationally beneficial. Diversity reflects NZ's colonial past and present, acknowledges NZ's multiculturalism and provides diverse experiences and perspectives to an operation.

> …absolutely, I think here in Aotearoa. I think that's really, really important. My Te Reo is appalling but I'm really mindful of that we are guests here in NZ…particularly when you're organising events, people will expect due process… (Interview 10, Lines 99-102).

> …that probably should be at the top because we do need to drive a more diverse cultural mix in our work force here (Interview 11, Lines 133-134).

> I mean I think we deal with such diverse range of visitors, being in tourism, and 65% of our people coming from overseas, there's definitely different traits with different cultures, to be aware and respect and adapt and work within it, and make people feel welcome (Interview 1, Lines 166-169).

> 'Cultural competence', for us that is more about the differing nationalities that we have as guests and the differences that they have that we need to be aware of and sensitive to while still giving everybody a good experience, and also within New Zealand the bicultural nature of our society and we want to reflect that to our guests as well so that's important too, that everybody has knowledge of and sensitivity to tikanga Māori (Interview 3, Lines 92-97).

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, references and interview performance. Interviewees were particularly interested in:

- A record of work experience. It was noted that it may be hard for graduates to have accumulated much experience. This is a factor that makes employing graduates difficult for employers. Work experience need not be in fields related to a particular application. Having had any previous job indicates some reliability and basic professionalism.
- Personal interests and life experience. Interviewees felt that it is often someone's personal interests and experiences that are telling as to their capabilities. Life experience can indicate personal maturity.
- Practical skills. Interviewees are interested not only in an academic grade, but also the particular practical skills that were tested/implemented over the course of an academic paper.
- Behavioural interviewing. Many interviewees would use scenario-based interviews to test applicants' capabilities. Alternatively, they would ask for past examples where an applicant had used their capabilities.
- An understanding of the role on the part of the applicant. Moreover, interviewees want applicants to be able to articulate why they want the role and what they will bring to it.
- Alignment of values between the applicant and the organisation.
- Seeing a demonstrated passion for the role/industry.

Potential for an Online Tool

Feedback on a potential online tool to assist employers in evaluating OP graduates' capabilities was positive. A strong majority of interviewees saw the tool as likely being a source of additional information that could be used during recruitment. Interviewees emphasised that to achieve this the tool would need to be accurate, identifying a graduate's capabilities correctly, and discerning. Inevitably, some people will not possess certain capabilities and this must be truthfully identified. The matter of discernibility raises issues of measurement. One interviewee suggested that measuring capabilities via a spectrum would be more accurate than a yes/no grade of whether someone possesses a capability. Finally, multiple interviewees noted that an online tool would be more appropriate for helping employers assess some capabilities than others. It was noted that face-to-face interaction would be needed to identify things such as effective communication and interpersonal behaviour. However, non-interactive capabilities, such as organisation, could be determined via the online tool.

> Very useful. I think that would be really good. If you could see some of the detail around how and why…Things like feedback from lecturers. So, I worked in a team that did this and then independent validation – Joe attended to do this or when working in teams, Joe has a tendency to lead from the front or he's more compliant or whatever, that gives me more about them. Everyone can work in teams, but it's about how you interact with others… (Interview 19, Lines 424-433).

> That would be helpful. So, long as it wasn't all just, when you said the lecturer comes in and advocates and says whether they have done it well or whatever, but it wasn't all yes, they did every single thing well, you know that it's not completely biased, that they might have organised themselves well, but they do need to develop their resilience skills and those sorts of things (Interview 18, Lines 143-147).

> I think it would be quite useful for us, because as I said, we're not one of these bigger firms that do their own psychometric testing. So, having that, and it may be quite clear in the interview, so you may have a gut feeling and it's not always right, it would be good to have something that actually backs it up. And so, for a small organisation, you do fly by the seat of your pants sometimes, so having that online tool would be quite useful (Interview 17, Lines 151-155).

OP Practice: Recommendations

Throughout the course of the 20 interviews analysed here interviewees offered a number of reflections on OP graduates and the potential for relationships between industry and OP. Multiple interviewees indicated a desire for, or highlighted potential benefits in, a relationship between their organisation (or wider industry) and OP. The commentary of some interviewees suggests that they feel they do not know a lot about OP's educational offerings.

> I've really enjoyed the interface between the organisation and the Polytech… I think we have a massive, massive opportunity both with the Polytech and dare I say it, the University, to capitalise on all of the knowledge in both those institutions, in a variety of ways that we're not currently really, I don't think we're squeezing the most juice out of that wee lemon (Interview 11, Lines 268-271).

> In truth, in the last probably two or three years, we haven't had a lot of business graduates come to us for roles, we deal with a lot from the university, heaps from the university, but very few. So I just wanted to see whether or not the New Zealand Diploma of Business was still being run and what you were running (Interview 20, Lines 215-219).

> And then also, if they do choose a Polytech degree, is it actually the same that comes out [as at university]? Is it the same degree, same person, same skills that comes out of University, are they the same thing, are we talking apples with apples or is there a difference? (Interview 16, Lines 542-547).

Regarding graduates themselves, interviewees reported positive experiences and a desire to receive more graduates. However, lacking resilience, critical thinking/problem-solving and written communication skills were also noted.

> You know, we've had a couple of graduates come through and they are adding huge value, like the work they're doing, we're putting them on specific projects that I would put a normal staff member on, and they're delivering the results (Interview 12, Lines 303-305).

> Because you know I had a great Grad, I would have employed her on the spot. And I saw her a couple of weeks ago and thought that I had let that one slip through (Interview 6, Lines 217-218).

> I guess just from our personal experience in recent times, we have probably found that graduates from the Otago Polytechnic that we have employed, have been less resilient than graduates that have come from a University background. Now that's a not a big population, so you may not be able to draw that as an inference across the entire Polytech graduate class, but in our recent experience, we have found that a couple of graduates from Polytech have certainly had short-comings in that resilience space (Interview 16, Lines 533-538).

> I think writing styles have dropped off hugely and I struggle with they put everything down on a page that they know and it's saying, actually the person doesn't want to know everything you know, what they want to know is what's the answer, so you need relevance, and you need to be able to moderate (Interview 19, Lines 87-90).

Communication Design Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of seven interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's communication design courses. These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP before moving on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews. In concluding, recommendations for OP practice raised throughout the interviews are listed.

Learner Capabilities

In general interviewees were positive about OP's Learner Capability Framework.

> …it's brilliant you're doing that (Interview 2, Line 131).

One interviewee stated that information on OP graduates' capabilities could elevate OP graduates over other job applicants. However, multiple interviewees cautioned against allowing the LCF, and any online tool used to communicate students' capabilities, to act as a box-ticking exercise.

> I never look at where they have studied or anything like that, just go to the work and if I like them… generally it's based on the person and their portfolio and the way they come across… it's the person in front of you and what they bring to the table…it [standardised testing of student capabilities] just sounds like some boxes that need to be ticked (Interview 7, Lines 167-173).

Interviewees also pointed out that there would need to be context given to how students had been assessed for capabilities, etc.

> … it would be really interesting from an employer point of view…if maybe there was an example of how that conclusion had been arrived at (Interview 4, Lines 207-209).

In this regard, one interviewee noted that broader life experience would be more indicative of a graduate possessing soft skills.

> It would be better if they had had "hospo" experience, because that actually works out what hard work is and how to relate to people and that sounds like a silly example, but it's actually not (Interview 6, Lines 323-325).

Generally speaking, the 25 capabilities identified in earlier parts of this project were described as valued within the communication design industry. No interviewee expressed that any important capabilities had been excluded. While OP's efforts to identify capabilities valued in its graduates were welcomed, interviewees also emphasised the need for appropriate technical skills and knowledge in graduates.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Two broad sets of capabilities, and three specific capabilities, yielded particularly interesting content. These are:

- Communicative skills
    - Communicates effectively in writing
    - Communicates effectively verbally
    - Communicates effectively visually

- Thought processes
    - Thinks creatively
    - Thinks critically
    - Solves problems
- Demonstrates digital competence
- Organises effectively
- Demonstrates resilience

Communicative Skills

All interviewees included at least two of the "Communicates Effectively…" capabilities in their top-ten list. Written, verbal and visual communication received relatively equal attention throughout the interviews. In general, these were discussed as some of the most important capabilities for a graduate to have.

> …we've identified writing as one of the most highest [sic] level of skills or capabilities… this is the base line, this is ground zero (Interview 2, Lines 182-199).

> …you can have all of those skills and be a great designer, but if you are the person responsible for presenting the work or communicating your work, even in part, you have to have those skills as well (Interview 5, Lines 58-60).

Communication was mostly discussed in two contexts:

- A collaborative design process with a client or fellow team member(s).
    - …the interactions that we have amongst staff requires some form of confidence to – one, to trust yourself to engage with the other staff member in a specific way, to challenge their ideas, to not be afraid to be wrong (Interview 3, Lines 44-46).
- Office-place interaction.
    - …communication is just obviously an essential tool and that without clear communication, it can often result in, for example, management having to get far more involved with an employee and that's something that is culturally, we don't like the feeling of any kind of micro-management… (Interview 4, Lines 30-33).

As alluded to in the first of the immediately preceding quotes, there is a sense, detectable in multiple interviews, that confidence and resilience underpin effective communication. Moreover, communicative skills were linked to effective interpersonal behaviour. Those who communicate well are likely to have successful interpersonal interactions.

> …let's just say you flick to the client in an email going – here you go. They will go, why have you done this, and just knowing that the best thing to do is to sit down with them and explain what you've done, as opposed to just going – here's my design, like it or lump it (Interview 5, Lines 93-96).

Thought Processes

Critical thinking, creative thinking and problem-solving were all seen as highly valuable by interviewees. As with industry experts from other fields analysed as part of this project, such as those from architectural design, these capabilities were seen as intertwined. One interviewee did not order ten capabilities but, rather, grouped multiple capabilities into ten groups. "Thinks Creatively", "Thinks Critically" and "Solves Problems" were explicitly grouped together.

> …many of the scenarios that I and my employers find themselves, will be problem solving challenges, where initially they might be working independently and this problem might come up and so they need to think critically about the problem… (Interview 3, Lines 67-69).

> …think creatively and you will probably do okay (Interview 2, Line 178).

> …along with problem solving, it's [creative thought] just an absolute core skill that's needed for every element of the business (Interview 4, Lines 95-96).

Demonstrates Digital Competence

The prevalence of digital platforms/tools was often noted. While discussed by multiple interviewees, digital competence seemed to be spoken of mostly in terms of technical skills or knowledge. E.g., the ability to use Photoshop or Illustrator for design, or the ability to use Slack for internal communication. With regard to soft skills, digital competence was linked to creativity, initiative or a willingness to learn – attempting to be at the forefront of a rapidly changing industry.

> …are they preparing for what's to come? (Interview 2, Line 326).

Organises Effectively

The importance of organisation was a recurring theme. Organisation was seen as important for a number of reasons. It was said to assist a person in not being overwhelmed by their workload, linking it to resilience. Organisation was also linked to an ability to appropriately direct or apply technical skills, and was seen as important in a team context in which resources are shared.

> …organisation is so key…you're exposed to a lot of content and level content and to be able to organise assets, organise your day, organise yourself, and not feel overwhelmed because you can manage your tasks… (Interview 2, Lines 204-208).

> …we have so many files and so many assets and so many moving parts, on every one of our products, so it's incredibly important that those are kept in the right sort of folders and set up and because everyone works together so much within a team, if you put something somewhere, where somebody else isn't expecting it to be, then they can't do their job (Interview 4, Lines 59-62).

> …you can be the greatest at all those things [technical skills], but if you're not organised and effective, you're not going to get anything done on time (Interview 7, Lines 120-121).

Demonstrates Resilience

Multiple interviewees noted that the process of negotiating designs with either clients or team members required resilience, confidence, and flexibility/adaptability.

> …of having that resilience to kind of back your idea, but also know when to sort of step down if you have to (Interview 1, Lines 10-11).

> …being able to regulate emotion as a designer I think is an interesting capability. Because you have to co-exist with a team and work is an output of a combined group…some firms will take the attitude that they know best and some firms will just do everything the client says, and some will be in between. And then within the firm, if you match the style of the organisation - brilliant. If you're in conflict with it – not very good at all (Interview 2, Lines 48-54).

> …you actually have to turn around and firstly accept that someone doesn't like what you've done and that you have to come up with a new course of action (Interview 5, Lines 47-49).

Other Interesting Findings

As with other groups of interviews examined as part of the broader LCF, interviewees at times framed attributes they were looking for as personal characteristics that a graduate exemplified, rather than capabilities a graduate possessed.

> That's probably the most important thing to me when hiring anyone in any role here, is that they are good people and that they fit with the other good people that we've got here (Interview 5, Lines 154-156).

> It is the person and the personality that is becoming the capability, so we are hiring the person not the skills, not the capabilities in a way (Interview 2, Lines 56-57).

Team work and independent work seen as important and interrelated. Phrases similar to "get on with it" are in common in regard to independent working. Moreover, independent working is vital to teamwork, as those who require oversight absorb extra resources from the team, etc.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

Interviewees pointed to standard criteria in assessing a job applicant's capabilities. These include:

- Good references.
- Strong portfolio.
- Strength of past experience – valuable in itself and also gives a candidate confidence, which is key. Also, demonstrating that one has sought opportunities to become experienced is indicative of interest in the field.

Interested specifically in graduates' experience working in groups. Ask about times that there was a difficult group dynamic. How did they respond to this?

> …just trying to figure out more about the personality of the person in that group dynamic (Interview 3, Line 156).

In addition, multiple interviewees suggested that face-to-face interaction was key. This led to some of the skepticism around what an online tool assessing students' capabilities could tell them. With regard to interacting with the applicant in person, interviewees had used the following methods in the past:

- Interacting with students, and viewing examples of their work, in informal settings. One interviewee is involved in OP "'Crit' sessions" – sessions where industry experts offer feedback on student work.
- Internships – allows the employer to see an individual in the work environment.
- Job interviews.
- One interviewee stated that they often try to have multiple interviews with a candidate.
- Another interviewee likes to use an interview tactic in which, along with the hiring staff member, someone from the workplace undertaking a role similar to that which the interviewee will fill if successful participates in questioning the applicant: …a person from within the business that will be working alongside that prospective employee, we usually use their skill set, to engage that prospective employee and test or probe into specifics that are required for that position (Interview 3, Lines 19-22).
- Prepare a test to test their skills – not necessarily about passing or failing. A big part is about being able to communicate their thought processes in how they tackled the test.

Similar to industry experts in other fields, comments from the seven interviewees interviewed here suggest that communicative capabilities are important in securing a job, not just once there.

> …when the learners come and try and explain specifics about what they've been doing at University, there's often a time in that interview period, where they are maybe lost for words (Interview 3, Lines 237-239).

OP Practice: Recommendations

Interviewees were not critical of present OP practice. In fact, there were moments of high praise.

> …I've hired a lot of people from the Polytech, so you must be doing something right (Interview 2, Line 455).

However, interviewees were forthcoming with a number of recommendations for OP.

> OP should attempt to find …ways to bring in more people from outside…more engagement between potential employers and students in a setting where, sort of like the presentations or where they showing their work informally, I think that's where they break down the barriers so they're not as nervous, but it kind of helps gauge from what sort of qualities they might have (Interview 1, Lines 184-190).

Multiple interviewees use the example of Sexy Summer Jobs and their "speed dating" night in comments and that they see Internships as a help for students to get a foot in the door. There is an implicit suggestion that OP needs to work to assist students find skills that fit the market (present and future):

> …the more abstract that work is from commercial reality, again the harder it is to employ them… (Interview 2, Lines 124-125).

> OP should move with the general trend in education to "dematerialise" interactions: …we don't have to sit in a class on a chair all day anymore, and I know you guys recognise that and others recognise that and I wish there was some way that I could detach my production people from their computers… (Interview 2, Lines 474-476).

Another consistent overall view was that OP should try to understand what motivates students and cater to their interests, and that it should also help students identify what makes them a unique candidate for a job, etc. Following this, interviewees also often commented that OP should require students to work under conditions more comparable to a workplaces that they will be entering into. E.g. greater time constraints, and that students should try and obtain work/life experience (not necessarily in the design field). This is indicative of capabilities.

> It should be a little bit like "Project Runway", where they give them like a set amount of hours to go make something. Because that's it…And the thing is you guys are giving them a deadline, you know, you need to have it in by then, it just that isn't necessarily the kind of deadlines they are going to face anywhere else. (Interview 5, Lines 279-282).

OP grads should try and obtain work/life experience (not necessarily in the design field). This is indicative of capabilities.

Fashion Design Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of eight interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's fashion design courses. Unlike other batches of interviews, two of these interviews were not recorded. In these instances, the interviewer's notes, rather than interview transcriptions, were analysed.

These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including commendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

Interviewees were positive about OP's Learner Capability Framework.

> …it would be a great way to have some other framework where you can see their clothes and their technical capabilities and their design ideas, but then also to know if they can communicate like a normal human being (Interview 5, Lines 37-40).

However, as discussed in the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below, there was notable skepticism regarding the potential for an online tool to appropriately communicate a graduate's capabilities to employers.

The framework received more partial endorsements, as opposed to full endorsements, when compared to experts from other industries analysed as part of this LCF project. The 25 capabilities identified in earlier parts of this project were described as valued within industries relevant to fashion design. However, the fact that three interviewees compiled a list containing less than ten capabilities suggests that there are some capabilities clearly understood as essential, and some seen as beneficial but superfluous.

> There's heaps that I think are important, but probably aren't top ten (Interview 6, Line 45).

Indeed, there were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Three broad sets of capabilities, and one specific capability, were seen as particularly important. These are:

- Communicative skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Communicates effectively visually
- Thought processes
  - Thinks creatively
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Professional practice
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
  - Works independently
  - Organises effectively
- Demonstrates digital competence

Communicative Skills

At least one communicative capability was present in all interviewees' top-ten lists. Most top-ten lists included more than one mode of communication (i.e. verbal, visual or written). Communication was viewed as important within the design process, e.g. the ability to communicate design concepts to others, and also within the broader professional context; communicating with work-mates, manufacturers, commercial buyers and individual customers.

> For me, it's very important that regardless of what they've done, that they can construct and understand construction and be able to communicate it and work with your manufacturers… (Interview 2, Lines 178-180).

> Just those kind of really basic work place kind of communication. Things like coming in and saying good morning, you know like, lots of people don't do it and it's kind of doesn't help them… (Interview 5, Lines 369-371).

Thought Processes

As in other interview categories, critical thought, creative thought and problem-solving capabilities were viewed as intertwined. These capabilities were viewed as integral to design itself and, therefore, part of the technical undertakings of a role in fashion design. However, problem-solving was, at times, discussed with regard to inter-personal behaviour; both the ability and willingness to collaboratively solve problems, and the ability to prevent or mediate conflict with others. These three capabilities were at times linked to a fourth capability – Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning.

> …the designers get really frustrated when an intern will try something and it doesn't work and then they just leave it there, well if I have to come all the way downstairs, have you tried this, have you tried this and you know, they want to know that you've kind of exhausted all the possible options that you can come up with (Interview 5, Lines 309-312).

> The willingness to be part of a team and if we do have problems, that we're problem solving it together (Interview 1, Lines 181-182).

> There's always going to be problems in this industry. It's just how you deal with them and it's addressing them early and being up front about it, and accepting responsibility for it and saying, what can we do to help, to help make this right? (Interview 2, Lines 109-111).

Professional Practice

The ability to work both as part of a team and independently was highly valued by interviewees. With regard to working independently, there were multiple references to the fact that the demands of an industry workplace meant that employers are too "time-poor" (Interview 4) to hold new employees' hands.

> Here's a task, go and action it all to completion. If you have any problems, just sort them out (Interview 8, Lines 39-40).

> We need to be able to kind of work a little bit in isolation sometimes and be able to continue working without someone telling us what to do (Interview 7, Lines 72-74).

Working in teams and interpersonal behaviour were again spoken of similarly. A healthy team environment was seen as important as it boosts morale, increases productivity and helps endure the strenuous demands of the industry.

> Yes, so we are all in the sinking ship together and I think that's looked at being a quite important value in the work place (Interview 5, Lines 148-149).

> Being a team member that understands other people's position is a very important team member attribute (Interview 8, Lines 19-20).

> …it's just morale, like I've really noticed with my team, we have a really good working relationship and we're just far more productive and just have a better chance at work, so that's really important (Interview 7, Lines 46-48).

Moreover, while the capability, "Organises Effectively" was only included in around half of the interviewees' top-ten lists, skills that might be associated with this capability received recurring attention throughout the interviews. In particular, the ability to work to deadlines and multi-task were highlighted.

> We quite like for the employee to be able to multi-task (Interview 1, Line 171).

> Probably multi-tasking and being able to do multiple tasks… Because we are small, we're a very small team…So, I think people would have to be able to do lots of things now (Interview 2, Lines 12-19).

> So, working to a deadline, being sort of able to chop and change and take something on, adaptability and you can't be sort of like, oh I'm working on this, it's like, if something more urgent comes in, that would probably take precedent [sic] (Interview 6, Lines 19-21).

More broadly, and as the immediately preceding quote highlights, flexibility/adaptability were often emphasised as desirable in potential employees. This stems from the fact that the industry in question contains a diverse set of roles and tasks. This need for flexibility/adaptability is reflected in the "OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations" section below.

Demonstrates Digital Competence

Demonstrates Digital Competence was present on all but one top-ten list. The prevalence of digital platforms in the fashion industry simply makes this a reality of employer needs.

> Oh because of the digital world that we're living in now. I mean we use, within our company, we would use probably four different software base programmes (Interview 1, Lines 21-22).

> These days you have to do everything, so you might be doing many videos when your [sic] at an event or taking photos for Instagram, able to upload in HTML, not so much coding but online formatting, like a word presage. And then of course, your InDesign and Photoshop, and emails (Interview 6, Lines 85-88).

Other Relevant Findings

- Technical skills were still an emphasis for interviewees. Skills discussed include basic computer skills (digital competency), pattern-making, grading, sewing and clothes construction, understanding body-type and fit, colour-switching, digital enhancement, and cutting samples.
- Sustainability – conflicting accounts between interviewees as to how much sustainability has been instilled in the industry. One (Interview 5) argues that it is often a marketing tool and refers to "green-washing".
- Noted that the industry can be intensive and has an unhealthy culture of long hours, etc.
- Work-readiness – employers require graduates who have an appropriate understanding of what working in the industry entails. Graduates need to understand:
    - They will be asked to do multiple tasks only a minority of which might actually be design based.
    - The industry is intensive and often demands long hours.
    - There is still much to be learnt.
- See the Recommendations and Commendations section for more on these matters.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

When assessing the suitability of applicants for a position, interviewees consult the following sources of information:

- CV.
- Academic record.
- Portfolio.
- Personal profile (e.g. age and living situation).
- Social media profile.
- Interview.
- Previous work experience with the individual, if any.
- General work experience.

In addition to the previously discussed capabilities that were deemed important, interviewees are interested in:

- Technical skills.
- Demonstrated research into the business and the applicant's potential role within the business.
- Information on personal life, including interests / activities.
- Personal fit within the prospective team.

Potential for an Online Tool

As mentioned in the introduction, interviewees were sceptical of the benefit of an online tool indicating graduates' capabilities. Skepticism was not directed at the notion of such a tool, which numerous employees felt had the potential to help narrow down a pool of applicants, but, rather, at the potential implementation of the tool and broader LCF.

> I think I'm struggling to imagine what it would be and what form. If an online tool that would exist would help or clarify anything, then yes (Interview 7, Lines 174-175).
>
> In my head I sort of see it as being parallel with getting a gold star for trying hard kind of thing. It's quite hard to quantify… when it comes to – communicates – well how tangible is that? It's extremely important, like it's very important, but who gets to quantify that and then who gets a sticker for having passed that on. To know what standard of communication is a difficult thing…I do think it is important, I just think it needs to be delivered with some kind of seriousness (Interview 5, Lines 435-452).

In addition to the "gold star" quote above, another interviewee (Interview 4) emphasised the need for standards in order to ensure that micro-qualifications (or the like) were not handed out "like lollipops". The same interviewee suggested that only a limited number of people might be deemed to have demonstrated each capability, thus offering a "point of distinction". Finally, this interviewee raised the idea of creating a global standard that is easily replicated. Other institutes employing OP's LCF would validate OP's system.

Echoing sentiments from other interview clusters, interviewees noted that they would still look to personal interaction with graduates as a key method of assessing graduate capabilities.

OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations

Throughout the course of the eight interviews analysed here, interviewees offered commentary on the quality of graduates entering the industry (often without specific reference to OP).

- Interviewees suggested that many grads were not work ready, although this varied.
    - …the maturity and the capabilities between these interns is so wildly different. Some of them are like working with 15 year olds and then some of them are like adults (Interview 5, Lines 35-36).
    - One interviewee (Interview 4) stated that they no longer employ people under the age of 25, as they lack life experience and aptitude.
- One interviewee noted that solid technical skills were hard to find within the industry.
- Multiple interviewees noted that writing skills seem minimal, as evidenced by, among other things, poorly crafted CVs.

Moreover, interviewees offered a number of recommendations to OP based on the state of the industry:

- It is important for students to understand that working in the fashion industry may not mean designing and, therefore, flexibility and adaptability are required:
    - …for the students to understand that they may not end up being actually designing, but are they still happy to be in the fashion industry… (Interview 1, Lines 204-205).
    - I think there is a lot of focus on making the garments and that is a very tiny sector of the industry (Interview 7, Lines 283-284).
    - And I think a lot of students coming into the industry are way more focused on being designers and design assistants and there isn't really that many roles in companies for those positions off the bat, you know (Interview 8, Lines 158-160).

- In relation to the immediately preceding point, students need to be familiarised with the broader operations of the industry. The business side of the industry is particularly important.
    - …commerciality, that's another thing… I found with my University was they were always pushing the conceptual and thinking outside the box…and I don't think I got anything from University, other than just pushing the creative side (Interview 7, Lines 310-317).
    - I remember when we were at school, we used to do the professional practices paper and we wrote the business plan. And that was such an integral part of me starting a business…all of those things which became really important in our business, is the skills that students coming through, they just have no idea about (Interview 8, Lines 149-153).

- Grads should be taught that success often takes a lot of time and money, and that the industry is demanding.
    - …the reality of it all, it's not all glamourous, it's actually real. So, it's being able to get in just say, is there anything else I can learn or do? (Interview 2, Lines 245-246).
    - …being able to accept those knocks (Interview 2, Line 262).

- Work-experience or exposure to the industry is key to grad success.
    - …that industry experience you cannot get anywhere else, and I think it's really, really important (Interview 7, Lines 355-356).

Finally, interviewees were forthcoming with praise for OP.

- … I do have to say that I think we are fortunate having the Polytech here. I wish it was here when I was young (Interview 2, Lines 247-248).
- …that was such a well-rounded Degree in terms of business, capabilities and design and drawing and all the aspects that you start with to gain your confidence in the industry, everything was covered, so that was great (Interview 8, Lines 219-221).

Food Design Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers initial analysis of seven interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's food design courses. These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP grads. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews. Finally, areas in which interviewees suggested OP's practice is working, and those in which practice could be improved, are discussed.

Learner Capabilities

Generally speaking, interviewees were positive about OP's efforts to identify learner capabilities that were desired in target industries. The 25 capabilities identified in earlier parts of this project were described as accurate with regard to the industry investigated here. No interviewee suggested that any important capabilities had been excluded. While OP's efforts to identify capabilities valued in its graduates were applauded, numerous interviewees noted that such soft skills cannot make up for lacking technical skills.

There were evident themes in what will here be labelled "personal qualities" that interviewees desired in graduates. Four broad personal qualities were highly consistent across all seven interviews. For a number of reasons, the capabilities identified by interviewees were not as consistent across the group. Often multiple capabilities feed into a personal quality that interviewees discussed. Some capabilities were seen as overlapping. Moreover, each interviewee made personal interpretations of the capabilities. The following outlines four personal qualities that were most commonly said to be desirable across the seven interviews and discusses the specific capabilities interviewees associated with each personal quality. Notably, these personal qualities are not necessarily captured in their entirety by the 25 capabilities identified by OP.

Passionate About a Career in the Industry

Almost all interviewees referred to seeking employees who were passionate about food and the food industry. Such people were seen as wanting to build careers in the food industry, not just collect a weekly cheque. Passion was associated with high levels of motivation and an impressive work ethic. Capabilities interviewees linked to passion were:

- Demonstrates Resilience – people who hold a genuine passion for the work are less likely to be deterred by set-backs, obstacles or criticism.
- Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning – those dedicated to a career in the industry are more likely to seek to improve and expand their skills and performance.
- Displays Leadership – people who are passionate about their work are more likely to be at the forefront of development in the industry.
- Enterprising – similar to leadership, passionate employees are likely to be those who go above and beyond a job description, seeking to make a difference.

> …they [young chefs] haven't got the strength anymore, the determination or the passion and it is worrying me (Interview 1, Lines 19-20).

> You can work in lots of different places that have different hours and workloads, different teams, but the one thing that keeps you there is the food, you know, the tastes and flavours and hospitality (Interview 3, Lines 196-198).

A Willingness to Learn

"Willingness" is key here, as most interviewees who discussed this matter highlighted not an inability to learn but, rather, an assumption among graduates that further learning would not be required. Part of this has to do with humility; accepting one's limitations. The other, in close relation to the quality of being passionate, is demonstrating an interest in expanding one's knowledge and skill set. Capabilities interviewees linked to a willingness to learn were:

- Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning
- Displays Resilience – a willingness to learn from failure and criticism.

> An openness to learning, I think has got to be the number one thing (Interview 5, Line 27).
>
> …they've got to have that understanding that there is more to learn (Interview 4, Lines 18-19).

Maturity/Professionalism

Interviewees seek candidates that have realistic expectations of how hard working in the food industry (particularly in a commercial kitchen) can be and an understanding of what it means to be a paid employee; a professional. Examples given are being well presented, being punctual and not being shocked at the suggestion of working long hours or weekends. A strong work ethic is key. Capabilities interviewees linked to maturity/professionalism were:

- Demonstrates Resilience – not being daunted by hard work. Adopting an attitude of getting on with it.
- Works Independently – not needing to be babysat.
- Acts Responsibly – takes personal responsibility for their role without requiring intervention from managers. notably, this is seen as key to Works in Teams.

> …there's not recess at 10.30 with coffees and teas and all that, you've got a responsibility now, you're working for an employer and you are getting paid for what you do (Interview 4, Lines 76-77).
>
> …if you come in at 10.00 o'clock, you've got two hours to set up for lunch. So, if you were half an hour late, that's going to affect the operations and it's like a domino effect (Interview 2, Lines 27-29).

Initiative

Closely linked to maturity and professionalism is initiative. Interviewees seek employees they can trust to exercise their own judgement. Capabilities interviewees linked to initiative were:

- Works Independently – not only acts upon instructions but seeks out tasks independently.
- Solves Problems – has the ability to solve problems without referring them (unless major in nature) to management.
- Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning – can utilise personal experience in the aforementioned problem-solving processes.
- Thinks Creatively – the ability to work with what one has. e.g. the limitations of seasonal foods.
- Thinks Critically – the ability to think for oneself.

> …they just think more. Okay we're nearly at the end of the day, let's start doing the floor and clean up, whereas some of them will just stand around and wait for another order (Interview 6, Lines 139-141).

Other Relevant Findings

- Works in Teams and Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour seen as essential due to the nature of the industry. These two capabilities often seen as overlapping or synonymous. Despite this, and perhaps in contradiction to it, the ability of a person to work in a team was often associated with personal traits, rather than interpersonal behaviour, by interviewees. Those who are responsible individuals are unlikely to require an excessive degree of support from teammates, etc.

- Displays Work Life Balance at times related to Demonstrates Resilience. A balanced life prevents burn-out. Multiple interviewees discussed mental health issues within the industry more generally.
- Health and Safety treated as a basic requirement.
- Organisation viewed as important and typically spoken of in terms of time management and meeting deadlines. Sometimes referred to with regard to organising physical space or ideas also.
- Verbal and visual communication seen as more important than written communication.
- Matters of cultural competency are mostly viewed in a passive rather than active sense. Employees are not asked to be versed in navigating cultural difference, they merely need to be respectful of others and be able to work alongside those from other cultures. These matters did not receive too much discussion.
- Interviewees generally do not look for different capabilities in international students. One interviewee mentions that they would hope that international students would have a sensitivity to NZ social norms, etc. Language competency can be an issue, as can legal matters to do with visas, etc.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

Most discussion on this matter spoke to how each interviewee assesses potential employees for their suitability or how they assess early career employees. Generally speaking, interviewees sought to detect a passion or sense of care for the job. Indicators are:

- Taking pride in personal presentation.
- Asking questions or taking notes while on placement or trial periods.
- Volunteering for shifts.
- Following up on information in one's own time and discussing it the next day with managers.
- Punctuality.
- Respect for more experienced members of staff.
- Initiative in trying to locate work in the first instance.

In terms of how they deduce this type of information, interviewees highlighted:

- Work place internships and trials.
- Checking applicants' social media profiles.
- Extended interviews that are not overly formal but, rather, like a conversation.

Notably, communicative skills are not only important once in a work place, but also important in demonstrating that you have the capabilities that will make employers employ you in the first instance. E.g. communicating your interest and passion by taking notes and asking questions when working a trial for a job.

Potential for an Online Tool

Interviewees were generally positive about the idea of an online tool that would allow them to gain information on which capabilities each OP course instilled in students.[1] However, one interviewee suggested that for employees unconvinced by the technical skills or fundamental knowledge imparted by OP qualifications, such an online tool would hold little sway. In addition, multiple interviewees noted that an online tool could not replace, and would be inferior to, seeing an applicant work on an internship or trial period. Multiple interviewees suggested that such a tool would be in line with hiring and training programmes becoming increasingly digitalised.

[1] It might be worth noting that many interviewees seemed to take the online tool as something that would allow them to evaluate individual candidates, rather than looking at particular courses and the capabilities each course teaches.

OP Practice: Criticisms and Commendations

Within the seven interviews analysed here, both criticism and praise were levelled at OP as an institution and OP graduates. In an attempt to turn both criticism and praise into actionable goals, interviewee feedback on OP's performance is framed as recommendations below. Key recommendations for OP are:

- Prioritise on the job learning. Produce students who are ready for the "real world". OP needs to make students aware of the time and experience required to gain top level positions in the tourism industry. Emphasise hands on skills and experience, as well as a knowledge of how the industry operates. E.g., graduates should have a realistic image of starting wages and hours they will be expected to work.
- Basic cookery fundamentals of graduates should be strengthened.
- Tailor education to the market. If most students will work in cafes, educate to that effect.
- Investigate changes to the workplace placement system. The "broken-up" nature of placements in which students work a few hours or days at a time makes it hard for employers to gauge their skills/capabilities. It also diminishes student outcomes.
- Related to the immediately preceding, uncover each student's passion. If businesses are informed of why a student wants to enter the industry, they can tailor their work experience accordingly.
- Tell the story better when it comes to letting businesses know how they will benefit from having OP students do placements with them. OP should do a better job of promoting high-achieving students.
- Support international students with legal requirements of staying in NZ and transition from study to work.

> …we had a Polytech guy come in last week and all his chef jackets are all creased up, had pumpkin scratch on his hat, he didn't have the right shoes on, his pants are all creased and covered in stuff and that was his first impression (Interview 2, Lines 156-158).

> I think that you guys do a fantastic job, you've got a great facility there. I think more employers should be encouraged to understand what the Polytech are doing and the capabilities of what their students have and get involved (Interview 4, Lines 203-206).

> …some of the boys that I get to help, say from the University, half the time they are a lot better than some of the Polytech students – they just think more (Interview 6, Lines 138-139).

> … somebody who comes in to a kitchen environment that's completely shut off… it's definitely something that I can't deal with…and I think that is what is really good about the BCA programme…those kids, they know there is something more and there is always something more… (Interview 5, Lines 30-35).

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the unanimous endorsement of OP's learner capabilities framework by the seven interviewees indicates that the previously identified 25 capabilities are relevant to Food Design. Analysis of the interview transcripts suggests that learner capabilities should be leveraged to produce graduates exhibiting the personal qualities of passion for the food industry, willingness to learn, maturity/professionalism and initiative. Moreover, a number of specific industry recommendations for OP can be found in these interviews.

Product Design Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following document summarises and offers analysis of six interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's product design courses. These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP before moving on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews.

Themes emerged from the interviews both with regard to the LCF generally and the capabilities most valued by the interviewees. Ten capabilities previously identified by OP were seen as particularly important by the interviewees. There were also a number of other capabilities identified by interviewees that are not included in OP's previously compiled list. These are discussed in the "Further Findings" section. I group the aforementioned ten capabilities highlighted by interviewees into three broader categories in order to remain succinct. The ten capabilities were:

- Personal/professional practice
    - Demonstrates resilience
    - Reflects on performance and applies personal learning
    - Works independently
    - Practices ethically
    - Practices health and safety
- Interpersonal skills
    - Communicates effectively (verbal, written and visual)
    - Works in teams
    - Displays leadership
- Dealing with diversity
    - Displays cultural competence
    - Displays bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context

General comments about the Learner Capability Framework

All participants think the idea behind the LCF is very good and can potentially not only improve OP's graduates' employability but also strengthen the ties between OP and industry and workplaces.

> I think it's a very useful tool. I'm really pro the idea of actually, if we had a closer collaboration between the educational organisations and Otago Polytech and here and other industry players, then I think that's a really good thing (Interview 5, Lines 268-270).

However, an important point that several participants make is that they expect to have learner capabilities at a team level, rather than individually. This means that one person cannot, and should not, encompass all capabilities but, rather, that an entire team should strive to have all these capabilities between its members.

> I don't know how aspirational they feel. Sort of feels like a check-list of things that I should do or you know. I mean, they're quite ambitious. It would be amazing if everyone was like this all the time, but on another level. I'm not sure what's giving it that quality. That would be my main comment or question I think, is aspiration, and needs. To be a wonderful, amazing human being, it's helpful if we can, you know (Interview 1, Lines 105-110).

> Some of these things you don't expect to see the whole lot in one person, do you, that's what it boils down to. And you have to have some scope for saying, well, this is a strength you've got, how do we build around it? … if you have a whole organisation or team of non-writers, then it would become very high. Because you would be looking for someone that could do some good documenting perhaps (Interview 6, Lines 582-593).

Personal/Professional Practice

Demonstrates Resilience

As an extension of maturity, workers are expected to be resilient to work pressure, standing up to challenges, being able to overcome failure and dealing with personal difficulties.

> …in the work that we do, because it's all about designing something new or thinking out of the box, or working with really complex problems, to have personal resilience is really important…I think that's in how you respond to challenges and how you work your way through difficult situations and adversity (Interview 4, Lines 194-203).

Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning

A product designer is expected to be self-reflective and committed to constant learning. This is what makes a team improve. It also provides building blocks for creativity.

> …probably what you really want is for people to be able to self-evaluate in order to chart some sort of improvement against some criteria on these [the capabilities]. I think self-evaluation is a really interesting notion. It's one of the things that really sets a high performing team apart from others, is that they don't fall into that trap of thinking they're amazing when they're not or vice versa (Interview 1, Lines 138-143).

> Thinking creatively is like a top priority, but to do that, what I don't see here, is self-awareness. To think creatively for me, means that you are really comfortable and confident in yourself and you have that open mindset. So, that is something that we talk a lot about, is that open mindset versus fixed mindset (Interview 4, Lines 185-188).

Works Independently

Being able to work independently is very important, especially for designers, since many of them work freelance at certain points in their careers. Working independently means being self-driven, self-directed and organised.

> What we need is to have a meeting once a week or even once a fortnight and say this is what is happening, this is what is important, what are your feelings about where we going and then hopefully, they pick up on the critical and kind of figure out what they can do within that sort of general broad direction (Interview 6, Lines 18-21).

Practices Ethically

Ethical conduct is important but it need not be detached from reality or be seen to be rigid.

> …it's got to be aligned to values and done with good intention, because sometimes ethics can be held rigidly and actually prevent the very thing that you're trying to do. And we've had some ethics conversations with some researchers and if we follow their strict advice, we wouldn't talk to anyone affected by the issues we're working on. We've totally, absolutely need to practice ethically, but it needs to be done with those good qualities and it needs to be done with good intention (Interview 3, Lines 68-73).

Practices Health and Safety

> Health and Safety is incredibly important to us, because we spend a lot of time in the workshop as well as in the office, so we want people to be healthy and safe. We've got a responsibility as an employer that they are going to go home in one piece ... Maybe historically, some people have seen health and safety as a bit of a barrier to getting things done and what we really want is a really positive view around that, with us being a responsible employer, that we want them to be healthy and safe while at work. And that it should just be woven into how you approach something, and it's not a separate check box that you go through (Interview 2, Lines 110-121).

Interpersonal Skills

As mentioned above, designers work in a diverse environment, making their interpersonal skills extremely important.

Effective Communication (Verbal, Written and Visual)

A central aspect of Interpersonal skills is communication.

> For us, I don't think you can have the brilliant designer without the communication verbally and in writing and visually. I think that we're looking for that package, the full package (Interview 5, Lines 131-132).

In this regard, all types of communication seem to be equally important and valuable.

> …we are really looking for effective communicators. So when we are doing our recruitment process, the cover letter and the portfolio, are two really important parts of that. So, I guess in order to get your foot in the door, some of the most important things are around the visual and the written communication. Then just every day, it's just so important to be able to communicate (Interview 2, Lines 214-218).

Works in Teams

The most repeated required capability by interviewees was Works in Teams. Working in a team can also be seen as a combination of several lower-level capabilities, such as working independently, acting responsibly, being able to receive and provide feedback.

> I think to be a really effective team player, you have to be able to work independently and take some personal responsibility so that you can contribute well within the team and then go away and kind of do your bit to come back. They are sort of separate, but they work really well together (Interview 2, Lines 67-70).

> …team work is incredibly critical, only because there's really good research to show that trust is the foundation of any team and if you're going to reach a goal, you need to have a foundation of trust, so that you can then have critical conversation, so then you can develop confidence in each other, so that you can attain your goal, there's another level in there somewhere. But working in teams with us, is really important. We practice co-design, and our organisation is founded on smart people who want to do good, and we practice a really strong culture of commitment and contribution and learning (Interview 4, Lines 177-183).

Displays Leadership

Working in diverse teams, designers often need to take a leadership role, even when their position is not necessarily formalised as one. Leadership, in this sense, means assertiveness, effective communication of ideas, and confidence.

> …is an industrial designer in the way that we work, there's often one designer with a large group of engineers on a project. So, we talk about design leadership being really important at being able to again, effectively communicate ... good reporting, engineering, even if you're relatively junior, you're willing to speak up at meetings and feel confident, communicating what is important about the product … I don't know if it's so much leadership, as it is just effective communication and confidence and that kind of thing (Interview 2, Lines 174-193).

Dealing with Diversity

As mentioned, a designer's work environment is very often diverse in many ways. It may take a form of diversity in opinions, disciplines, backgrounds.

> … most of the time we are working as part of a project team with a lot of people from different backgrounds and different disciplines. A lot of them are mechanical engineers or technicians, marketing backgrounds, product management. So being able to communicate to a wide range of different people, is really important (Interview 2, Lines 16-20).

Cultural Competence and Bi-Cultural Proficiency

Some of these types of diversity have to do with culture. Here, cultural and bi-cultural competencies - including bilingual communication abilities - become crucial to the designer's work.

> Because we sell across a whole lot of different markets, it's really important to understand the different kind of nuances of how people interact with or interpret a product. So, it's probably one that we actually don't think being explicitly important, but if you kind of unpick it, it really is (Interview 2, Lines 48-51).

> …the values and the comfort with being in situations where you don't know all that's going on, but you can sit with that comfortably, I think is as important as having the skills or the knowledge of a language. I mean, I've seen people make mistakes in a cultural context, but if they do that with humility and curiosity and genuineness, it's easily forgiven. But if people think that they know how to be in a situation, because they might have got some knowledge, that's more offensive ... it's important to have some experience of being a minority, then this takes on a different meaning, than if you're always used to being in control and in the dominant group (Interview 3, Lines 50-63).

Further Findings

The interviewees offered commentary on a number of traits or abilities that they considered important in employees. As noted below, many of these overlap with the 25 capabilities previously identified by OP.

Personal Commitment and Passion

A good employee is one who is passionate about and committed to their work.

> …one other thing I think the Polytech is understanding and doing well too, is kind of giving students some passion for the projects. Because that is also incredibly important too. There is nothing more frustrating than feeling passionate for a product yourself or a company, and having people turn up that are only there to punch the clock and doing the bare minimum. I'm not saying that you want people that are slaves at work here all weekend and things, but it is nice when people, kind of, have some feeling for the product too (Interview 6, Lines 117-122).

Maturity

The first – and perhaps most important – capability participants mention revolves around personal maturity. Maturity encompasses here several existing capabilities such as Acting Responsibly. Additionally, maturity is seen as an ability to accommodate complexities with self-confidence and is contradicted with ego-driven behaviour, insistence on unrealistic or unacceptable goals.

> …a lot of creativity is linked with more of a kind of child-like ego state of exploration and naivety and wonder, you know. And then a lot of the skills that are in here, might be more in a parental ego state around ethics and problem solving, and critical thinking. And after a few years as a parent, adult, child model, then the adult is the spontaneous ego state in the middle and the goal is spontaneity, it's not to be sort of beige or control all the time, it's being creative, I can dip into my child, but when I need to make a hard decision or set a boundary, I can dip into my parent and come back to a stable centre, where I'm in control rather than getting triggered by different situations, either being very judgmental or curling up in a ball and waiting for it to go away (Interview 1, Lines 113-121).

> …what I see more and more in the work place and the work that we do, is an acceptance that it's not just about the work you do, but it's about the heart that you bring into something, it's about the softness that is sometimes required in a situation, it's about understanding the importance of language when dealing with different communities or contacts (Interview 4, Lines 268-272).

Resourcefulness

Closely related to problem solving and creativity, resourcefulness requires initiative.

> …it's important to be able to get back up from a challenging more adverse situations, but that's about being able to bounce back from adversity … Resourcefulness, enterprise, entrepreneurship, curiosity need to be fostered (Interview 3, Lines 126-128).

Time Management

> We'll come together, we'll have a stand up, then we'll go away and work on something for 30 minutes, and so that's a sprint, then you come back and how did we get on, what needs to happen now, great – another 60 minute sprint – it wasn't quite long enough, so let's have a bit longer this time. And just having some experience in that sort of way of using time (Interview 1, Lines 303-307).

Interdisciplinary Capacity

Designers work very often in diverse teams. This requires them to be able to understand and be able to engage with different paradigms and methodologies.

> The work that we're doing in design, is also at a crossroads of so many different methodologies, which is super exciting. For example, there is behavioural science, there's psychology, there is qualitative and quantitive research, there's design, there's …….. , there's cultural anthropology, innovation and all sorts of things, and to be able to handle that you need mental models to be able to sort through it all (Interview 4, Lines 229-233).

Ability to Document Work Processes

An important aspect of a work process is self-documentation. This is meant to ensure that not only the end-product will be the focus of the work but also the work process.

> …another thing that's pretty important, is being able to gel ideas. You know to me, an idea is only an idea, if it's at the hand waving stage, that's interesting, but you know when it reaches a white board, that's kind of better still. When it's a prototype that you can handle, it's excellent too. When it becomes a CAD model, that also very handy. But then it needs to be kind of digitally stored, and ideally you know, the process getting there is able to be stored as well. If that person is no longer available, when the question arises, you know, this has proven to be a little bit weak or needs to be improved, what we need to know about the history of this (Interview 6, Lines 78-84).

Empathy

Being able to design for other people requires understanding their point of view and needs which are imminently different than the ones of the designers. Empathy is the ability to adopt that point of view and design to those needs.

> Empathy is also really important ... it really comes down to being able to build empathy with, not just the person you're working with to understand their perspective, but with our end customer who could be on the other side of the world from you, maybe even meet them, and kind of understand who they are, is also important... (Interview 2, Lines 36-55).

Ability to Provide and Receive Feedback

Another important interpersonal capability is the ability to provide constructive feedback and, no less important, being able to receive feedback.

> And if they just sort of wax lyrical or raving about them, it's actually not that useful, you know. We want to see a balance, a critique you know. I still think the critique is the best tool we have for getting students comfortable with the idea of how to improve their work, it's not personal, and we all want this project to be as good as it can (Interview 1, Lines 368-371).

How to Teach Soft Skills

When asked how capabilities can be taught, most participants referred to trainings and upskilling they hold for their employees. These include periodic check-ins with employees, mentoring, shadowing experienced staff, workshops delivered by external providers and more. An important component in this upskilling process is reflective learning.

> We've got a learning and development role, I can't think of her exact title, based in Auckland and she's down in Dunedin quite regularly, every couple of weeks if not once a month, so they run a lot of internal courses. And she'll get external people in, so they just did one on effective business writing the other day, for example and they had some of the leadership team and some of their engineers in that, with an external person. And then they run other ones with the software that we use, that kind of stuff (Interview 2, Lines 279-284).

> When I was in my final year at [my organisation], we had part of a professional practice paper, we had to learn how to use Microsoft Projects. We had to do a Gantt chart, a sort of retrospective thing actually. We had to revisit the previous project and how you would approach it differently. But even for minor projects, within the ID team, where you use Microsoft Excel quite a lot for planning. We just literally blocked stuff out and what do I have to achieve this week. The other thing, it was just getting people to think about what is the prioritisation, what do I have to get done this week, what can I put off until next week, if I want this work to happen in six weeks' time, what do I have to be doing now to ensure that it's staying on track. And I think it is something that generally as young people, maybe at high school and stuff like that, you don't have to think about it. So, it is a bit of change in thought process. And some people are naturally quite good at it and some really struggle (Interview 2, Lines 144-154).

How Can Soft Skills be Assessed by Employers

Participants suggest many different ways for capability assessment, ranging from software such as StrengthsFinder, through student portfolios to assignments and presentations carried out by candidates.

> …one thing that I can imagine would go / or could go in a portfolio, are some examples of people giving each other feedback, you know, here's how other students have evaluated themselves and here's how the student has evaluated another student or something like that. So that would give some sense of their ability to be honest, but also to be polite or be constructive (Interview 1, Lines 359-362).

> …a show casing of a couple of projects that have been worked on, displaying, because we haven't got into the visual, it could be an example of a project completed, so it could be a presentation of that, the thought process behind it, verbally and then supported with visual, written back story and scoping out of the project, from thought concept through to completion, would be certainly as aspect of showing one's competence (Interview 5, Lines 80-84).

Engineering Technology Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of nine interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's engineering technology courses. Three interviews were not recorded. In these instances, notes taken by OP staff at the time of an interview were used, rather than interview transcriptions. These nine interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

Interviewees were generally supportive of OP's Learner Capability Framework initiative and praised OP for its work in attempting to develop rounded graduates. Interviewees approved of the 25 capabilities identified by OP.

> Oh, I'm happy to endorse it, it's critical as far as I'm concerned, it's critical to have these capabilities prior to coming into the work place (Interview 6, Lines 322-323).
>
> There's quite a lot of good stuff here. I mean if someone came to us with all these capabilities, we would be pretty happy (Interview 5, Lines 210-211).

The commentary offered by all nine interviewees indicates that employers are attentive to the capabilities potential employees possess.

> So, probably the soft skills, you know in my mind, are a lot more important than the actual technical side of it…whether they specifically know about, you know technically about what we want, is not quite as much of a concern if we feel they are able to learn…
> (Interview 7, Lines 80-85).

While supportive of the LCF, there was notable skepticism with regard to the ability of an online tool to convey information on graduate capabilities to employers. Please see the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Three broad sets of capabilities, and two specific capabilities, were seen as particularly important. These were:

- Communicative skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
- Thought processes
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Interpersonal skills
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Demonstrates resilience
- Reflects on performance and applies personal learning

Communicative/Interpersonal Skills

As in other interview clusters, communicative skills were seen as important. Verbal and written communication received a lot of attention, while visual communication did not make any top-ten list.

> …in any large organisation having the ability to communicate is essential (Interview 1, Line 28).

> …a lot of what we do is actually committed to paper or some form of digital media and so you need to be able to actually communicate effectively – write it down so that people understand it (Interview 3, Lines 102-104).

> You know communication in general is important, but certainly good writing skills. That writing in complete sentences, the basics. Definitely no text speak (Interview 5, Lines 11-12).

> …you've got to be able to have a conversation and then be able to actually listen (Interview 6, Lines 58-59).

Thought Processes

As in other interview clusters, critical thought and problem-solving skills were, at times, linked by participants. Unlike in other interview clusters, creative thought was not discussed in conjunction with critical thought and problem-solving. Creative thought appeared in only one top-ten list.

> …we're designing systems and a lot of that is problem solving when we're coming out with ways to deal with, how to build something or how to make something work (Interview 9, Lines 60-62).

> …never runs according to clock work, and sometimes I'm an advocate for asking the team, how do we solve this problem, not just relying on the Foreman, I throw it wide open and say, what can we do to fix this problem? (Interview 6, Lines 96-99).

> …what we do is solve problems on an everyday basis and being able to think through those problems. We hire students for their thinking critical skills and really that's a fundamental of engineering, so it's pretty important (Interview 5, Lines 67-69).

Interpersonal Skills

All interviewees included either Works in Teams or Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour in their top-ten list.

> It's about how you feel about and treat other people, it's also about how you feel about and treat yourself, because these things are inter-related (Interview 1, Lines 130-131).

> …almost everything we do here involves more than one person and often several people all working together and they need to feel comfortable working in teams (Interview 3, Lines 61-63).

> …it's rare that someone will work by themselves the entire time and if they do, they're doing something wrong, so they've got to be able to work in a team and work well with others… (Interview 5, Lines 78-80).

Demonstrates Resilience

Numerous interviewees spoke about the need for recent graduates to display resilience in the face of problems or set-backs.

> The resilience part of it I see as quite important for anyone in any role really. Times get hard and be able to work your way through that one way or another (Interview 7, Lines 148-150).

> Someone who sort of their head goes down as soon as there is a slight bit of adversity, is not really going to cut it in the normal commercial environment. So, they need to be willing to accept the fact that it won't always be plain sailing, but you need to be resilient enough to rise above it (Interview 3, Lines 146-149).

> …resilience is about persevering when a job is hard and getting to the other side, having that confidence in yourself to be able to keep on pushing… if you're calm when things are stressful, then that will help others to remain calm and effective and work well and it will help your relationships and so forth. Sometimes relationships can be damaged in those situations where you require resilience (Interview 1, Lines 166-178).

Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning

Although only four interviewees included Reflects on Performance and Applies Personal Learning in their top-ten lists, a willingness to learn was discussed by additional interviewees.

> …willing to learn and extend themselves beyond their comfort zones, to new skills and new areas (Interview 4, Lines 22-23).

> …we've got an age of people that think they know everything and we have to actually, you know, remind them that they don't, they're still learning (Interview 6, Lines 23-24).

Other Relevant Findings

There were a number of other characteristics that interviewees sought that are, perhaps, not covered by capabilities in their entirety.

- Most notably, an appropriate "attitude" was discussed by multiple interviewees. The attitude described seems to be one of maturity and professionalism:
    - We're looking for people which have got the right attitude, so they're actually going to come to work, turn up to work, do a day's work, they're reliable, it's about reliability. We can change how people do things if they've got the right attitude (Interview 6, Lines 16-18).
- Confidence was also discussed, typically in the context of needing to be able to ask for help when required. Mistakes in the industry can be costly, and young employees need to be able to signal when they are out of their depth. Confidence was also associated with a willingness to voice one's opinions.

On the matter of international graduates, English language skills was the most commonly cited requirement. Familiarity with NZ culture and legalities around visas and knowledge of NZ engineering code were also mentioned.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, cover letters, references, academic record/qualifications, interview performance, the applicant's social media pages, trial periods on site, and the applicant's personal life. Interviewees were particularly interested to hear applicants talk about past experiences to elicit information on capabilities such as interpersonal behaviour or problem-solving skills. Moreover, the point of initial contact with applicants is important. Are they punctual? Are they well presented? Do they look you in the eye when conversing?

As in other interview clusters, work experience (or simply demonstrable efforts to gain experience) and participation in extra-curricular community activities (e.g. sports or volunteer work) were valued by employers.

Potential for an Online Tool

There was notable skepticism regarding the benefits of an online tool conveying graduates' capabilities. Skepticism stemmed from 1) questions of how such an online tool could appropriately measure/quantify capabilities, 2) the belief that interpersonal communication was a better indicator of capabilities.

> I wouldn't see it being beneficial…I will look at what they've done. To be honest, it's the professional conversation we're going to have with them that makes or breaks that person. So, they've got to produce that evidence themselves, look me in the eye and I'll ask them the most simple questions around, why did you apply for this job and I want the answer verbally to tell me why they applied for the job… (Interview 6, Lines 136-140).

> I would say pretty low value. We want the candidate to work and tell us. We don't want to have to refer to a tool and I would say, probably I would be surprised if we even referred to it, but that candidate should be able to tell us. If that tool is helpful for developing the candidate's skills ahead of time and preparing them properly for an interview or to give then an indication on what and how to develop themselves professionally, then it's good value…But, as an employer I would say next to nothing. What we would ask for is a CV and a writing example and we want to meet the candidate, we want to see how personal they are and how they explain themselves, how they think on the spot (Interview 5, Lines 119-126).

> Look it totally depends on the tool. Like I'm just going to always be sceptical of an online tool that purports to somehow report on the soft skills of the student. If there is something that's truly effective behind it, then that could be really good (Interview 1, Lines 230-232).

This is not to say that there was not any support for an online tool. However, on multiple occasions interviewees noted that even if beneficial, such a tool would only play a complementary role in the recruitment process.

> It will be just another data point within the process of hiring someone. I don't think I'd use it and go, I'm hiring that person because of that score. It'd be another data point in amongst the interview and the CV and the academic marks and all that extra curricular stuff that I was talking about (Interview 4, Lines 304-307).

OP Practice: Recommendations

Interviewees offered a number of recommendations for OP practice.

- OP should encourage students to get any type of work experience, even non-industry. Being able to demonstrate attempts to get experience is important also.
    - OP should encourage field-trips to engineering sites to increase familiarity with the industry: I mean I know they do it, where field trips from your Polytech out to sites - it's hard now with zero harm and health and safety and that, but sometimes having those field trips is huge to those guys to actually put into practice (Interview 6, Lines 239-241).
- Additional skills that students should be encouraged to develop include solid note-taking skills and the acquisition of a full driver's license. Systematically recording notes about a job is an important skill, as is the ability to drive vehicles from site to site.
- One interviewee states that, with regard to technical skills, new employees often struggle most with structures and hydraulics. An implied suggestions, perhaps, to further equip OP students in this regard.
- Multiple interviewees suggested that OP was in a better position to develop some capabilities more than others, raising questions of what the role of a tertiary institute is. Problem-solving, communication skills and the ability to work in teams were seen as easier to teach, for example, than acting responsibly and personal resilience.
    - Some of these others are harder to develop at school… a lot of these are developed over time in a profession… (Interview 5, Lines 201-204).
- One interviewee suggested that students not just be graded on capabilities by OP staff but, in order to help them understand what capabilities look like, conduct (and receive) peer gradings on other students after having worked with those students in groups for an extended period.

Finally, multiple interviewees reported on their experiences with OP and its graduates. These tended to be anecdotes used as examples, rather than commentary on OP and its graduates generally. While mixed, feedback tended towards the positive.

> Basically everyone here in the office is an ex Otago Polytech graduate. So, we can only speak highly of them all (Interview 9, Lines 350-351).

> I would just say that in all my dealings with the Polytech, you guys seem to be on the right path and it makes sense to me. I like the philosophy that you've got and about what you are trying to achieve (Interview 1, Lines 334-336).

Information Technology Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 11 interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's information technology courses. Two of these interviews were not recorded. In these instances the interviewer's notes, rather than interview transcriptions, were analysed. These 11 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

Interviewees were mixed with regard to the degree of endorsement offered to the Learner Capability Framework. In more than one interview questions as to whether the interviewee would validate the LCF were not conclusively answered. In general, however, interviewees recognised the importance of graduate capabilities, not just technical skills, and their commentary suggests that the 25 capabilities identified by OP are relatively comprehensive. Interviewees were sceptical of the role an online tool might have in communicating the LCF to employers, as is discussed in the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below.

Perhaps a reflection of a multi-faceted industry, many interviewees stipulated that the most desirable capabilities were hard to determine at an industry level but, rather, would vary from role to role. This notion was more prevalent in these interviews than those from other interview clusters.

Also more evident than in other interview clusters was the grouping of certain capabilities by interviewees. Numerous interviewees explicitly grouped capabilities while determining their top ten or excluded some capabilities due to believing that those that had been excluded were essentially accounted for by another capability they were including in their top ten. To put it simply, the overlapping nature of the 25 capabilities was a theme in these interviews.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Three broad sets of capabilities, and one specific capability, were seen as particularly important. These are:

- Communicative/interactive skills
    - Communicates effectively in writing
    - Communicates effectively verbally
    - Works in teams
    - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Thought processes
    - Thinks creatively
    - Thinks critically
    - Solves problems
- Professional practice
    - Practices ethically
    - Acts responsibly
    - Reflects on performance and applies personal learning
- Demonstrates digital competence

Communicative/Interpersonal Skills

As in other interview clusters, communicative and interpersonal skills were seen as important. While other clusters had tended to be less concerned with the mode of communication, the interviews analysed here indicate a strong preference for verbal and written communicative skills. While present in other interview clusters, the relationship between communicative capabilities and interpersonal capabilities was more evident in these 11 interviews.

> Obviously you've got to be listening to the users and to what their needs are, and if you are visiting them you're not being standoffish and crossing your arms in front of them, displaying the right body language ... there to help them (Interview 2, Lines 96-98).

> …emotional intelligence, the ability to be able to talk with people and understand people, those softer skills are really important (Interview 4, Lines 45-46).

> …to be able to communicate with your team mates, with your managers, with your customers, with everybody so if you can't communicate with those people then you're not going to get far… (Interview 3, Lines 275-277).

As in other clusters, the ability to work in teams was highly valued.

> …you really need to be a team player, there's not as much room for the hero as there used to be, it's more about the team and how we can all succeed together… (Interview 4, Lines 43-44).

Thought Processes

As in other interview categories, critical thought, creative thought and problem-solving capabilities were viewed as intertwined. These capabilities were viewed as integral to IT itself and, therefore, highly desirable.

> So 'solving problems' for us is very critical, it's right up there, it's what we do, your bread and butter (Interview 8, Lines 128-129).

> …pretty much most of the job is how to think about a problem and solve it (Interview 5, Lines 83-84).

> …thinking creatively and critically is very important…How do they think critically about something and work that through in small bites to get an outcome… (Interview 7, Lines 91-95).

Professional Practice

Ethical practice and responsible conduct were seen as overlapping and as vital in the IT sector. Such conduct was spoken about both with regard to the basics of being a trust-worthy employee and specific aspects of IT jobs, such as dealing with sensitive/confidential client information.

> …if we can't rely on you, if you don't have integrity, you're wrong here, definitely not fitting here into the team (Interview 6, Lines 72-73).

> Ethics is pretty big, I want to be able to trust the people I'm hiring, if they're ethically sound I will be able to let them do their job which kind of ties into 'works independently' (Interview 5, Lines 95-97).

> …ethics is a big one for our industry… we work on a lot of internal systems for companies so I guess keeping that confidentiality and stuff is incredibly important… (Interview 3, Lines 177-182).

Also important with regard to an employee's practice was a willingness to learn and improve.

> We don't really want to add people to the team that want to just grind away and then not getting anywhere, if everyone gets better we all get better (Interview 5, Lines 110-112).

> …really, really, really important in people, without it they're just not going to grow, that's the most important thing in the job, that they continue to learn (Interview 4, Lines 147-149).

Demonstrates Digital Competence

Given the nature of the industry in question, digital competence was a recurring theme. However, it was usually seen as a technical skill with this interview cluster and at times excluded from an interviewee's top-ten list for this reason.

> …in software development you would hope that's kind of implied (Interview 3, Lines 214-215).

> …that's a given, if you want to work in IT and you don't have digital competence, sorry, you know, (laughs), that's a base skill… (Interview 6, Lines 127-128).

Other Relevant Findings

- Preponderance of males in the industry.
- English language skills were typically the only specifically cited requirement for international students. Familiarity with NZ culture mentioned at times too.
- Noted that the industry can be demanding.
- "Attitude" was a word often used to describe what the interviewees sought – the right attitude. How much do the concepts of capabilities and attitude overlap?
- Numerous interviewees stated that an important quality within IT was a willingness to share knowledge; not to be a "knowledge hoarder". It was stated that this was not fully captured by the present 25 capabilities.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, cover letters, references (including personal discussions with OP staff), personal presentation, psychometric testing and interview performance. There was a recurring sentiment that face-to-face interaction was ultimately required to assess soft skills, which feeds into the following "Potential for an Online Tool" section. Interviewees were particularly interested in:

- Hearing a graduate discuss previous experiences of working in teams.
- Evident problem-solving skills:
    - …if they get past the first interview we go into a team session around some whiteboarding pseudoproblems and we know very quickly (Interview 7, Lines 144-145).
- Personal fit -
    - …the thing that sways most of us first off is the actual interview because you meet someone, you think, 'no, I don't like them', or 'I don't think they'd fit', or whatever (Interview 1, Lines 295-297).
- Why the applicant wants the job? Give a good reason.
- Communicative skills via interview and cover letter.

Potential for an Online Tool

There was notable skepticism regarding the potential for an online tool to appropriately communicate a graduate's capabilities to employers. Commentary on the online tool included:

- It might be helpful in narrowing the applicant pool but could not replace face-to-face interaction:
    - …probably wouldn't direct us to a yes/no for someone, we would always prefer the face to face experience… (Interview 8, Lines 333-334).
- It could, perhaps, help differentiate between members of a certain OP class, but it might not help compare OP grads against other applicants, as they may come from organisational backgrounds that do not offer something like the online tool.
- A more accurate appraisal could be acquired in other ways, such as contacting OP staff with whom the employer had a relationship:
    - … I think it [the online tool] would make it harder. We're looking at the person not what they can put forward as far as documents and things. We know, often I'll ring someone at the polytech and say, we're looking at this person, what did they do for a thing, project, how did that go, what's their work ethic like, things like that, so we will do that behind the scenes, it's not what you know but who you know, we'll ask the questions up front to make sure we get the right people (Interview 7, Lines 156-160).

    - No, it's just another thing I'd have to log in to and look at, if I've got 100 applicants and three of them are on that, that's another barrier I would think to looking and stuff, if candidates can't put themselves forward in a traditional way, I understand we've got lots of millennials and they want to do things online but it's time consuming for businesspeople to go and do those things (Interview 7, Lines 260-263).
- It could create overlap in info, e.g. same info online is included in CV, and states that face-to-face interaction will be required to determine graduates' capability to fit with a specific team in any case.

At times it was noted that the potential for such a tool was hard to gauge without a deeper understanding of what it would look like.

- …whether it would be useful would depend on how good it turned out to be I suppose…it depends what they actually meant…I don't know what they've really got in mind (Interview 1, Lines 341-354).

Despite the above, some interviewees were positive.

- It's more about that sort of diligence around understanding the person to a deep level for me and how they are going to fit in…so if you can create a profile or supply an employer with another dimension of information that's different from one of the ones we've already mentioned, that gives us more insight into the people we're talking to, that creates a lubricant between us and hopefully that's a positive thing (Interview 4, Lines 291-296).
- I reckon it would be really good. I think it would be quite helpful, having employed quite a few BIT graduates, it would be good to be able to go in and have a look online (Interview 2, Lines 245-246).

An explicit suggestion was that at least some of the material provided by the online tool should be commentary or evaluation by lecturers, rather than fully student created content.

- I guess evidence of their achievements and what they can do technically from my perspective, any public speaking type stuff, written examples of stuff could be quite good, samples of their writing for their written communication and their oral communication would be quite good (Interview 2, Lines 264-266).

OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations

Throughout the course of the 11 interviews analysed here, interviewees offered a number of reflections on graduates they have employed (not always OP graduates). These included:

- Suggestion that students coming through do not have good communication skills:
    - …I've actually spent a day like interviewing every 15 minutes throughout the day, practically six hours probably, every 15 minutes doing an interview and out of it I can count on my hand the number of people that I can actually understand verbally, they're very much struggling to understand full sentences and that I think is a big hurdle for them, I know they might be brilliant technically, and that's great, but without communication, whether that be verbal or written, but without communication our whole system fails because that's an integral part of how we work… (Interview 8, Lines 349-355).
    - … there's an aversion to using the phone which is silly because often you can spend 15 minutes typing up an email and you can achieve the same thing in 15 seconds on the phone ... typing an email, three hours waiting for a reply, and 15 minutes of their time typing up a reply when it could be a 30 second phone call (Interview 3, Lines 198-202).

- Claims that graduates do not demonstrate professionalism:
    - …first impressions count, how you're dressed, how you're presented, how you hand shake, did you arrive on time, all those sorts of things are the normal stuff we expect in business that a lot of grads don't understand. Especially the millennials you know, they want to turn up in sneakers and jeans and stuff but it's not a sneakers and jeans place. Especially not at an interview (Interview 7, Lines 139-143).
    - In the real world it's not quite the same, you've actually got to plan ahead, manage your time effectively and know how you are tracking against that time…I find a lot of new graduates or incoming graduates struggle with it a little bit (Interview 3, Lines 22-27).
- Multiple interviewees noted that there is quite some variation in OP BIT grads with regard to the capabilities highlighted by the LCF.

Interviewees also offered suggestions to improve the employability of OP graduates:

- OP as an institution, and its IT students, should connect with businesses during their studies:
    - I think that involving businesses during the people's courses would be quite good… the connection's disappeared, I'm not sure why… as a business we're also interested in fostering local connections and keeping people in Dunedin, there's a group of software houses, we all know each other and talk to each other and we don't want to fight over the same people, it's about how do we keep those people in Dunedin and give them good jobs. We don't want all graduates in our house but if we can spread them around then they get good learning and Dunedin gets to keep the skills which is for us incredibly important…it's hard to get staff, being able to get quality graduates and having that contact pre-interview is very important I think…We like going to events and seeing stuff that's going on but we have to know about it, so it's about that connection between business and institutions that we need (Interview 7, Lines 229-253).
- OP grads should be prepared for standard job interview questions:
    - …the sort of questions we ask they haven't thought about before… (Interview 8, Lines 323-324).
- Additional (or reinvigorated) focuses for OP's BIT course could include hardware, customer service and trouble-shooting skills:
    - …I guess it's the stereotype of IT, that they sit in a dark dungeon, hide away and we need to break that… (Interview 2, Lines 383-384).
- One interviewee noted that what OP is hoping to achieve with the LCF sounds like SFIA but for broader soft skills than IT skills. SFIA could be an interesting model to look at.

Finally, interviewees offered praise for OP and its graduates:

- One interviewee stated that they have a long-standing relationship with OP and remarked that they value OP graduates above institutions with which they are unfamiliar.
- Another stated: I still really think that Otago Polytech produces amazing students…And I always have, like, as high a quality as any student that I've interviewed, and we have a lot of Otago graduates in our team now, currently there's four of us (Interview 4, Lines 364-369).

Midwifery Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 14 interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's midwifery courses. These 14 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

The commentary of all 14 interviewees indicates that non-technical skills, or capabilities, are recognised as an important determinant of employability within the midwifery profession. Capabilities are vital in a midwifery role and employers are attuned to determining applicants' capabilities during recruitment processes.

> …it is really easy to see that they have done their hours, they've had their births, they've passed their exams, all those kinds of things, but actually what you are looking at is the full picture of someone, most of the people I've interviewed are great but you do have to kind of scratch below the surface and just see what else is there… (Interview 2, Lines 62-65).

Correspondingly, the commentary of these 14 interviewees supports OP's efforts in developing the LCF, although the question of endorsing the LCF was often not put to interviewees explicitly. Regarding the online tool that may eventually communicate aspects of the LCF to employers, interviewees were mixed in their views. There was some questioning of how valuable such a tool would be. This is discussed further in the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below.

Interviewee commentary suggests that the 25 capabilities identified by OP are relatively comprehensive. Multiple interviewees indicated their approval of OP's list of 25. Capabilities that interviewees spoke of prior to being shown OP's list often corresponded with capabilities on the list. There were rare occasions on which interviewees suggested that an important capability had been omitted from OP's list. Where this is the case, it is highlighted below.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Four broad sets of capabilities were seen as particularly important. These were:

- Communicative/interactive skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Thought processes
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Personal/professional practice
  - Practices ethically/Practices health and safety
  - Demonstrates resilience/Displays work life balance
  - Reflects on performance and applies personal learning
- Cultural understanding/awareness
  - Displays cultural competency

Communicative/Interpersonal Skills

Communicative and interpersonal skills were seen as paramount for midwives. With regard to communicative skills, verbal communication was most highly prioritised, followed by written communication. With regard to verbal communication, the multitude of parties that midwives must communicate with was highlighted; the woman receiving care, her whānau, immediate team members and other healthcare professionals. The role of communicating information to women in care so that they might make the most informed decisions around giving birth was emphasised. With regard to written communication, there was a strong emphasis on the ability to produce comprehensive yet concise notes and documentation.

> I think 'communicating effectively verbally' is important especially when you are working with big groups or there is an emergency and you're going to have a whole lot of people running into the emergency and you need to be able to say what has happened, what you are doing and what needs to be done, so that's quite key, and also be able to talk to women and explain exactly their options so all that kind of stuff, kind of really important (Interview 2, Lines 216-221).

> Communication is key for me, communication, transparency about information has to be clearly given to the women in a verbal way…, it's a major, major thing, communication, and I think communication is one of the main things that comes out in complaints from consumers, that you know, has failed in the relationship between a midwife and a mother (Interview 6, Lines 304-310).

> …if it's not documented it didn't happen, as they say, will it stand up in a court of law, so that is really important, we are moving towards digital, possibly, maybe not in my midwifery lifetime, no written notes, but again it's for that handover of care, if that's what you're doing that needs to be documented (Interview 10, Lines 169-173).

Effective interpersonal behaviour speaks to an ability to resolve or diffuse conflict (one interviewee suggested that conflict resolution could be its own capability). This capability was also linked to relationship building and getting along with others.

> …how to deal with conflict, especially if you are the only midwife on the ward and there is some type of conflict that goes on, you still need to be able to provide care to that woman so how to deal with that and how to appropriately kind of display that effective interpersonal behaviour (Interview 12, Lines 103-106).

> …if conflict arises just confront it head on, be very honest about why is this not working for you… just address it straight away (Interview 6, Lines 361-364).

> …we work with people, we work with women and a lot of other colleagues, there's a huge multidisciplinary team, we have to be polite and respectful because being able to do that engenders trust and you need that with women, you need that with your colleagues and I think that is one of the key things that you need in midwifery (Interview 2, Lines 197-200).

The ability to work in a team was linked to effective interpersonal behaviour, and both team work and interpersonal behaviour were linked to an ability to build trust and collaborate. Moreover, working in a team is simply a reality of how the field operates.

> …in our unit we do work in a team, it's a small team so we all have to get on, kind of building that trust and collaboration with our team members is really important… working together with different personalities can be difficult but it's quite good if people can understand where other people are coming from (Interview 12, Lines 119-134).

> …the 'working in teams' thing which I've chosen is particularly important again from our community's perspective as we have a reliance on working quite closely with people in PHOs and also across the community in NGOs and various other things, that ability to maintain relationships and be able to work collaboratively is important… (Interview 7, Lines 248-252).

> …when the emergency bell goes you need every person there to be able to work as a team and to resolve the problem and support each other so team work is extremely important (Interview 14, Lines 486-488).

Thought Processes

As in other interview categories, critical thought and problem-solving were viewed as intertwined. These capabilities were thought of both in regard to helping patients with specific issues and helping to improve an organisation's wider systems/practices. Critical thought and problem-solving were linked to independent working, as those who have these skills do not require micro-management. It was, however, often noted that new graduates should know when they need to ask for help in resolving an issue.

> Problem solving as well, it's great when we are in leadership roles it's great for people to identify things that, or processes that might not be working so well but actually to come with the solution is so important, you know, and it's actually owing it (Interview 11b, Lines 111-113).

> So the critical thinking, the problem solving, all of those things is really important in our job because often you are bringing in a bunch of symptoms and you are trying to figure out what is actually going on so it is important to be able to look at all areas of that problem and be able to solve it so thinking critically is important (Interview 13, Lines 187-190).

Personal/Professional Practice

A lot of what might be considered value laden words were used to describe the ideal practice of midwives. A generosity of spirit, integrity and the ability to provide women-centred care were mentioned. In fact, one interviewee suggested that generosity of spirit be considered an additional capability. Interviewees were, thus, interested in graduates' ethos/philosophy on birth. Ethical practice and ensuring health and safety tied into these considerations.

> …again this is coming back to transparency and trust, I mean for me trust is the key component of the partnership between a midwife and a mum and if she is in any way practicing unethically and the mum picks up on it then it would just fail the whole relationship (Interview 6, Lines 314-317).

> …we need midwives that are going to be broadly focused on health and safety because they need to understand that they have a duty of care, not only to the women but to their colleagues and anybody that comes into the service and they have a personal responsibility that if there is any breach of that or they are concerned about it that they are part of the solution and it is part of their duty to flag it… (Interview 3, Lines 216-220).

One interviewee noted that there may be systemic issues that make the upholding of ethical and safety standards difficult.

> …we wouldn't be tolerating the kind of system we are working in at the moment if we were practicing ethically, all of us are compromised every day by the quality of care we are providing and the systemic classism, racism, like we work in an institutionally corrupt system and I feel compromised every day and I don't know that I am able to do that very effectively, I'm aware of having to make difficult choices for the long term, but I need to know that the workforce has a conscience and understands basic moral values, and again I've got some midwives who are not displaying that at all and I'm finding that really difficult and really upsetting (Interview 3, Lines 203-210).

Resilience was seen as imperative to lasting in the midwifery profession. This was commonly linked to an ability to maintain an appropriate work-life balance.

> 'Resilience' is something I think you very much need for the first year of practice because there is going to be quite a roller coaster, of a year learning and thinking you're great and then not and so, and being knocked down and picking yourself up again, and knocked down and picking yourself up again, all year (Interview 5, Lines 145-149).

> I put that in there because it is hard especially as a new graduate coming into a busy place, it is really hard and also that step up from being a student where you work with a midwife and you don't have that responsibility and you step up and suddenly you are responsible and that is a big jump for a new graduate I feel and they have, they can never really be ready for it because I think it is quite experiential… (Interview 2, Lines 221-226).

Moreover, those who reflected on their practice and apply lessons from past situations are likely to be more resilient, as they adapt. Reflection on one's own performance is likely to lead to improvement in professional practice generally.

> …you learn from that reflecting, I think that is important for all midwives, but it is particularly important in that first year, and is going to add to that roller coaster and then building the resilience and all of that (Interview 5, Lines 169-171).

> …for me someone who is still learning and going to workshops, and finding out new information about midwifery and birth and applying it to their practice is someone I would love to have as my midwife and who can reflect on past performance and be honest and open about it, not feel guilty but just be transparent about it (Interview 6, Lines 341-345).

Cultural Understanding/Awareness

Many interviewees noted that due to the diverse base of patients a midwife may deal with, and the need for patients to receive treatment in a way that is acceptable to them, midwives need to be aware of cultural difference. Relatedly, the midwifery workforce would gain from additional representation of minority ethnic groups. Although cultural competence was often the capability interviewees selected to their top-ten list, the commentary often referenced matters that concern bicultural proficiency. It was noted in multiple interviews that, despite acknowledged efforts by OP, more needs to be done to increase graduates' (not solely those from OP) bicultural proficiency.

> …you've always got to be able to bring those [cultural] factors into your care that you give, and the understanding, and it will be able to help with your relationship building so without that, you've got nothing, you've got to be able to relate to all kinds of women, no matter who, and put your personal views aside… (Interview 14, Lines 511-514).

> …we have a lot of different cultures in our community and Māori are one of those cultures that I think it is important for us to understand, I know that the polytech [sic] do a lot of work around Turanga Kaupapa[1] and Treaty of Waitangi, decision making and that kind of thing and I think that is really important for our new graduates to be aware of, that Turanga Kaupapa (Interview 12, Lines 90-94).

> …that's kind of a given for me, it's being able to understand different contexts of people, everyone is so, so different, people's situations are different, and not just you know, when I talk about culture it's not just ethnicity, but you're talking gender, you're talking sexuality… understand where people are coming from and not being judgemental about people's situations, that kind of thing… (Interview 8,125-130).

Other Relevant Findings

- Multiple interviewees noted that while passion is desired, new graduates often attempt to undertake too much in their first year. There needs to be a self-awareness of their limitations both with regard to skill and maintaining an appropriate work-life balance.
- The shortage of midwives, especially from minority groups, was mentioned in multiple instances.
- Numerous interviewees noted that certain capabilities were additionally valuable in rural clinics where often teams are smaller and resources are less. In particular, the ability to work independently, communicate effectively and reflect on one's performance are important.
- One interviewee suggested that there is a division between core and LMC midwives, with core midwives being seen as secondary citizens.

[1] Standards of Practice - New Zealand College of Midwives - Turanga Kaupapa are a reference and source of support for midwives, wahine and whānau and were developed by Nga Maia in 2006.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, cover letters, references, personal presentation, placement reports and interview performance. Interviewees were particularly interested in:

- Conducting behavioural/scenario-based interviews. These would typically try and elicit information on a graduate's ability for team work, conflict resolution and reflection on past practice.
- Why the applicant wants the job. Employers hope to see that the applicant has given thought to the role, how they could contribute to it and why they want it. Similarly, employers like to see that an applicant has an idea of their desired career trajectory and will take responsibility for professional development.
- Work and/or life experience indicating maturity.
- Seeing that a graduate has an understanding of their own kaupapa or philosophy. Why do they want to be a midwife? How do they understand birth and a midwife's role in the journey?
- Informing themselves as to whether a graduate has kept abreast of health and related political issues.
- Understanding whether a graduate has familiarity with the community in which they would be working. This would allow them to inform those they care for about other relevant services within the community.
- Self-awareness. Employers want to see that a graduate is aware of the areas in which they need to improve.

Potential for an Online Tool

Feedback on a potential online tool to assist employers in evaluating OP graduates' capabilities was mixed. Around half of the interviewees would value such a tool in the recruitment process. The other half felt that it would not be useful or useful only as a secondary resource to recruitment methods such as interviewing and reviewing CVs.

> No, I don't [think an online tool would be helpful], because I think it's all, it's about the person, it's not about what they project onto, because some people have insight and some people don't (Interview 2, Lines 293-294).

> It's quite hard because I mean, I can meet you verbally as the potential new graduate and I can go tick, tick, tick, tick, the philosophies align, the business plan is aligned, everything is aligned but it is in chatting to you or knowing you and what your peers say about you that is going to say whether you have that X-factor or not…you've got to be the right fit for that group, you can have the perfect CV and everything but still not get the job, so from the point of view of capabilities for me, that X-factor can't be named as a capability (Interview 5, Lines 217-224).

> Yeah, I don't see how it wouldn't be useful, if I think the more opportunities we can give people for choice around information the better and I think the way that this is displayed kind of graphical is quite helpful, there's lots of white space [referring to the material on the LCF interviewees were given], there's some nice sort of simple graphics there and some use of colour, yeah I don't see that it wouldn't be helpful, for sure (Interview 3, Lines 292-295).

> I personally would find that really beneficial, I would certainly use it… I don't think it would be more arduous, we don't take many on do we… when you are doing your reference checking you tend to pick up on things like that [problematic behaviour] and you can get an idea of where that's going so this just adds an extra level to that, if you were concerned about somebody then you could always just check (Interview 11a, Lines 239-271).

At times the interviewer asked whether employers would use a similar method in job interviews to that used in the interviews analysed here; employers asking applicants which capabilities they felt they most valued or possessed. Responses were positive.

OP Practice: Recommendations

Throughout the course of the 14 interviews analysed here interviewees offered a number of reflections on graduates (not necessarily of OP) that they have had experiences with, midwifery as a profession and how OP might better train its midwifery students.

Regarding the standard of graduates, interviewees generally reflected positively. Having said this, mention was made that improvements could be made with regard to critical thinking, reflecting on practice, implementing culturally appropriate practice in the workplace and working with others. Recommendations of strengthening these areas were often made after acknowledging the otherwise good performance of graduates.

> …the graduates that come out that have graduated, I mean they are all amazingly confident, we've had, another group on the coast, they've had a new graduate this year as well and she's been amazing and slotted in nicely, and they come out really competent and it is just supporting them in their confidence I think, treating them as equals and as colleagues and not kind of making them feel that, so that they can then develop these, further develop all of these characteristics; yeah, I enjoy working with them, it's good (Interview 8, Lines 314-320).

> I think that the graduates come out with really solid background in cultural competency and feminist theory and the role of women and partnership, but I do think the reality of practice is just not, and I don't know how you can teach them on an undergraduate programme, because you learn it when you are in practice, it's the biggest learning of all, yeah, that jump from student to actually you are now responsible (Interview 4, Lines 224-228).

> …the ones that do come through are pretty good actually… there is kind of this theme coming through of people just wanting to work their own, everything revolves around them and their work-life balance-y type thingy which is fine, you've got to have a work-life balance but sometimes it comes across as a bit selfish at times… (Interview 2, Lines 351-358).

With regards to the needs of midwifery as a profession, and associated recommendations of how OP might address these, one interviewee suggested that there needs to be a clear career/study pathway for secondary and tertiary care. This, they argued, does not currently exist.

> I'm more interested in skilling up a workforce that actually can provide quality evidence-based secondary and tertiary level care… (Interview 2, Lines 55-56).

Similarly, the need to further integrate consumer feedback into midwifery practice was highlighted. This would help to ensure that the consumer's needs are being met.

> I think it is kind of lacking in the new grads programmes, you don't have much consumer input into there so I would really like to see more interaction…I get a lot of feedback from grandmas and grandparents who are in the birth room who feel very, they have lots to feedback and I feel like that's how you enable midwives and others who are working in a family environment to understand the connectivity between the family and how that whānau has so much influence on that woman that you're walking alongside… (Interview 6, Lines 484-492).

Finally, it was recommended that administrative/business skills should be a component of midwifery training. Currently midwifery courses assume these are learnt on placement, it was argued. Graduates are struggling with business skills. There needs to be a business paper within the degree.

Nursing
Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 19 interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's School of Nursing courses. These 19 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

The commentary of all 19 interviewees indicates that non-technical skills, or capabilities, are recognised as an important determinant of employability within the nursing profession. Capabilities are vital in a nursing role and are particularly difficult for employers to instill in employees that do not possess them prior to employment.

> I agree with xx that skills are skills, don't get me wrong they need them, but they are something that can be taught… But if they don't have good communication skills, and probably time keeping comes in there, the ability to be flexible, the ability to adapt when the situations change. That is probably a personality thing whereas task dominated or skills dominated can be taught (Interview 18, Lines 56-63).

> I think they [technical knowledge/skills] are important for any workplace environment however they are things we can teach people the knowledge, but its those other skills that are very hard to teach people. And we do work with people during the year around their empathy, their self awareness, but those are the other skills that are perhaps harder to teach (Interview 5, Lines 27-30).

Correspondingly, the majority of interviewees endorse OP's efforts in developing the LCF. Regarding the online tool that may eventually communicate aspects of the LCF to employers, interviewees were generally supportive also. There was, however, some questioning of how valuable such a tool would be. This is discussed further in the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below.

Interviewee commentary suggests that the 25 capabilities identified by OP are relatively comprehensive. Multiple interviewees indicated their approval of OP's list of 25. Many of the capabilities interviewees spoke of prior to being shown OP's list corresponded to capabilities on the list. There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Four broad sets of capabilities were seen as particularly important. These were:

- Communicative/interactive skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Thought processes
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Personal/professional practice
  - Practices ethically/Acts responsibly/Practices health and safety
  - Organises effectively
  - Demonstrates resilience
- Cultural understanding/awareness
  - Displays cultural competency

Communicative/Interpersonal Skills

Communicative and interpersonal skills were seen as paramount for nurses. The four capabilities included under this heading (see the above listing) were spoken of as highly intertwined. With regard to communication, all but one interviewee included either verbal or written communication in their top-ten lists. There are a number of parties that nurses must communicate with: patients, patients' families, team members and other healthcare practitioners. Nurses must be able to alter their verbal communication style to suit a given audience in order to be understood. Moreover, effective communication involves active listening skills. With regard to written communication, there was a strong emphasis on the ability to produce comprehensive yet concise notes and documentation.

> …you have to be able to communicate effectively verbally, I mean all communication is important but I think for a nurse that verbal communication to gain the information is really for me, is really important (Interview 6, Lines 51-53).

> …they [the patient] are seen by one nurse but not necessarily seen by the same nurse the next time on so it is essential that nurses document very clearly and concisely so the next person can follow the care plan… (Interview 15, Lines 119-121).

Generally speaking, effective interpersonal behaviour speaks to the ability to build and maintain relationships with patients that are appropriate and conducive to improving the patient's health.

> Well I believe that a lot of people who come to us have been through several other services before, have been, some perceive that they have been let down and we need to help them to know that they can trust…So if people are not treated well they may disengage altogether with health services (Interview 13b, Lines 51-58).

> …to me that is around making sure you have got good boundaries with work, I think we work in an industry where it is easy to make friends with the client base. And you do come across people that you like a bit more than you do others, it is human nature. But it is about remembering we are staff, we are here to do a job, and not crossing those boundaries (Interview 17, Lines 84-88).

Finally, the ability to work as a member of a team is important to the effective administration of healthcare and to prevent the overloading of any individual. The ability to delegate was often mentioned.

> Well we have to get on with our colleagues, and in fact none of us can do this alone and neither should we think we can, it helps to set boundaries, it helps to keep us in balance, handing over, being respectful of others and their capabilities, ensuring that we give full information to our colleagues so that they can work effectively (Interview 16, Lines 182-185).

> So it is vitality important, team work, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, you come in, you are part of it, hand over from the team, hand over at the other end to the team, it is all about team work, it is busy but all about teamwork (Interview 7, Lines 227-230).

Thought Processes

As in other interview categories, critical thought and problem-solving were viewed as intertwined. These capabilities were seen as necessary for nurses to be able to assist patients with their needs. However it was often noted that graduates should be able to articulate when they need help from colleagues or management.

> …trouble shoot, think on their feet, to know how to work through a problem in a systematic way, but also be able to put their hand up and say I am not sure about this and seek advice they may need if they are unsure around a problem they have got (Interview 2, Lines 97-100).

> …have to have some problem-solving capabilities because even though you are a small cog in a big wheel, a big machine, it is really really important that you have the ability to try and solve problems at the lowest level for yourself and have the ability to actually identify what the problem is correctly, and then think of a solution around that. That doesn't mean you do that independently, you might do that by asking or seeking support. I think you have to have problem solving capabilities (Interview 3, Lines 84-89).

Personal/Professional Practice

In an environment often involving sick/vulnerable people, a high standard of personal and professional conduct is expected of nurses. Ethical practice, acting responsibly and ensuring health and safety seemed to be viewed as overlapping in this regard. Through ethical practice, responsible actions and/or adhering to health and safety practices patients and employees are kept safe. All but one interviewee included at least one of these three capabilities in their top-ten list.

> Nurses that are working out in communities, they have to work independently, and they have to be responsible about what they are doing. There has to be an ethical underpinning to their practice, as it could be quite easy for people to not do the right thing is my view on that (Interview 6, Lines 63-66).

> H&S is a huge thing obviously in the workplace in today's day and age. We have to make sure all of our team is on board with H&S. And also being aware of any potential things that come up, that is an important thing, keeping the team safe, and our patients safe. And also helping to reduce any risks to anyone in the building (Interview 18, Lines 147-150).

It is important to note that this extends beyond safety from physical harm. Safety can also be thought of in terms of cultural safety. Patients are to be treated without judgement and in ways that are informed by the patient's culture (see the immediately following "Cultural Understanding/Awareness" section).

Organisation was also seen as a requirement of the job, due to often heavy workloads involving many patients.

> …so I think that is around prioritising what is the most important thing to be done, and making good decisions around that when you are planning out your day (Interview 6, Lines 70-72).

> Organises Effectively, it is a survival issue really (Interview 7, Line 258).

Finally, with regards to personal and professional practice, resilience was seen as imperative to lasting in the nursing profession.

> For nursing I think resilience is quite important, and I don't know whether we train or we support people much with that, I don't know if we do it very well for our staff, but I think, in order to practice effectively you need to have, you need to understand how to keep yourself resilient (Interview 6, Lines 85-89).

> It is huge in our roles, and I think [organisation name] isn't your stereotypical rest home. You are going to meet some really complex people that are going to challenge you on a hourly basis, every minute of your time, you have to be resilient, you have to be like water off a duck's back or you would never come back (Interview 17, Lines 106-109).

Cultural Understanding/Awareness

Many interviewees noted that due to the diverse base of patients a nurse may deal with, and the need for patients to receive treatment in a way that is acceptable to them, nurses need to be aware of cultural difference. One interviewee noted that the current phrasing of "cultural competence" might be at odds with notions of cultural safety.

> …if you are again going to care for people in the way that they determine is safe and respectful then you need to understand your own culture and notice the differences… you know reading and learning about New Zealand culture but not then assuming because you've learned about Māori in a general sense that you understand … it's about safe practice again, and making sure people feel comfortable, trusting and respected (Interview 16, Lines 110-113).

> Well I think that is respecting each other, cultural competence is all about looking at the person as a whole, in general, it doesn't matter who they are, asking them if they have got any cultural preferences; being mindful and respectful of each patient that walks through the door (Interview 148-151).

> I have to say I am a little bit aghast at those cards [referring to cultural competency] because again I was raised in the School of Nursing and the School of Midwifery under the kaupapa of kawa whakaruruhau which was Dr Irihapeti Ramsden's theory on cultural safety and I have to say she scared us into, if we see the word competence, reacting almost in a rash way because it kind of undermined the kaupapa of self-reflection and the kaupapa of cultural safety… (Interview 13a, Lines 254-259).

Other Relevant Findings

- International grads were expected to have appropriate English language skills and an understanding of the NZ healthcare system. Multiple interviewees noted that nurses often play a leading role in the administration of healthcare in NZ and that this differs in other cultures. International nurses are, at times, too quick to defer to doctors, etc.
- Some interviewees within aged care and early childhood care felt that their fields were not seen as obvious options for new grads. They would like to see this change.
- While possibly overlapping with previously identified capabilities such as Works Independently, flexibility and adaptability were often raised by interviewees. Both are needed in an occupation that requires an employee to work on a diverse range of tasks and within a healthcare system that is ever-changing.
- Attitudes/values were often cited. Interviewees want graduates that display compassion, empathy and genuine care for others. They expect an overlap between a potential employee's values and their organisation's values.
- Similar to the immediately preceding point, grads require a base-level confidence in their abilities. This links with a need for courage to have difficult conversations with patients and colleagues.
- Enthusiasm, passion and/or a genuine desire to work in healthcare is sought after.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, cover letters, references, personal presentation, psychometric testing, placement reports and interview performance. There was a recurring sentiment that face-to-face interaction was important in assessing soft skills, which feeds into the following "Potential for an Online Tool" section. Interviewees were particularly interested in:

- Conducting behavioural/scenario-based interviews. These would typically try and elicit information on a grad's problem-solving, ability for team work and communication.
- Why the applicant wants the job. Employers hope to see that the applicant has given thought to the role, how they could contribute to it and why they want it. Similarly, employers like to see that an applicant has an idea of their desired career trajectory and will take responsibility for professional development.
- Employers mentioned other frameworks that help them assess applicants' capabilities e.g. ACE, Care Advantage and (STAP).

Potential for an Online Tool

Interviewees were generally positive about the potential for an online tool to assist employers in evaluating OP grads. Most saw the online tool playing a complimentary role to pre-existing recruitment processes. The online tool could help determine which applicants to shortlist for an interview and even help employers prepare questions for an interview.

> …it would assist with getting an interview, and that is probably be where it would stop. Because if I looked at somebody's portfolio and saw evidence of innovation, or lateral thinking, or evidence of good problem solving, then I think oh yeah I will interview that person. That would probably be where I would leave it (Interview 19, Lines 117-120).

> Totally, yes…sadly there are some of them [OP students] they [OP staff] will know if they are a team worker or not throughout their training, so that would be really useful (interview 10, Lines 169-175).

> …you could then question more deeply around that [the employer's initial assessment of the applicant], I think so, I think it would be more useful, you could dig down (Interview 6, Lines 148-149).

> I think it would be incredibly valuable because it is going to show you some critical thinking…At the moment I think it [the information employers have to work with during recruitment processes] is one dimensional…Show me what is important to you, show me how you are as an individual because I need to fit you in to this part of my workplace (Interview 3, Lines 204-215).

Having said this, there was a notable sentiment that an online tool could not replace vital face-to-face interaction:

> I'm not entirely sure [if a portfolio on capabilities is helpful], because I'm not entirely sure that I believe always others' impression of themselves (Interview 16, Lines 277-278).

> So I think they [sources of information like the proposed online tool] are helpful but I am probably more a people person (Interview 17, Lines 186-187).

> I think it would be useful but it is also about meeting the student, seeing that personality shine through, see that potential in leadership or communication skill is also important. It is a component but not, I would not like to see that be the only tool utilised. It is important to be able to allow the student to shine themselves, and see that communication skill level, the ability to interact, to hold eye contact, those things are really important as well (Interview 2, Lines 118-123).

OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations

Throughout the course of the 19 interviews analysed here, interviewees offered a number of reflections on graduates they have employed (not always OP graduates) and recommendations for OP practice moving forward. Interviewees seemed generally pleased with graduates that they had received from OP.

> Well I'll tell you this, the new grads that we've had in the last few years from Dunedin, they have been brilliant… They really, really have, especially the last couple of years that I can think of… The one we've got this year, I so want to be able to give her a job (Interview 14, Lines 309-318).

> I think the students come out pretty work ready to be honest (Interview 12, Line 158).

However, interviewees did note that they would like to see additional resilience and critical thinking in young workers. Lacking resilience was spoken of largely in terms of younger generations, rather than OP graduates specifically. The LCF should give graduates practical skills that enable them to display capabilities once on the job.

> I would support it [the LCF] as long as it came with a kind of hand bag of tools…So I suppose it is what tools you are going to give people under that framework that helps them with some of these issues… So yes I would support it but it needs to come with a little hand bag of tools that they can pull out at the appropriate times (Interview 19, Lines 192-204).

Relatedly, some interviewees noted that part of their wanting to employ new graduates was that they assumed that recent graduates would bring fresh thinking, a passion for research and a challenging of current practices. It was noted that this was not always the case. Some graduates do not exhibit a desire for ongoing learning, which disappoints employers. This is related to employers' hope that employees will be passionate about their own career development.

As noted above, one interviewee believed that cultural safety, rather than cultural competency, was the appropriate lens through which to practice. In this regard, the interviewee suggested that OP could use existing services to educate students. The interviewee suggested that Wānanga o Aotearoa does a fantastic job.

Finally, there were a number of comments on NZ's healthcare system and how graduates/OP might fit within it. It has already been mentioned above that interviewees within aged care and early childhood care felt that graduates did not see these fields as appealing options. They wonder how OP might alter this. Similarly, interviewees working in rural settings noted that rural clinics are often small and lack the ability to provide the quantity of mentorship that new graduates require. This can mean these clinics can not employ new graduates. These interviewees too wonder how OP might help. Moreover, it was noted that forming silos separating healthcare professionals can be dangerous. Students should be given a holistic understanding of the healthcare system.

Occupational Therapy Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 11 interviews (with 12 interviewees) held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's occupational therapy courses. One interview was not recorded. In this instance notes taken by OP staff at the time of the interview were analysed, rather than interview transcripts. These 11 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assesses whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

While the interviewees' commentary indicates that the 25 capabilities previously identified by OP are valued by employers, many interviewees felt they could not fully endorse the LCF. This was largely due to being unclear as to how the LCF, via the proposed online tool, would provide practicable information to employers on a graduate's capabilities. However, interviewees valued OP's efforts to impress upon students that transferable capabilities are valued by employers.

Clear themes emerged from the interviews both with regard to the capabilities most valued by the interviewees and more general commentary on the LCF, nature of the healthcare system and how students might be appropriately prepared for the workforce. Commentary on capabilities is discussed in the first half of this report, while more general commentary is reserved for the latter half.

Eleven capabilities were seen as particularly important by the interviewees. I group these eleven into five broader categories in order to remain succinct. The eleven capabilities were:

- Communicative skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
- Thought processes
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Interpersonal skills
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Personal and professional practice
  - Demonstrates resilience
  - Reflects on performance and applies personal learning
  - Works independently
- Cultural awareness/understanding
  - Displays cultural competence
  - Displays bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context

Communicative Skills

As in other interview clusters, communicative skills were seen as important. Verbal and written communication were emphasised, while visual communication did not make any top-ten list. Communication was discussed in the context of basic conversation, report writing and the ability to communicate one's clinical reasoning. Communication was very closely associated with one's interpersonal skills and, thus, closely associated with the capability Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour.

> This [communicating verbally] is probably the thing we do the most, whether it be with each other, the client, other health professionals, fundamentally we are in a situation where we are one on one with a person, and we need to communicate effectively (Interviewee 1, Lines 89-91).

> Those reports need to be able to stand up because it is the property of the referrers, so there is the quality of reports that we must provide (Interview 5, Lines 89-90).

> …being able to talk a little about what the underlying principles are behind the therapeutic engagement rather than just I think we simplify it too much, especially in mental health…So I guess communication that is clear, succinct, relevant, gives a little bit of that clinical reasoning (Interview 6, Lines 121-127).

> …working with a really diverse bunch of clients and being able to gain that trust and rapport through their communication (Interview 7, Lines 166-167).

> Basically if you are not able to communicate with people effectively you are not going to have very good relationships with them (Interview 8, Lines 116-118).

Thought Processes

Critical thought, creative thought and problem-solving skills were valued, and often seen as intertwined, by interviewees. It was mentioned on multiple occasions that creative thought was often required in finding appropriate solutions for patients due to resource limitations upon health practitioners, both with regard to time and money.

> …a big part of your role is finding solutions to problems, the client will come to us with all of these issues, these symptoms, things that they can't do, a huge part of the role is finding solutions, thinking laterally, looking at what has already been tried… (Interview 8, Lines 70-72).

> Clinical Reasoning is the key to what we do, so to be able to have critical thinking about getting the best outcomes for the clients, making sure that they are covering all the bases (Interview 5, Lines 92-93).

> Thinks Creatively, that capacity to, we are not going to have huge financial resources sometimes, what has always impressed me is when people say oh I can access free resources from here, so that can think creatively (Interview 6, Lines 242-245).

Interpersonal Skills

All but one interviewee included either Works in Teams or Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour in their top-ten list. Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour was particularly favoured. Many interviewees specifically mentioned the ability to build rapport with patients. This ability was often one of the first things mentioned by interviewees, even prior to being shown OP's list of 25 capabilities.

> You have to build a rapport with someone. You have to be a bit of a chameleon I think because you are going to have different people of different ethnic, or life groups. You may not agree with some of their beliefs that they have loudly told you, but you still have to have this relationship with them where it is appropriate and professional moving forward (Interview 1, Lines 154-158).

> I guess in mental health, no matter where the OT is working is, you know that therapeutic rapport, we talk a lot here about relational security, which is kind of a term we have adopted from the UK around how we work well within a risk management framework for people (Interview 6, Lines 24-26).

> That is huge for us, we have challenging workloads, a lot of pressure on the team, things that might cause conflict everyday, so being able to adjust and adapt to working in their team is really important to us (Interview 7, Lines 182-184).

> …a lot of people forget common courtesy, it can have a huge influence in a workplace (Interview 12, Line 128).

Personal/Professional Practice

Numerous interviewees spoke about the need for recent graduates to display resilience, reflect upon and learn from past performance and work independently. Resilience and reflecting on one's past performance were particularly important.

> Resilience is also about having to do a full work day, turn up on time, smelling and being clean and having that ability to go yes it is hard but this is what the job is (Interview 1, Lines 171-173).
>
> But you have to have an internal strength to be able to do this work and have dealt with your own stuff I think (Interview 4, Lines 120-121).
>
> …I would expect someone to always be looking at what they have done, evaluating how it went, and thinking about what they might have done better, or thinking about what their shortcoming is, or what development they might need, and doing something about that (Interview 12, Lines 117-119).
>
> I put that in because if people can't reflect on their own performance, you can't show them what they need to learn, they are already perfect (Interview 8, Lines 192-194).
>
> …it is all about providing rehabilitation, so part of that here is, assessments that take place, functional assessments, workplace assessments etc. To be able to do that a person needs to be able to work independently (Interview 5, Lines 85-87).

Cultural Awareness/Understanding

OT graduates need to be able to work with people from different backgrounds, as the communities in which OTs work is very diverse. Moreover, graduates need to have an understanding of the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in NZ society and the lack of equity experienced by Māori and other minorities in NZ. Many interviewees saw cultural competency and bi-cultural proficiency as associated. However, one interviewee stated that this should not be the case, as bi-cultural proficiency was seen as being about Te Tiriti specifically. Furthermore, one interviewee suggested referring to the capability as "Displays Cultural Skills", rather than "Displays Cultural Competence". This was due to their belief that cultures are not homogenous and, therefore, people can be skilled in engaging with cultural difference but cannot be competent in a certain culture.

> Cultural competence is a big thing, going into people's homes, going into somebody's home and being able to be respectful… (Interview 4, Lines 86-87).
>
> …they were trying to find ways of, you know, the old tubs of rice or macaroni for a sensory integration project and going to a Kaupapa programme and they saying very clearly in Māori in Tikanga practice we don't play with our food. In practice you can't use those things (Interview 6, Lines 270-273).
>
> …we have the Treaty of Waitangi that underpins our practice so we need to heed to that, and make sure we are adhering to practicing in a bi-cultural manner, building rapport with our Māori clients and delivering in a manner acceptable to them (Interview 8, Lines 172-174).

Other Relevant Findings

There were a number of other themes emerging from the interviews:

- It was seen as critically important that recent grads know their limitations and when to ask for help:
    - So I think new graduates or even just experienced staff coming into our service looking for that ability, asking for help before something gets out of control (Interview 3, Lines 35-37).
    - …being able to be independent learner but still be able to know when they need to seek support (Interview 5, Lines 18-19).
- Despite the focus of the interviews being transferable capabilities, many interviewees emphasised that clinical reasoning skills are of the utmost importance.
- The need for the workforce to diversify to represent the community it serves was commonly discussed. The workforce presently lacks Māori and Pasifika people, as well as men.

- The changing nature of the healthcare sector was emphasised. OTs are one part of a "chain" of service-providers that a patient might deal with.
    - Relatedly, OTs are asked to work on a diverse range of tasks and, therefore, students need to be taught to apply theoretical knowledge to varied practical situations.
- International students were expected to have:
    - Appropriate English language skills
    - A knowledge of NZ's healthcare system
    - A knowledge of NZ's bi-culturalism

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, cover letters, references, academic record/qualifications, interview performance and initial personal interactions with the applicant. Interviewees were particularly interested to hear applicants talk about past experiences to elicit information on capabilities such as interpersonal behaviour or problem-solving skills. Many interviewees would employ "tell us about a time when" or "what would you do in XX situation?" lines of questioning in interviews.

As in other interview clusters, work experience, broader life experience and demonstrated research into the role the applicant is applying for were valued by employers. Multiple employers suggested that CVs should contain more detail than they typically see; not just listing work placements, but the learnings, etc, from those placements.

Potential for an Online Tool

Interviewees were mixed in their views on the potential benefits of an online tool. Around one half of the interviewees were sceptical of the benefits of the tool to employers (this did not exclude the belief that the process of developing a profile might be helpful to students themselves), largely due to questions of how capabilities could be systematically determined or a belief that face-to-face interaction was ultimately required to assess capabilities.

> …you could be really academic about it, and research and write that first, how natural is that would be my question. Evidencing it and writing that down would be different than sitting down and having a conversation (Interview 4, Lines 159-161).

> Yeah I don't know. Because a lot of times, when it is new grads we are employing on placements xx, and the way they present to us in an interview, so they can have all the evidence on paper looks amazing but when they come to interview they just are not the right fit (Interview 5, Lines 133-135).

> I am veering towards it would be extra information, so may be somewhat useful, but there is still something, yeah I am not sure how much weighting it would have… where would the evidence come from? Something they have added themselves, info from supervisors, info from polytech, narrative or would it be?...I think I am concerned it would be a box ticking exercise…For some reason I have a lack of trust that this extra information would get the right people…It depends on how it is done (Interview 7, Lines 385-405).

> I would still want to talk to someone. I have employed people through agencies before where they would do the reference checks for you, I have had glowing references for people that I am sure if you spoke with them you would pick out things that were missed in a written format (Interview 8, Lines 319-322).

There were those, however, that were enthusiastic about the potential of an online tool. These interviewees emphasised the need for the tool to contain detailed information on workplace experiences that a CV might not contain and also valued the inclusion of references from former supervisors.

> It would be really good actually. I would find that useful if you were to develop it…scenarios where there is feedback from tutors would be useful when looking at new grads (Interview 12, Lines 201-210).

> One of my thoughts would be whether clinical practicum supervisors would be able to feed into that. Or is it purely based on the curriculum in the polytech because of course you can write very well and talk very well and do very good assignments, it doesn't mean you can find those skills in a workplace context (Interview 9/10, Lines 383-386).

> …that would be great to see something that has been prepared, not just stock standard cover letter or CV, something more, in depth, is that something that might be available at the time of receiving their application? (Interview 3, Lines 145-147).

OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations

The preceding sections on those capabilities that interviewees typically value should be seen as implying recommendations for OP practice. E.g. the prevalence of Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour in interviewees' top-ten lists, and the centrality of this capability within the analysed transcripts, indicates that OP should prioritise this capability in its teaching. This concluding section focuses on more general recommendations and evaluations of OP practice.

Interviewees stated that they would value graduates having additional technical skills in the areas of:

- Risk assessment
- Mental health and substance abuse
    - Some clear understanding around harm strategies, some exposure to using some drug and alcohol screening and maybe being able to pick some brief interventions, at a really lower level, at a brief intervention stage, doesn't have to be hard core, that would be great, something around that (Interview 11, Lines 38-40).
- Sensory modulation

Moreover, interviewees suggested that students be assisted in developing a strong professional identity of what it means to be an OT and what role(s) OTs are expected to play within the healthcare sector. Related to this, interviewees recommended that students be familiar with the nature of the healthcare system more broadly; how it operates and how the role of health professionals is understood. For example, one interviewee spoke about the trend towards empowering patients:

> …how do we enable and empower other people to look after their own health? That is a skill set to develop, how to have those conversations, or how to change the model from I am the therapist, you shall do. So probably developing the expert consumer, the expert patient. That is something we are talking more and more about… (Interview 9/10, Lines 516-519).

Appropriate knowledge of the healthcare sector and one's role within it relates to the additional recommendation that students be taught to apply theory in multiple contexts.

> …I always thought we were pretty good at being adaptive and looking at how something could translate from one environment to another, or generalise skills from one area to another. But no you are right, some are coming out things are a little bit too compartmentalised (Interview 6, Lines 193-196).

Moreover, because of its prevalence in the transcripts, it is worth repeating that many interviewees stated that new graduates must have an awareness of their own limitations and their specific responsibilities.

> …the ability to understand your own capabilities, reflect on that, seek assistance if you need it… (Interview 6, Lines 111-112).

Finally, multiple interviewees reported on their experiences with OP graduates. Feedback was positive.

> …they can do their mihi's, they are really good at getting up confidently and introducing themselves at a mihi whakatau, that kind of thing has raised them above other new graduates, knowing about the inequalities, knowing about social justice, that kind of stuff is really important (Interview 6, Lines 280-283).
>
> …the last intake we had four at any one time, and they are fantastic (Interview 7, Lines 52-53).
>
> Just to say that we have been really lucky to have had the OT students we have had…we have just had some amazing students, awesome to work with (Interview 11, Lines 285-288).

Quantity Surveying Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of eight interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's quantity surveying courses. These interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including commendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

Interviewees were positive about OP's Learner Capability Framework. All interviewees endorsed the framework at the conclusion of their respective interviews. The 25 capabilities identified in earlier parts of this project were described as valued within the industries relevant to quantity surveying. However, compared to interviewees from other industries explored as part of this LCF project, interviewees had less trouble determining their ten most important capabilities. This suggests that capabilities omitted from all or most top-ten lists are clearly understood as beneficial but superfluous when recruiting for graduate level positions in the industry in question. Unlike other groups of interviewees previously analysed, there was a direct suggestion that a relevant capability may be omitted from the OP's list of 25 – effective listening. However, there was an acknowledgement that this could be considered part of effective communication skills.

> That's the one thing that's missing – you are missing – Listening – that's not in here at all (Interview 7, Lines 320-321).

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. These themes were, in the opinion of the data analyst, more consistent than in other categories of interviewees explored as part of this LCF project. Three broad sets of capabilities, and one specific capability, were seen as particularly important. These are:

- Communicative skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
- Thought processes
  - Thinks creatively
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Personal/professional practice
  - Practices health and safety
  - Practices ethically
  - Displays work life balance
- Works in teams

Communicative Skills

Communicative skills were present in all but one interviewees' top-ten lists. Verbal and written communication were prioritised over visual communication. Some interviewees suggested that basic communicative skills are diminishing with the advent of digital communication platforms such as email. One interviewee made the explicit recommendation (discussed in the following recommendations section) that OP include a communication skills module in courses relevant to quantity surveying.

Communicative skills were seen as central to team-work and broader relationship-building within the industry.

> …you can't work in a team or display leadership if you can't communicate (Interview 1, Lines 188-189).

> If you communicate verbally, you will build relationships, you will build contacts, you will do a lot, you will move forward very effectively (Interview 4, Lines 275-276).

> I have to encourage very strongly for any young people that we have coming through here is the need to try to create personal relationships with people within the industry and emailing them isn't necessarily the best way to do that (Interview 7, Lines 53-55).

It was also noted on multiple occasions that working as a quantity surveyor required communicating a building plan to the build team that would need to implement the plan. This makes communication a basic requirement of routine aspects of a quantity surveying job.

> So, if someone, depending on the role, can't communicate effectively, then they are of little use (Interview 6, Line 76).

Thought Processes

As in other interview categories, critical thought, creative thought and problem-solving capabilities were viewed as intertwined. These capabilities were often discussed in terms of the technical undertakings of a quantity surveyor, with problem-solving seen as a fundamental aspect of the occupation.

> …that's what we do each day (Interview 7, Lines 102-103).

> It's generally what trades are, you're solving problems (Interview 8, Lines 83-84).

Thinking outside of the box and being able to determine multiple ways at arriving at solutions is key.

> …thinking creatively is just about finding a better way…if you can think outside the square and think creatively, you're going to halve the amount of man hours to achieve the same result (Interview 3, Lines 217-221).

> That's probably one of the biggest traits you need…you've got to have a certain amount of cynicism, I guess, a questioning mind (Interview 8, Lines 32-35).

These capabilities were on multiple occasions linked with reflection on personal performance.

Personal/Professional Practice

The three capabilities I include here (Practices Health and Safety, Practices Ethically, Displays Work Life Balance) were common features of interviewees' top-ten lists. They were included by these eight interviewees more frequently than by interviewees from other industries analysed so far.

Health and safety, as well as ethical practice, were seen as part and parcel of the role of a quantity surveyor or the industries in which quantity surveyors work.

> …in our game in construction, health and safety is a big thing, so that's very important to me that there's an understanding there and that it's not just written, or lip service paid to health and safety (Interview 6, Lines 43-45).

> …the whole basis of quantity surveying is to be impartial and so ethics for me is, that's the top and if you're not that, then forget it, you're in the wrong place doing the wrong thing (Interview 7, Lines 96-97).

Work-life balance was recognised as key to people sustaining good work and a passion for that work.

> That's about the sustainability of the person being able to carry on doing what they're doing (Interview 7, Line 151).

> …in construction and especially with contractors like ours, it can burn people out, it can be a hard industry and you do need to keep in perspective (Interview 4, Lines 66-68).

Moreover, work-life balance was linked to maturity and well-roundedness, as a person with hobbies, interests and non-work commitments has to have skills such as organisation to balance these.

Works in Teams

The ability to be a part of a team was unanimously valued by interviewees, as indicated by this capability featuring on every interviewee's top-ten list. However, while interviewees' discussion of team-work at times dealt with a narrow conception of the capability, such as the ability to collaborate, etc., these discussions more often dealt with broader notions of whether a potential employee aligned with team values or culture. Thus, team-work was often dealt with more as a matter of team-fit and, thus, was a matter of personal qualities, rather than interactive skills.

> …we always call it the good bastard test, but it's that compatibility – are they compatible with what we believe our company culture is, with the people that they're going to be working with and will they fit into the team (Interview 1, Lines 628-630).

> …when I'm employing someone, the first thing I look for is culture. The skills can be learned and you need a base set, but they can be learned, but it's the cultural fit that I look for (Interview 6, Lines 28-30).

> Part of the values thing that we're working on, which is a big project, is that ultimately we want to be able to use those to recruit to and align our people, that we are very selective about picking the people that align to them (Interview 3, Lines 276-278).

As in other interview clusters, the Capability "Works in Teams" was linked with the Capability "Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour".

Other Relevant Findings

- As in all preceding interview clusters, interviewees noted that they want graduates to exemplify personal traits such as:
  - Passion for the work and a career focus.
  - A willingness to listen and learn.
- In relation to the above discussion of team work, the interviewees expressed an interest in who a person was, not just their technical or soft skills. This suggests that while capabilities as conceptualised by OP's LCF may capture some of what employers seek in graduates, it does not capture all of it (not that the analyst assumes that this would be possible).
  - …capabilities are great, qualifications are fine, I want to know the person (Interview 1, Line 620).
- Technical skills received less discussion than in other interview clusters. However, a skill that was discussed by multiple interviewees was knowledge of (construction) contract law.
- The fact that women are a minority in the relevant industries was recogised by multiple interviewees.
- Multiple interviewees note that cultural and bi-lingual competence is probably of greater importance in the North Island.
- With regard to international students, the main criteria were:
  - English language skills.
  - A knowledge of NZ construction code/standards.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

Interviewees listed the following sources/methods by which they assess potential employees' capabilities.

- Strong, well-written, CV.
- Grades/qualifications.
- Work history.
- Interview performance.
- Social media profiles.
- Psychometric testing.
- References.

From these sources/methods interviewees were particularly interested in:

- The candidate's personal life and persona – E.g. sports teams, volunteering. This was seen to be telling with regard to a number of capabilities. Participation in team sports was often highlighted.
    - I've just found that when I've had people that haven't been sports people at all, and I don't care what level of sport, just team sport, they generally don't gel as quick or as well (Interview 8, Lines 109-110).
- Evidence of applicant having shown effort in pursuing opportunity.
- Examples of how a candidate has tried to learn/develop through their own initiative/mistakes.
- Effort evident in initial application. Is it personalised or unique, etc?
- Interview performance as indicative of communication capabilities.

Potential for an Online Tool

All but one interviewee liked the idea of an online tool through which employers could learn more about the capabilities of graduates. In this cluster of interviews the online tool is introduced to the interviewees as something akin to an online portfolio/CV. Themes regarding the online tool include:

- The online CV/portfolio should be visual. Include examples of the student's work and photos of them working.
- The online CV/portfolio should include personal information about graduates, as this is important in the hiring process (see previous section). E.g. photos of students with their sports team, etc.
- The online tool should be comprehensive. As much info on a student's training record via the online tool as possible would be helpful to employers. It could help them see where a graduate's strengths and weaknesses are and, if employed, would help businesses facilitate a training programme for the former student.

Despite these themes, there is evident difference in opinion of how the online tool should operate. Some interviewees envisaged a student's portfolio/CV as having been created by the student, thus allowing them to demonstrate their communication skills, creativity and personality. Others understood that a student's portfolio/CV would be created/moderated by OP, thus providing unbiased/third-party analysis of a student's capabilities. Those who took this latter view considered this independence essential.

> It would only be handy if they didn't get to filter it. If it was unfiltered portal, like all their good, bad and the ugly, it's all there. But if it's something that they've dressed up, it's no different than a CV they've handed through. So, as long as it was an unfiltered portal, that would be good (Interview 8, Lines 128-131).

Of course, student input and independence need not be mutually exclusive and the commentary of some interviewees indicates this. One suggested allowing students to alter their profile while also attaching independent references to it.

OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations

Interviewees offered significant praise to OP graduates and OP itself. Interviewees stated that:

- They had a history of working with OP students on placement or OP graduates.
- They have had good interactions with OP students in the community. OP students coached one interviewee's children at football. Says that the OP students exhibited many of the capabilities in the LCF.
- OP students seemed to have high levels of career ambition. One interviewee mentioned that many OP grads take the option of participating in the employer's optional career development programme.
- OP is leading the way in exhibiting sustainable practice in its building practices: … sustainability is becoming huge.
    - You guys at the Polytech are leading that as far as your projects go (Interview 6, Lines 209-210).
- OP qualifications were trusted. One interviewee stated:
    - I mean if you've come through the Polytech, you've already had the filter already put through you, you know, so if you come through as a Graduate from the Polytech, I already know you've ticked off all those skills, or you wouldn't have got through if you didn't have to think critically, be a problem solver, you wouldn't get through your Quantity Surveying Degree if you didn't have those skills (Interview 8, Lines 112-116).
- OP graduates were seen as relatively work ready by some. However, this was contrasted in other statements (see below).

In addition to this praise of OP and its students, there were a number of recommendations made by interviewees. These included:

- Graduates should be qualified with regard to health and safety. Site Safe certification as a minimum. Additional health and safety certifications would also be good.
- The suggestion that OP needs to insert communication skills learning into its courses (the interviewee experienced this while attending the former polytechnic on Stuart St.). The interviewee mentions, in particular, the potential of role-playing exercises in this.
    - …role playing will scare the living daylights out of some of them because they will feel, oh people are looking at me. But at the end of it, the confidence that they gain out of that sort of thing is terrific (Interview 7, Lines 71-73).
- Ethics and responsibilities of quantity surveying should be emphasised to students.
- The reality of starting at the bottom of the ladder should be emphasised to OP students. This somewhat contradicts praise from other interviewees claiming that OP grads are relatively work-ready.
    - …we've employed a few graduates and I would say that every one of them arrived with an expectation that they, at least a misunderstanding that they knew more than what they did, so the most difficult thing is, just watching them go down to, well actually I don't know very much at all, and I'd thought that I'd finished my training – so, no you've just started your training (Interview 7, Lines 277-280).
    - I think teaching people they've got to behave properly and also to be humble enough to know they actually don't know everything and that they're really just starting on the career once they walk out the door is the most important thing. Because then they should be open to learning and listening (Interview 7, Lines 316-319).
- Merging academic and on-site learning:
    - …most employers' idea of getting through the second year and then work and do the third year part time over two years, so you actually develop (Interview 8, Lines 334-336).
    - I would like to see, and I think what's missing from all the papers and stuff throughout NZ, and we tend to agree on this at a bit of a national level, is something like the engineers do, where they have a three month placement and get some on-job experience (Interview 2, Lines 56-59).
- Employers need to be made more aware of what OP can offer their employees, etc.
    - I think there's probably a lot of employers out there that really don't know what the Polytech offers, they know they offer three-year courses or Diplomas, but they don't probably realise that they can send one of their employees away only part time or they can do it online training and they think they're going to lose them for a year or two (Interview 8, Lines 212-215).
    - Mentions that not many employers know about Capable NZ.

Social Services Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 13 interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's social services courses. These 13 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

Commentary by all 13 interviewees indicates that employers recognise capabilities as an important aspect of any individual's employability. Generally speaking, within Social Services professions there is pre-existing recognition of, and formalisation of, soft skills within the workforce. Professional bodies maintain codes of conduct and particular entry requirements that speak to an individual's soft skills. Accordingly, all interviewees can be interpreted as supporting the broader LCF.

> I think it would be wonderful, I really do, and if they could present those [capabilities] to prospective employers that would be really helpful, rather than a grade from a particular course (Interview 2, Lines 349-350).
>
> …if an education institution has had the opportunity to identify competencies, skills, knowledge etc. and can feed that [to employers], that can only but contribute to making the right decision, or a good decision [in recruiting] (Interview 1, Lines 538-540).
>
> …knowing this is a framework behind their learning and knowing these things are all considered makes me feel better about it (Interview 3, Lines 412-413).

Clear themes emerged from the interviews both with regard to the capabilities most valued by the interviewees and more general commentary on the LCF, nature of the Social Services system and how students might be appropriately prepared for the workforce. Commentary on capabilities is discussed in the first half of this report, while more general commentary is reserved for the latter half.

Ten capabilities were seen as particularly important by the interviewees. These have been grouped into four broader categories in order to remain succinct. The ten capabilities are:

- Communicative skills
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Communicates effectively in writing
- Interpersonal skills
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Personal and professional practice
  - Practices ethically
  - Practices health and safety
  - Demonstrates resilience
  - Organises effectively
- Cultural awareness/understanding
  - Displays cultural competence
  - Displays bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context

Communicative Skills

Communicative skills were seen as central to the fields in question. Verbal and written communication were emphasised. Verbal communication was typically considered paramount. Communication was discussed in terms of a clinical tool for building relationships with clients, etc., but also in the context of the broader workplace and the need for professional communicative skills such as email writing, etc. Communication was very closely associated with one's interpersonal skills and, thus, closely associated with the capability Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour.

> …for counsellors those are your core skills, they're your listening, your attending skills and your intervention tools…so adapt their verbal communication to suit the young person and then they have to readapt it to deal with the parent and then they have to readapt it to deal with the staff so they actually have to have a sense of audience… (Interview 8, Lines 195-209).

> …I think is really important at all levels of integrating into the workplace so not only obviously working with clients effectively but being able to communicate with peers and colleagues and bosses and whoever else you need to communicate to, to actually be in the workplace. I think that's probably the most important one, that everything else follows if there is good communication or effective communication (Interview 6, Lines 111-116).

> …your note writing in particular needs to be effective…we need to be able to see not a novel, you get novels sometimes, but very clear writing around how was the person presenting, what was your interaction with them today, how does that fit with their goal… (Interview 12, Lines 189-193).

Interpersonal Skills

As alluded to above, Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour was deemed important by the vast majority of interviewees. Works in Teams was similarly valued. Broadly speaking, these capabilities were viewed similarly in that they both speak to an ability to work well with others. Works in Teams has a narrower focus, usually spoken of in terms of relating to colleagues or other health professionals. Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour was seen as applying to the patient/client also. Both of these capabilities were linked to having effective communications skills.

> If you can display effective interpersonal behaviour in the context of your colleagues, I'm going to be significantly less concerned that you're going to do something ethically wrong in the clients that you're working with (Interview 12, Lines 176-178).

> …the other thing that's really important is whoever works here has the capacity to engage with a wide range of people so they need to be able to change their style depending on who it is or what it is (Interview 10, Lines 115-117).

> The work that we do across the whole sector involves collaboration, whether it's with external stakeholders and families and your own colleagues internally as well which is just good communication and interpersonal skills really (Interview 3, Lines 161-163).

Personal and Professional Practice

Numerous interviewees spoke about the need for recent graduates to display resilience, organisation and an awareness of the ethical and health and safety requirements incumbent upon them as healthcare professionals. Ethical and safety conscious practice were seen as foundations of the professions in question. With regard to health and safety, a knowledge of risk assessment and minimisation was valued. Resilience and organisation were seen as vital to managing one's workload and maintaining one's personal wellbeing.

> …practicing ethically, absolutely vital, I just put that there because ethical issues cover so many things and in our sector, be it social services, education, health, disability, understanding what is right and wrong for you to do, understanding what other people expect of you… (Interview 1, Lines 247-250).

> I think we're in a privileged role, we're often people's, we have a duty of care so it's ensuring everybody is safe and respected… (Interview 3, Lines 176-177).

> I think 'resilience' is important in the job. That when things get busy it's an important characteristic for them not to wilt but to be able to cope with those times where there is a lot of pressure or where things don't go as planned… (Interview 4, Lines 170-172).

> …often there is high demand in terms of time and face to face between staff and clients that we expect, or that the industry expects actually, the government does, and it's about how do they prioritise… (Interview 13, lines 206-208).

Notable with regard to professional practice was commentary from multiple interviewees stating that a facilitative model of care was important.

> …it's very important, particularly in this role, that they don't come from a, 'we know what's best for you', type of approach, but 'what do you think is best for you'… (Interview 4, Lines 150-152).

> …people have to have that sort of faciliatory approach, not that professional control approach (Interview 1, Lines 113-114).

> So we're not doing to the client, we're asking to be invited to work alongside them, so we're not trying to impose… (Interview 6, Lines 333-334).

Cultural Awareness/Understanding

Many interviewees noted that the communities in which graduates will work are very diverse. Accordingly, graduates need to feel comfortable interacting with people from different cultures and should be able to reflect on how their own cultural background informs their views and experiences. Specifically, an understanding of historical injustices against Māori and other minorities was seen as vital. Knowledge should extend beyond a basic understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to interaction with Māori tikanga.

> In this agency it's predominantly pakeha, but we do work with other cultures and really important to have an awareness of your own culture so that you are able to work with other cultures (Interview 6, Lines 178-180).

> …we're very conscious about having relationships with different communities and what stands out here, what first springs to mind for example is the LGBT community, we have liaised with the relevant services and people to make sure we are practicing in an inclusive way, and what we don't know we find out, we're proactive (Interview 6, Lines 93-96).

> …we've really taken a commitment as an organisation to ensure that we have cultural competence and we've implemented a cultural competency framework and we've really worked hard to ensure that as a bicultural service that that is visible in practice. So, and we know that in terms of the client groups that we're working with that it is significantly important to them, so we can't just do it in a tokenistic way, we're really committed to ensuring that we are meeting the client groups where they're at (Interview 9, Lines 87-93).

Other Relevant Findings

There were a number of other themes emerging from the interviews. Many of these speak to capabilities that employers value but may not be presently captured (in their entirety) by the 25 previously identified capabilities. These include:

- Attitude/values - multiple interviewees noted they look to employ people with the right attitude. Often this was not expanded upon in detail. However, the appropriate attitude was linked at different times to empathy, transparency and a willingness to learn. Employers seek employees whose values align with their organisation.
- Confidence – graduates need to be confident in their abilities and in themselves to work in these fields:
    - …some sense of esteem and also a sense that they can do the job is very important, that they have a sense of confidence in the job, to be able to do the job rather (Interview 4, Lines 180-182).
    - Yes, certainly confidence, because we don't want to bring someone into the workplace where they feel distinctly uncomfortable, we've had, our nurse that came here on placement is a great example, she's quite young and she's a really attractive young woman so those features could be difficult, but she's got a really strong sense of – she's also Māori – she has a strong sense of who she is although she is not strong in Māoritanga or te reo Māori (Interview 10, Lines 63-68).

- Flexibility/adaptability – the dynamic nature of the work in question requires people to be flexible and adaptable.
    - Because the work is quite diverse, and we have to be quite flexible with our client group, or target group that we work with, it might be that different approaches might become apparent and we need people to be able to move to the approach… (Interview 9, Lines 39-41).
    - …being flexible, being open to working across other services and do other things (Interview 13, Lines 335-336).
- Ability to motivate others – the ability to motivate patients/clients to pursue their own wellbeing is important to possess.
    - Yes, many people who have significant social and health issues for whatever reason, have lost motivation, not because they are terrible people, but they need a lot of help to get themselves going again, so these sorts of roles lend themselves towards those sorts of things (Interview 10, Lines 659-661).

Interviewees also discussed what international graduates would require to work within NZ organisations. Points that would be considered in employing international graduates include:

- A knowledge of NZ's healthcare system.
- A knowledge of NZ's bi-culturalism.
- Ability to appropriately police-check/reference check an applicant's background.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, references, academic record/qualifications, interview performance and initial personal interactions with the applicant. Interviewees were particularly interested to hear applicants talk about past experiences to elicit information on capabilities such as interpersonal behaviour or problem-solving skills. Many interviewees would employ "tell us about a time when" or "what would you do in XX situation?" lines of questioning in interviews. As in other interview clusters, work/placement experience and broader life experience were valued by employers.

Potential for an Online Tool

Interviewees were generally supportive of an online tool to convey graduates' capabilities. Some interviewees noted that there is familiarity with this sort of framework among health practitioners. This would potentially mean aligning any future online tool with current models.

> I think it's a fantastic idea, I do think, I really love the idea that maybe you'd collaborate with Bronwyn Pagey and Co. to talk about the Real Skills Plus. For me to have another capability and set of capabilities and competency set up it just blurs the market more but if you can lay theirs over what you are doing in some way it would help us with matching up… even if you want to do your own thing, e-Real Skills Plus, Bronwyn Pagey would be the person to talk to at Werry in Christchurch (Interview 11, Lines 308-318).

Most interviewees saw the online tool as something to feed into their decisions about who to shortlist for a job and as something that would provide material to base interview questions on.

> I mean, so thinking about that and thinking about how many graduates we have employed, because we have employed a few, it would certainly help to be able to, even in the shortlisting phase to have that type of information available, and if it, well I thought of certainly people answering those types of things themselves but if it is that they've asked their lecturer or tutor to put information in I think that would be definitely helpful (Interview 9, Lines 191-196).

> Ok, sure, I think it would be helpful to be honest, what do you normally have in front of you, a CV and a couple of referees, and I've been a referee and I've been a referee checker so I know how you can manipulate both sides of that game so it would be very cool to be able to have another tool that you could have a look at and tease some stuff out of, even if it was something that you took to an interview so we can tease some stuff out of them, so we can get them out of this staged interview horrific space they're in… (Interview 11, Lines 635-640).

OP Practice: Recommendations and Commendations

The preceding sections on those capabilities that interviewees typically value should be seen as implying recommendations for OP practice. E.g. the prevalence of Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour in interviewees' top-ten lists, and the centrality of this capability within the analysed transcripts, indicates that OP should prioritise this capability in its teaching. This concluding section focuses on more general recommendations and evaluations of OP practice.

Multiple interviewees suggested that OP graduates were not ready for the workplace environment they were likely to face upon entering the workforce. There was recognition that this could be more to do with graduates' lack of self-promotion skills, rather than their capabilities. It may also be an inescapable factor of youth.

> So at the moment, as an employer, and I am, I don't see there being a significant difference between employing somebody with a certificate, or a diploma or a degree so from my perspective they all get the same level of, they'll all be Level Four's so they all start on the same, so it's difficult because I'm not seeing that the more time spent studying the better you are, at all; and actually there's people that we haven't employed before because they haven't been able to answer a simple question, like what's psychosis, or their referees didn't come through, and probably till this year, actually until this year not many people made the cut. Joe Bloggs off the street was making a better impression than the polytech graduates…So are they work ready? Maybe. Do they know how to present themselves as work ready? No
> (Interview 12, Lines 510-523).

> …we've had polytech students over the years, I think there would probably be only one or two of the number that we have had, and we've had quite a few, that we would actually employ, and the reason being is that some of them are just too young, we find that quite a number of them, I would say they could take up to a maximum of four or five students [who require counselling] and then they feel overloaded… (Interview 8, Lines 47-51).

> I do also find the culture at the polytech creates something really unique and amazing in your students too and that's, I think the social work department is great, I think that the university lacks work experience and preparedness and people come out really green…whereas what I get out of the polytech is, I do think you guys are endeavouring to get your students work ready… there is a gap between what they come out with and their ability to tell an employer that they've got that, they're not very good at showing it (Interview 7, Lines 292-303).

In this regard, the LCF is a positive step.

> …there needs to be some more kind of vetting of these competencies as they go through the programme because some of the graduates I just do not think… some of these soft skills are lacking…it would be another very good tool to say well actually we've addressed this issue because I think unless that changes what is likely to happen is that for example a principal getting applicants for a school counsellor job will go through and look at the ones from a teaching background and prioritise those and they are not necessarily your best counsellors… I have seen this attitude, my own principal has had this attitude, he has actually said to me at times, "[interviewee name] is there any higher quality than this?" (Interview 8, Lines 454-456).

In addition, and in line with findings from the OT cluster of interviews, students need to be taught how to develop and articulate a professional identity.

> One of the biggest challenges for support workers is their inability to articulate what they do which is why the work continues to be undervalued…if support workers could actually articulate the work that they do, and they can effectively monitor and measure outcomes of that, that would make quite a difference (Interview 12, Lines 61-66).

One of the interviewees noted the need to engage with industry throughout one's studies to understand the workplace environment and give the student a chance to assess whether the work is for them.

> …if you've got students that you think would make fantastic practitioners but they are starting to wobble, give me a ring, send them up, see if we can get them to spend some time in here and that will either kill them or it will inspire them to keep going, you know…
> (Interview 11, Lines 780-783).

As in the OT interview cluster, OP graduates were seen as possessing appropriate cultural and bi-cultural competencies.

> I think the 'cultural competency' and the 'bicultural proficiency in a New Zealand context' are really important things for us, they are critical to delivering ongoing contracts, 'cos we have to provide that part. And I think the students that are coming out of the polytech are pretty well clued up with that, I don't think it's something that is lacking from what I understand (Interview 13, Lines 244-248).

Finally, it was noted by multiple interviewees that OP needs to be careful not to allow students to pursue courses of study that are unable to lead to employment due to a criminal record (or any other reason).

> We've had issues with a few of the polytech students around that over the years, people coming on placements that we've had to turn down because we just can't have them on the employment roll, whether or not they are employed by us on site and that's something the polytech needs to think about when they get new people they're enrolling because there's no point training someone that's going to struggle to get a job for the next ten years because of the industry they're training for… (Interview 13, Lines 294-300).

Visual Arts Summary and Analysis

Introduction

The following summarises and offers analysis of 15 interviews held between OP staff and industry experts operating in fields relevant to OP's visual arts courses. An additional interview was not recorded. Notes from that interview can be found elsewhere. These 15 interviews were held with the purpose of determining the capabilities, or soft skills, that industry experts desire in OP graduates. The following summary and analysis briefly assess whether the capabilities highlighted by interviewees align with the 25 previously identified by OP. It then moves on to identify main themes emerging from the interviews, including recommendations for OP practice.

Learner Capabilities

Interviewees were generally supportive of OP's Learner Capability Framework initiative and praised OP for its work.

> I think this is a great initiative, I think it is good to be thinking about what skills your students are building on already, what can be expanded upon or just described in a different way (Interview 1, Lines 226-227).

> …I think it is the transferable skills that are so important, more important than they have ever been, that people are going to be transitioning between different careers in their lifetimes (Interview 6, Lines 227-229).

Multiple interviewees noted the LCF would not only give employers additional information on OP graduates, but also allow students to tailor their tertiary education to what the job market requires. The commentary offered by all 15 interviewees indicates that employers are attentive to the capabilities potential employees possess. In addition, the 25 capabilities previously identified by OP were seen as relatively comprehensive. Some interviewees noted that there is significant overlap in the 25 capabilities.

> Here's my problem. A lot of these are actually the same thing in slightly different format if you know what I mean. Practices ethically, acts responsibility. The question is which one is the umbrella… (Interview 2, Lines 89-91).

With regard to the potential online tool, there was minor trepidation that this tool may be inefficient in conveying graduates' capabilities to employers. Please see the "Potential for an Online Tool" section below.

There were evident themes in the capabilities that interviewees desired in graduates. Four broad sets of capabilities, and two specific capabilities, were seen as particularly important. These are:

- Communicative skills
  - Communicates effectively in writing
  - Communicates effectively verbally
  - Communicates effectively visually
- Thought processes
  - Thinks creatively
  - Thinks critically
  - Solves problems
- Interpersonal skills
  - Works in teams
  - Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- Cultural competencies
  - Displays cultural competence
  - Displays bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context.
- Organises effectively
- Demonstrates resilience

Communicative/Interpersonal Skills

As in other interview clusters, communicative skills were seen as important. Visual communication, perhaps surprisingly, was the least cited mode of communication. Multiple interviewees grouped two or more modes of communication as a single item in their top-ten list. Listening was cited as important by those in teaching professions.

> …does not mean they have to be theatrical and extrovert but simply that they have to be clear confident communicators and have to be able to support their oral and body language, eye contact etc. (Interview 2, Lines 40-42).

> …to me the ability to communicate is fundamental to the act of teaching, and I see all three as critical there because even if you are good at only one of those, you are not able to convey what you are teaching to the broad range of students, because each student, they need information presented in multiple ways, and different learning styles need different ways to communicate it (Interview 6, Lines 63-67).

> Communicates Effectively Visually at the top purely because that is the ultimate outcome of all of my work. That is almost a job description really (Interview 10, 291-292).

> …communication is the core of what our curator's job is, through the display aspect particularly… (Interview 11, Lines 144-145).

Thought Processes

Although the 15 interviews analysed here involved interviewees from diverse workplaces, creative thinking, critical thought and problem-solving abilities were seen as important in all the work environments in question.

> …there are always going to be problems, that's a given. Something unforeseen (Interview 15, Line 92).

> …in our industry there is a lot of times where we get plans and they don't actually work, and we are doing renovations and stuff where you have to think on your feet, and I can't be there all the time…They need to be creative, come up with a way to make that work so it is quite important (Interview 12, Lines 185-189).

> Thinking Critically is quite important because we have to take a topic and then pull it to pieces… what are the key things that we are trying to get across…how is ours going to be distinctive (Interview 11, Lines 187-189).

Interpersonal Skills

Fourteen interviewees included either Works in Teams or Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour in their top-ten list. Notably, Works Independently was seen as vital to team work, as individuals need to be able to be trusted to contribute to a team's output without micro-management.

> Being able to understand how to work within a team, and contribute to the team vibe is important and sometimes hard (Interview 1, Lines 125-126).

> It's very important in the gallery that you interact with people, that you don't dominate them. I always greet people when they come in, wait for a period of time then ask them if they want assistance, let them feel familiar, that they are not being pressured (Interview 3, Lines 58-60).

> I think for me, the prime selection would be if you were going to be a good team fit. That is why I have put displays effective personal behaviour (Interview 5, Lines 72-73).

Cultural Competencies

Far more so than any interview cluster analysed thus far, these 15 interviews demonstrate a need for graduates to be culturally competent, particularly in a NZ context. Such sentiments were particularly strong among interviewees working in public institutions of arts/culture (e.g. museums) and education.

> I take it as a given that all students will have demonstrated inclusive attitudes and a lack of prejudice and an awareness of what is going on in the world, and all their applications. But the bottom line is simple. There is a Bi-Cultural proficiency in the NZ context, they must demonstrate that intangibly at the end of the year in order to gain provisional registration to enter a classroom (Interview 2, Lines 224-228).

> I think that is the core of what we do, we are constantly dealing with many different people, many different cultures, or our audience is filled with people of many different cultures. A good understanding particularly of our Bi-Cultural nation is really important. And having not only displaying cultural competency but embodying it, practicing it (Interview 4, Lines 79-83).

> I think Bi-Cultural is becoming more and more important. As long as you have a commitment to learn is ok. That really applies to most museums and galleries (Interview 5, Lines 101-102).

> …it's about understanding that people from different backgrounds have different beliefs and values. The ability to relate to people in a way, the dignity of their culture, and an appreciation of the differences I think is really important in building those relationships that you need to be an effective teacher (Interview 6, Lines 76-79).

Organises Effectively

Organises Effectively was contained in many interviewee's top-ten lists. Moreover, when interviewees were asked what capabilities were important in their workplace prior to being shown OP's 25 capabilities, time management, prioritisation of tasks or something similar was often mentioned.

> …there is lots to be done, and while you are working in a team you are responsible for your own bits of work so you are a grown up and need to work it out (Interview 13, Lines 66-68).

> If they are not an organise [sic] person this will follow through on their work… (Interview 12, Lines 180-181).

> Teachers have to have good organisational skills, personally and professionally. You are dealing with multiple classes, multiple individuals, sometimes multiple subjects, working with complex learning environment where you are moving around, you have got IT resource, you have to manage budgets, all sorts of things, so Organisational Skills are really important (Interview 6, Lines 92-96).

Demonstrates Resilience

Although interviewees' fields differed, many noted that personal resilience is required in their sector.

> A question I often ask students in an interview is how they handle stress (interview 2, lines 31-32).

> …you constantly get knocked back, you have to think about the positives you have achieved, you have to think what can we do that is still going to be great and beneficial (Interview 5, Lines 1008-110).

> …teaching is a particularly demanding job in terms of emotionally, emotionally it is incredibly demanding, you have to be physically fit, you have to be mentally well, and you have to be able to multi-task, and if you aren't resilient you don't last long on this job, you are not effective in this job (Interview 6, Lines 57-60).

> I guess resilience is something like, it is two days from opening and the printers ring up and say the printer is down we can't do this, or the collections team will say that object, a bit has broken off it so it can't go out. That ability to be able to deal with crisis really (Interview 10, Lines 323-325).

Other Relevant Findings

- Passion and enthusiasm for the subject matter in question was seen as very valuable.
- Professionalism was valued – dress well, be punctual, etc.
- International grads require understanding of English language and NZ's bi-cultural context.

How Employers Assess Graduate Capabilities

In assessing graduates' capabilities interviewees utilised a number of sources of information including CVs, cover letters, references, academic record, interview performance, and personal life and circumstance. Interviewees were particularly interested in:

- Work and volunteer history:
    - We would be looking at the kind of work experience, volunteer experience, what project experience they have been involved in. And we would be asking them to talk to some of these things (Interview 1, Lines 163-165).
- Interviewees often employ a "tell us about a time when" line of questioning in job interviews. The idea is to expose how applicants work with others, problem-solve, etc.
    - The ability to communicate the contents of a graduate's own portfolio: how do they present their work, so that it is clear not just a jumble box or bag of things that haul out to show you. That they can organise and talk around their work (Interview 3, Lines 84-86).
- An understanding of the organisation to which a grad is applying for work, and what a grad hopes to learn through working there. E.g. acknowledging strengths and weakness and where they hope to improve.

Potential for an Online Tool

Interviewees were generally positive in their assessment of the benefits of an online tool conveying graduates' capabilities. Commentary on the potential online tool included:

- Support for the notion that an online portfolio of some type would be valued by employers and give OP students an edge in seeking employment:
    - Absolutely, definitely. I think that is something that they could feed into as they got more experience. That is a real issue even for someone like myself when you tried to get your foot in the door sort of thing as it were, they say what have you done. And you present things you have done in a tertiary environment, and things like that, they add a lot of value (Interview 10, Lines 423-426).
    - I think that would be really useful. When you go through a recruitment process it is really hard sometimes to pick out those things, especially from people that have not been in the workforce before you can't see what work they have done so that would be really helpful and it would give them a leading edge I think in terms of for people to pick them up off that paper and interview them, because that is the hardest part (Interview 1, Lines 174-178).
    - Yes, like we have hired a few people from on paper, seemed like they would work out really well, and then for reason or another it doesn't work out that way. You know, doesn't work well with the team that we have, could be a million reasons. Something like that. If I knew someone had good people skills…Yes if there was something that could help me out, tick tick tick (Interview 15, Lines 168-176).
- The notion that an online tool would be in line with practice within the design industry.
    - A lot of designers and businesses do that already, printers and places like that you can go online and see what sort of large scale work they have been doing, projects that are involved and things like that. I think that would be a really good thing actually (Interview 10, Lines 441-443).
- The suggestion that the tool could help introverted students present evidence of capabilities. This could ameliorate the trend of skilled self-promoters winning positions they are not qualified for.
- The idea that demonstrated improvement in capabilities, not just demonstrated ability, might be important with regard to the online tool.
- Concern over issues of how the online tool would be verified/validated:
    - …if it was established that those assessments by those people at the polytech proved to be substantial when you actually had the person, so you had confidence in the assessment (Interview 11, Lines 354-356).
    - I think it would be useful. It would be interesting to see if the real world reality matched the print out if you like. It's always different in real life than it is in a learning institution. Always. So it's, I think anyone, well I would be apprehensive as to whether the information would be given about this particular person through that online tool was as effective or as honest necessarily as a referee check would be. So, yeah I would be apprehensive until I had some experience with the tool. But you would need to

know through experience. You would need to know how the tool was put together, you would need to know much time, was it objective, but again a referee check necessarily might not be objective as well as the referee might just want them to have an opportunity to get the job, or to get rid of them (Interview 9, Lines 138-146).

- Scepticism that an online tool would provide information above and beyond that provided by traditional means, such as CVs, etc.

OP Practice: Recommendations

Many interviewees felt that studies in the arts equip students with valuable transferable skills. Interviewees recommended that this should be made evident not only to employers but also students themselves.

- But we also know that the evidence is that bringing creative people into organisations just adds another level of depth of thinking, of being, of doing – I'm so biased it's difficult to step out of that but I do think there is a whole lot of room for Art School graduates to be going into non art–placed organisations as they add a value that we need to be able to describe (Interview 1, Lines 245-248).
- We would expect the technical knowledge to be transferrable too which is not something most students coming out of their degree what they are necessarily aware of (Interview 2, Lines 60-62).
- …show the students the potential of what is their degree…I think they see it as being an artist, or a designer, or they see it sometimes they can have a very one track mind as to what they can get out of it (Interview 4, Lines 279-287).
- I think it can bring a lot of value to any workplace, to be highly visual I think it teaches you a very creative way of thinking (Interview 5, Lines 187-188).

Specific suggestions for increasing these skills include:

- The inclusion of professional practice papers and internships in coursework:
    - I think that professional practice paper and the opportunity to do an internship in this city, through all the organisations we have in the city like the DCC, ORC, University, places that you don't sometimes think are the likely places, can build great opportunities for learning – for us as the host, but also for that young student (Interview 1, Lines 233-236).
    - It is noted, however, that even with internship experience securing a job in some roles, such as working in museums, can be very difficult.
- Teaching OP students in relevant courses museum collection management software.
    - It is something that needs to be learnt if you want to get into museums (Interview 13, Lines 115-116).
    - The software Vernon is mentioned in multiple interviews.
- Teaching OP students how to use modern digital communication platforms such as Slack.
- Aligning coursework with contemporary operations of industries. One interviewee suggests that OP courses are quite restrictive in not allowing students to take materials (e.g. computer code) from the internet. It is seen as stealing/plagiarism. However, within industry the ability to find resources online is a relevant tool.
- Moreover, OP needs to be aware of the changing nature of work:
    - …the important thing for them [tertiary institutes] is to be really aware of the change in the work environment, which means that people don't have to be together to do this stuff. Like they can work all over the world, they don't even have to have an office. We work like that remotely all the time, so there is a whole ability at the other end with people being able to self management (Interview 16, Lines 62-66).

There were a number of comments made with regard to graduates (not exclusively from OP) or young employees that the interviewees had had experiences with. Some offered praise while others offered criticism.

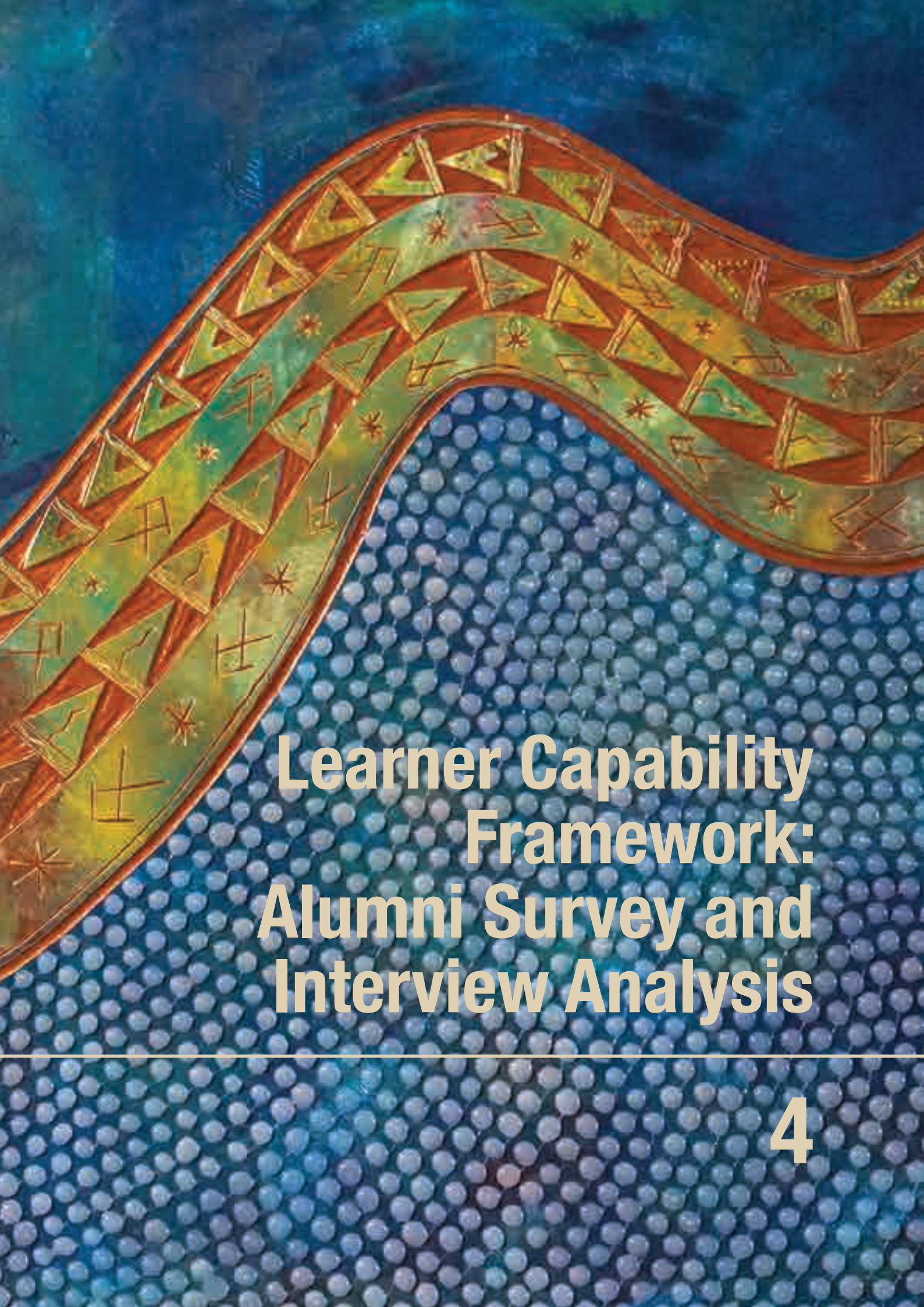
> It just seems that you have to do a lot of hand holding, a lot of "it's ok you are doing well", whereas I never had that type of treatment when I was coming through, you were just told what to do and get on with it (Interview 7, Lines 91-93).

> …they kind of think they can come in sit behind the big desk, get paid thousands and leave you know. No. Have you learnt to lift the something without hurting yourself, can you wind a cable, the really basic things. And our guys have come up from, a lot have done courses and they haven't been useful, in our type of industry. (Interview 15, Lines 225-232).

> He [a young employee] is a perfect example of somebody at university would have been a B man or a B plus, but if you could grade the soft skills he would be off the scales, +++. He knows everybody's name, every cleaner that works here, how many children they may have. Whenever there is something difficult, we will work around that, he is really good at it, works with them within the constraints. So this is a very important thing (Interview 11, Lines 300-304).

> …going back to the two guys I have got from arts school, the thing I noticed about them was their eye for detail…It has actually given me quite an insight into going, gee here is an area where you can take people from and just have a little more finesse that you might get from other guys coming through the trade (Interview 12, Lines 102-108).

In addition to praise of its graduates, one interviewee noted that OP is perceived as being a good employer with regard to offering opportunities for professional development.



Learner Capability Framework: Alumni Survey and Interview Analysis

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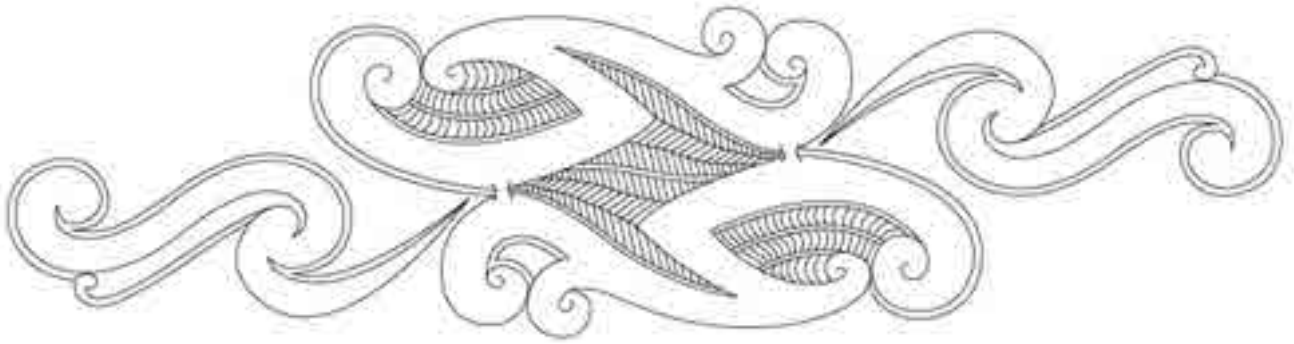


Alumni Survey and Interview Analysis Report

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Tropical Ocean,* 2018.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 60 x 90cm.

Introduction

Understanding capability, and then its application in the workplace is a multi-sided process to which each participant, whether employer/stakeholder or employee, bring their understandings and aspirations with regard to capability. During Phase One of the Learner Capability Research we asked employers and stakeholders to define what capability in the workplace meant to them and asked them to identify and categorise the 25 capabilities that Otago Polytechnic had identified as important. From this information we were able to build an understanding of the kinds of capabilities that employers and stakeholders were looking for in their workplaces and use this information to map against our current curricula and aspirations for our learners.

To close the loop on these findings it is vitally important to gauge insights from past graduates that are now in work in their chosen fields, and those who are in work but in fields not associated with what they primarily studied. We approached all past graduates of Otago Polytechnic in all 15 programmes from 2013-2018 to be involved in this part of the research and received 389 unique responses to our initial survey using Qualtrics. In this survey we asked alumni to identify the ten most important capabilities that related to their experience and current positions in the workplace. We invited alumni to also follow this process up with an interview to present them with the capabilities that their employers and stakeholders had valued and to ask them to review these in light of their own experiences. In gathering and analysing this information we could then identify similarities in thinking about what graduates need and what employers want, while also identifying the core shared capabilities across different workspaces to inform students of the important role that capability has in being work ready.

The initial research in the Learner Capability Framework focused on how employers and stakeholders relate to the identified capabilities, and what were the most important to them in their workplaces. In this second stage of this part of the research we aimed to get the alumni voice on both the capability framework and then around the selection of capabilities that employers and stakeholders had made.

This was conducted in two parts. Initially participants responded to a survey created using Qualtrics (See appendix 1). The survey asked some simple identifying information regarding their qualifications and years attained, their current work status and industry. Then it asked alumni to review the Learner Capability Framework document and prioritise the ten most important capabilities as they perceived to their job and to rate these from low, medium or high in importance to them. It then asked them to identify which, if any, the Otago Polytechnic assisted with in their studies, and to reflect on the capabilities as presented and respond if there are any they feel are omitted from the list that they have encountered or use in their positions, and how the Otago Polytechnic might better assist with capability development in their studies. From this first outreach we received 381 unique and usable returns (Figure 1).

Veterinary Nursing and Natural Sciences were omitted from this part of the study as there was not enough employer/stakeholder response to validate answers.

As a part of the survey respondents were asked if they could participate in a further interview to be conducted by telephone with a researcher to gain some further information around capability and capability acquisition. From this we received 40 participants from the pool of the original respondents.

Due to working commitments for many of these participants we conducted this part of the research following two methods. We held phone interviews with 12 of the respondents and conducted a further Qualtrics survey with the remaining 28 (see appendix 2).

Our primary line of questioning was - What are your experiences of how capabilities connect with your role in the workplace? And we also asked participants to consider the changing nature of their workplace and what they might need to do to develop or acquire new capabilities as these changes unfolded. From general responses we found that capability as it occurs means different things to different people and in different contexts, and it became apparent that capability as a set of independent and defined concepts were interpreted in very different ways depending on the participants' distinction between competency and capability.

	PROGRAMME AREAS	NO. OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS	NO. OF FOLLOW UP INTERVIEWS
1	Visual Arts	26	6
2	Business	105	15
3	Architecture	3	
4	Communication Design	12	2
5	Fashion	5	0
6	Product Design	3	
7	Food Design	24	1
8	CDPW – Social Services	38	2
9	Quantity Surveying – Construction	9	1
10	Engineering Technology	21	5
11	Information Technology	26	2
12	Applied Science (Sports)	13	3
13	Occupational Therapy	32	2
14	Midwifery	16	1
15	Nursing	18	
16	Vet Nursing	21	
17	Natural Science	12	
		381	40

Figure 1. Survey Demographic for Research Interviews.

Employers view capability in multiple ways, and this is highlighted also in the ways that alumni responded to questions about capability. This was an interesting insight into how our learners might negotiate the capability as a unit, for example *Solves Problems*, and then how this might be enacted in the workplace as a kind of collaboration.

We found that in there were large cross-sections of overlap between how employers and alumni understand the concept of capabilities, but we also found a different kind of language was used in expressing these. Ideas of passion, professionalism, maturity, attitude and work ethic continued to be expressed when defining the employer relation to capability and demonstrating capability in the workplace. This posed the question of the shared understanding of capability in the alumni voice and if a particular language emerged in describing capability from this group.

Responses from both groups also highlighted a kind of constructed behaviour for grouping a single capability into a series of different operations, for example the employer group responses were highlighted in thought processes that there are relationships and specific differences between critical and creative thought while applying these to solving problems. In the alumni response group this was echoed in that students wanted more *real-world* type scenarios where capabilities could be explored in solving these problems.

> *More real practical study cases to be solved to get the feel in the industry...Internship is a part of compulsory subject so all students get a better perspective about working in the industry, not just theoretical*
>
> – Construction respondent 6.

This is an interesting insight to begin to correlate responses to capability in that there is a natural difference in being in the process and in thinking about a process. Both groups are easily able to identify the capability when applied to a larger picture or project of that capability. This is important in thinking about how we implement the framework into curriculum to ensure that the learn-space has a sense of the workspace but identifies the key concepts and application for capability.

From our research into employer capability priorities we discovered that the most important capabilities related to intrapersonal capabilities and thought process capabilities.

> *…communication is just obviously an essential tool and that without clear communication, it can often result in, for example, management having to get far more involved with an employee and that's something that is culturally [problematic in the workplace], we don't like the feeling of any kind of micro-management…*
>
> (Communication Design Interview 4, Lines 30-33).

> *Like people, clients of ours generally come to us because they have a problem, in a lot of cases. So, ultimately the skills that we want to develop in our people, is to be able to work through the various factors that are giving rise to that situation, to toss things around and ultimately to come up with a solution that works for the client*
>
> (Business Interview 16, Lines 312-315).

On the following pages are general summaries of the initial Qualtrics survey responses presented to alumni of each programme area and the priority selection correlations. Of interest is the ways in which alumni view the complex relations between capability and competency, between a skill and enacting that skill in a complex environment.

What we found is that in general alumni agreed with the employer/stakeholder selections but the arrangement of these from most desirable to needed changed in the matrix, with alumni arrangements reflecting their different positional nature in the employment workspace.

Most Common Themes Referenced in the Survey Responses

Workplace Readiness and Transition

By far the most common theme across the 13 clusters of respondents was that students need to be workplace-ready upon completing their studies. OP must prepare students for the realities of the industries they are likely to enter and play an active part in assisting their transition from study to work. Comments touched upon:

1. The importance of interaction between students and industry prior to course completion. There was a notable focus on worksite placements, with comments suggesting that placements could be longer, more common (i.e. greater in number), include more stringent criteria relating to capabilities and be more varied as to the workplaces students attend. Students should not only go to industry. OP should seek to bring industry experts into the classroom as speakers and mentors, etc.

2. Classroom content and methodology should reflect workplace reality. Scenarios and case studies dealing with industry issues/challenges were mentioned, for example.

3. Technology utilised in the classroom should be up to date with technology used in industry.

4. OP should help students with networking, interview technique and preparing CVs and cover letters both during and following studies.

Quotation Examples

Application of real life scenarios should be incorporated more - for instance, business students could participate in case study competitions

– Business respondent 71.

More real practical study cases to be solved to get the feel in the industry...Internship is a part of compulsory subject so all students get a better perspective about working in the industry, not just theoretical

– Construction respondent 6.

The biggest obstacles I needed help with after graduating was not knowing where to look for work or how to network. I'm still really struggling with those and I think students need more preparation for the job hunt

– Design respondent 13.

More practical, real world scenarios. And a variety of. Not the same re worked scenario each time. Use a variety of practice contexts, education as well as health. Through a range of ages and conditions

– Occupational Therapy respondent 2.

We need to move to real enterprise, e.g permanent shop for students to sale [sic] *their works?*

– Visual Arts respondent 13.

Ability to go to work full time straight after study is hard, more emphasis on 40 hour study weeks, no skipping classes

– Nursing respondent 10.

Most Commonly Discussed Capabilities

Resilience, Work-life Balance and Student Wellbeing

Linked to the theme of work preparedness, OP should help students develop their personal resilience to the pressures many workplaces create. Possessing a work-life balance was often discussed in this context. Moreover, the pressures of tertiary studies (and simply being a young person) were noted. OP should operate in a way that enhances student wellbeing and help equip students with the skills to look after their own wellbeing in the workforce. Students who are well within themselves are students who are more likely to develop capabilities and other course-related skills. Respondents from health disciplines were particularly likely to discuss resilience.

> *Established support for emotional challenge management*
> – Visual Arts respondent 18.

> *Giving students the ability to build resilience in the work place* [sic]
> – CDPW respondent 28.

> *Emphasis on resilience and self-care especially when dealing with aggressive, confused and/or upset patients and demanding workplaces*
> – Nursing respondent 8.

> *Include real-life coping strategies for anxiety in this training so students can develop the resilience required to cope with the pressures of professional life*
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 7.

> *I believe it's important to ensure students are taking care of their wellness needs so they can be fully engaged and getting the most out of their classes. A good tip I was given as a student at OP was to take Vitamin D3, it helped to prevent those dreaded 'Dunedin blues' during the gloomy winter months. I was also incredibly thankful for always having oats and milk available in the OISA kitchen on those weeks where I was short on money*
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

Communication

Communication capabilities were some of the most commonly discussed by respondents. Verbal and written communication were the modes of communication emphasised. Visual was not discussed, other than by a respondent in the visual arts who noted the need for students to be able to explain (verbally or in writing) their visual work. Business respondents emphasised the need for training in professional communication.

> *Within IT I think commutation and organisation will go long way. All techies can solve problems but not all techies can communicate those issues to laymen*
> – IT respondent 14.

> *Communicate with clients…learn to ask good questions*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 17.

> *Help shy students with more verbal communication skills*
> – Visual Arts respondent 22.

> *I found the essays and assignments I did at polytech lacking majorly. I could not write well and my mistakes were not corrected or pointed out in a way that I could improve to a university standard. Because of this, my verbal communication skills were also inhibited, despite constant group presentations*
> – Visual Arts respondent 24.

> *A paper dedicated on teaching students how to write coherently, with support on what constitutes arguments, paragraphs, grammar etc*
> – Business respondent 25.

> *Talking about work capabilities, when you start working in an organisation main thing is your communication with your colleagues/boss/customers*
> – Business respondent 93.

Teamwork/Collaboration

A number of respondents noted the importance of learning to work within a team and, thus, course work that emphasises this capability. Teamwork was seen as important for a number of reasons, not least because it is a reality of many workplaces and can build collegiality between classmates and staff (discussed below). Group work also helps students to develop capabilities such as communication, cultural competency (where teams are diverse) and group level problem-solving/critical thinking.[1] While valued by respondents, it was also noted that group work needs to be administrated in such a way that ensures equal participation by group members. Respondents within the visual arts cluster discussed the distinct, but related, notion of collaboration (between academic disciplines and even education institutions) and the value that it would bring students.

> *Introduce more team building and effective team management activities*
> – Business respondent 47.

> *More group assignments with mixed abilities and ethnicities*
> – Business respondent 28.

> *Provide more group projects, but always check that all group members are contributing equally. Sometimes, the group leaders are the only ones who feel responsible to complete the projects. This is also to check if students are being organised*
> – Business respondent 87.

> *I think Capability can create real opportunities that allow all areas of students to work collaboratively in fun, meaningful and achievable projects. For example: [the lecturer] organises the Art and Water project with Uni...Nature of OP programme are multi-disciplinary, but in reality it lacks collaboration with other fields. e.g can an art students work with food design student to come out a project? I think Capability have the ability to close rapport between different fields*
> – Visual Arts respondent 13.

> *More time working in teams to problem solve*
> – Nursing respondent 10.

> *Group case studies/scenario based learning to build team work and critical thinking in a less pressured environment like simulation*
> – Nursing respondent 16.

Role of Students in the Learning Environment

Student Empowerment and Leadership

A number of respondents made comments on what role students should have in the classroom. Generally speaking, the commentary suggests a desire that students have an empowered position in the learning process. Numerous respondents saw value in a relationship between staff and students in which students identify the skills/knowledge/capabilities that are important to them and staff assist them in achieving these. Moreover, this type of empowerment discussed might also see students accountable to each other, not just to staff members. Importantly, this type of learning may require one-on-one interaction with staff or small class sizes.

> *Opportunities for students to identify an area they need to develop, and allow them to focus on learning/developing this skill for a module/assessment…Encourage students to take responsibility for their personal growth outside of the classroom as well as inside of it*
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 11.

> *Have a class leader each week that is responsible for ensuring everyone turns up to classes (or communicates absence). They are also responsible for delegating jobs, organising equipment, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page with what they need to be doing. It's something we do at Police College and it's worked really well*
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

> *Provide extra tutorials/workshops to help you identify these core skills and then work on them*
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 18.

[1] The discussion of problem-solving and critical thinking in a teamwork context was also found in analysing employers' views on capabilities.

Opportunities for students to identify an area they need to develop, and allow them to focus on learning/developing this skill for a module/assessment

– Applied Science and Sport respondent 11.

Continue providing students with opportunities to step up into leadership positions in their communities

– Design and Architectural Studies respondent 3.

Help students to create their own two-year plan/vision…Break the plan/vision down into doable actions

– Business respondent 35.

Peer/group mentoring facilitated by OP for students to learn from each other

– Nursing respondent 5.

Student Cohesion/Collegiality

While not explicitly linked to the matters of wellness discussed above, it was interesting to note that respondents from multiple clusters expressed a desire for greater connections with their peers and more opportunities to interact with staff and other students in informal settings.

Bring students together from time to time

– CDPW respondent 26.

OP run social events for the engineering department to develop social skills

– Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 10.

In the last year of the degree students could buddy with a first-year student and provide them with advice, guidance, support, and community contacts

– Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

Seeking to be Inspired

Multiple respondents noted that in attending OP they not only sought knowledge/skills/capabilities but also inspiration. In particular, OP was encouraged to utilise successful people within relevant industries as mentors or inspirational speakers. The call for inspiration was most notable among business and culinary arts respondents.

Provide examples of proven leadership (mentors)…Inspiration examples

– Culinary Arts respondent 16.

Having past students return to talk about their experiences since graduating from OP

– Culinary Arts respondent 24.

Have previous graduates (of notoriety [sic] *such as ex All Blacks) discuss their learning with new learners at the start of their journey*

– Business respondent 16.

Higher [sic] *good professional speaker who can inspire more rather than focusing on study materials*

– Business respondent 86.

Have more leaders share their own stories, not just successes but stepping blocks

– Business respondent 29.

Different Needs for Different Demographics

A handful of respondents noted that what students need from OP, both with regards to developing capabilities and more generally, will, in part, be determined by which demographics of the student population they fit into. Groups that may differ from the "average" OP student include mature/foreign/distance/post-graduate students. It was noted, for example, that mature students may require additional help with digital competence. In addition, OP should develop ways of including distance students in group work and social interactions with classmates.

> *Being a distance student was difficult, not having a strong knowledge as to how to access the library, which would have helped...Not having access to a peer group was tough, though I did have a good tutor who was in touch regularly and gave good advice*
>
> – Business respondent 26.

> *A lot more help for mature students who don't have digital capabilities*
>
> – Visual Arts respondent 14.

Praise and Criticism of OP

All of the above themes should be understood to indicate possible areas of improvement for OP. This is not to say, however, that OP practice in the areas discussed is presently sub-par. In fact, the balance of comments that could be interpreted as explicit praise or criticism was heavily in favour of praise. It was rare that respondents explicitly criticised OP staff or OP as an institution, particularly in any way that directly spoke to the above themes.

Praise

A lot of praise centred around respondents' feelings that capabilities had been well taught and that, in general, they had been well prepared for post-study work and life. I quote at length to illustrate the preponderance of positivity.

> *The listed skills were very well covered in the field of study I was in at the time and I don't think there was improvement needed…*
>
> – IT respondent 11.

> *I think OP does a fantastic job at preparing students for the real world*
>
> – IT respondent 12.

> *I feel like OP has done a pretty good job [at equipping students with capabilities] already, in my degree anyway*
>
> – IT respondent 5.

> *I don't think that you could do any better [at equipping students with capabilities]*
>
> – Business respondent 92.

> *I feel like my time at OP equipped me well for my job and can't immediately think of anything that would help more*
>
> – Design respondent 4.

> *This [capabilities] pathway to learning is amazing and I am so grateful that I found this to enable and empower me to complete a Bachelor qualification...Can't thank Otago Polytechnic enough for facilitating my learning journey*
>
> – Business respondent 63.

> *Studying via the Otago Polytechnic gave me the confidence to survive a very challenging workplace*
>
> – Business respondent 83.

> *I think OP gave me a great foundation in equipping me with these capabilities. I've built on them as I've gone onwards in my work*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 1.

> *I think OP are doing a great job so can't think of how they can do things better*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 17.

Dont change anything. Be the leader in innovation. Keep the ideal currently in place, doing things that relate and are work ready values

– Culinary Arts respondent 11.

I think OP does this [equipping students with capabilities] very well. My experience is a little different, in that I was already working in my field and had a post-graduate qualification prior to gaining my undergraduate qualification, along with a long work/life experience. I also completed my studies from a distance (Australia) and therefore did not have access to on-campus tools/ activities. I suspect that, for younger students the very fact of OP having made a commitment to naming and valuing these capabilities has a positive impact

– CDPW respondent 25.

It is difficult to teach these skills without realistic simulations or placements. OP gave me many placement opportunities and that made all the difference to my workplace capabilities - I graduated ready to work, as opposed to my previous University degree that gave me no workplace experience before graduating

– Occupation Therapy respondent 32.

I went on to study a Master of Arts with Wintec Institute of Technology and can without hesitation say that the teaching infrastructure at the Otago Polytechnic is far superior...I have no complaints with the Otago Polytechnic I think it is a wonderful school that has international comparisons only outside of New Zealand

– Visual Arts respondent 5.

Breadth of scope for Art generally I received at OP has enabled me to critically evaluate my work...Has given me workable tools to develop my own voice

– Visual Arts respondent 12.

I was incredibly well prepared by OP could not do more!

– Midwifery respondent 11.

OP did a great job with providing the PG education, and I felt well equipped in these capabilities

– Midwifery respondent 14.

The role of committed staff members was often noted.

My lecturers were committed to ensuring my cohort are equipped with the deepest sense of ethics required to shape us into effective and responsible professionals, which I continue to appreciate not only in my professional, but also my personal life to this day

– Design respondent 3.

Having a supervisor who was engaged with the project that I was doing and guiding me in the right direction helped me

– Business respondent 56.

[Staff member name] was excellent and got the best out of me, without a doubt

– Business respondent 51.

I thought the process was great. Well supported during the programme and feedback from written and verbal assessments

– Business respondent 4.

The support I received from my facilitator during my studies was excellent and I hope this support is maintained for all students

– Business respondent 36.

The support I received during my studies with Otago Polytechnic via my facilitator was awesome. I am actively encouraging my friends and whanau with years of work experience to take up this wonderful opportunity to get their degrees completed via Otago Polytechnic

– Business respondent 36.

You folks did a good job in keeping me motivated

– Business respondent 26.

I think OP really has widened my thought processes and inspired me to see that you can be so much more than just a chef when you do Culinary Arts. The lecturers in the BCA programme really helped me identify my potentials and saw that I was a nurturing and organised person who would sit well within the education system. They let me experience the education sector in the last year of my studies during project based learning and helped me identify my own capability and what I could be doing in the future. I absolutely think that without this programme I would still be chefing in [a]. dark kitchen and not found my full potential. I have never stopped asking 'why' since I finished in 2016

– Culinary Arts respondent 12.

I think OP do a very good job. I had a good lecturer who was always available to discuss options

– CDPW respondent 13.

Criticism

Criticism largely took place along the same lines as praise, although was far less common. Some respondents felt that they had been ill equipped for the workforce.

Work experience was a joke un [sic] *my programme*

– Architectural Studies respondent 2.

CAPL that I experienced was about telling our story, very little about learning new. Unfortunately it has not helped me thus far, to get ahead, in fact I am seen as too flash to many employers

– Business respondent 13.

Students are preparing for the real world, some lecturers think everything should be fun and games, real jobs are not like that. It's ok to have a laugh but remember to apply a serious nature when needed

– Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 1.

When I graduated there was no after graduation care or help with work placement. This has meant that I have had to rely on my past experience for my current job role. This has made my diploma essentially irrelevant

– Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 8.

Other criticism questioned OP and OP staff members'[2] ethics, suggesting that things such as pass rates, support for students and some course offerings were driven not by concern for students or higher ideals of quality education but, rather, self-interest or profit,

Start a placement cell and provide what you commit to. That graduate diploma was a money minting gimmick and nothing else

– Business respondent 15.

The business school's grading was too lenient. They were so focused on increasing graduation/ pass rates that they neglected their grading. This resulted in students having higher grades in subjects that they did not fully understand - myself included. This also resulted in a lack of understanding and expectation of management when entering the workforce

– Business respondent 71.

Staff could work ethically, i.e. not [go away] at the crucial endgame to further their own interests

– Visual Arts respondent 25.

I had done the **iamcapable** *module when I was doing my GDSM. I had reminded the program runners to have a look. But no one was bothered. I had even written this a couple of times but no one was bothered. I think this is waste of time and you are misleading the students at least with the* **iamcapable** *module. You guys need some serious monitoring here . Thanks*

– Business respondent 94.

One respondent linked their time at OP with deteriorating mental health. Given the serious nature of this comment, it should be noted that there was no further feedback of this nature.

OP didn't help me with any of those. I had to choose one to get to this question. OP DID help my depression and anxiety get worse, made me realise that going to OP was one of the worst mistakes of my life

– CDPW respondent 7.

[2] No staff member was mentioned by name.

Comparative Analysis of Employer vs Alumni Capability Priorities

Applied Science (Sports)

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Works in Teams	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
3	Demonstrates Resilience	Works Independently
4	Practices Ethically	Works in Teams
5	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Displays Cultural Competence
6	Inspires Others	Communicates Effectively in Writing
7	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Practices Health and Safety
8	Acts Responsibly	Displays Leadership
9	Works Independently	Thinks Critically
10	Thinks Creatively	Acts Responsibly

Architectural Studies

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Solves Problems	Communicates Effectively in Writing
2	Displays Digital Competence	Communicates Effectively Visually
3	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Works Independently
4	Thinks Creatively	Displays Cultural Competence
5	Works in Teams	Thinks Creatively
6	Organises Effectively	Thinks Critically
7	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Solves Problems
8	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Communicates Effectively Verbally
9	Communicates Effectively Visually	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
10	Thinks Critically	Works in Teams

Business

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Works in Teams	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Works in Teams
3	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
4	Solves Problems	Solves Problems
5	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Communicates Effectively in Writing
6	Organises Effectively	Works Independently
7	Displays Digital Competence	Displays Leadership
8	Displays Cultural Competence	Thinks Critically
9	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Organises Effectively
10	Acts Responsibly	Acts Responsibly
10	Works Independently	

Communication Design

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Thinks Creatively	Communicates Effectively in Writing
3	Solves Problems	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
4	Works Independently	Thinks Creatively
5	Works in Teams	Works Independently
6	Organises Effectively	Displays Digital Competence
7	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Displays Leadership
8	Acts Responsibly	Thinks Critically
9	Communicates Effectively Visually	Communicates Effectively Visually
10	Thinks Critically	Organises Effectively

Construction

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Works in Teams	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Works in Teams
3	Solves Problems	Communicates Effectively in Writing
4	Acts Responsibly	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
5	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Works Independently
6	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Solves Problems
7	Practices Ethically	Communicates Effectively Visually
8	Organises Effectively	Organises Effectively
9	Practices Health and Safety	Displays Leadership
10	Thinks Critically	Thinks Critically

Fashion Design

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Communicates Effectively in Writing
2	Displays Digital Competence	Communicates Effectively Verbally
3	Works Independently	Works Independently
4	Works in Teams	Displays Digital Competence
5	Thinks Creatively	Organises Effectively
6	Solves Problems	Thinks Creatively
7	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Communicates Effectively Visually
8	Thinks Critically	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
9	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Works in Teams
10	Organises Effectively	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning

Food Design

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Works in Teams	Works in Teams
2	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Communicates Effectively Verbally
3	Organises Effectively	Organises Effectively
4	Acts Responsibly	Solves Problems
5	Thinks Creatively	Works Independently
6	Solves Problems	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
7	Practices Health and Safety	Acts Responsibly
8	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Practices Health and Safety
9	Demonstrates Resilience	Displays Leadership
10	Displays Leadership	Displays Cultural Competence

Product Design

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Thinks Creatively	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Solves Problems	Communicates Effectively Visually
3	Works in Teams	Works Independently
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Works in Teams
5	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Displays Digital Competence
6	Thinks Critically	Organises Effectively
7	Organises Effectively	Thinks Creatively
8	Demonstrates Resilience	Enterprising
9	Works Independently	Thinks Critically
9	Communicates Effectively in Writing	
10	Acts Responsibly	Solves Problems

Engineering Technology

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Solves Problems	Works in Teams
2	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Communicates Effectively Verbally
3	Works in Teams	Communicates Effectively in Writing
4	Practices Health and Safety	Solves Problems
5	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Works Independently
6	Acts Responsibly	Practices Health and Safety
7	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
8	Thinks Critically	Thinks Creatively
9	Demonstrates Resilience	Thinks Critically
10	Organises Effectively	Displays Leadership

Information Technology

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Works in Teams	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Works Independently	Works in Teams
3	Solves Problems	Solves Problems
4	Thinks Critically	Communicates Effectively in Writing
5	Practices Ethically	Displays Digital Competence
6	Displays Digital Competence	Thinks Critically
7	Acts Responsibly	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
8	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Works Independently
9	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Organises Effectively
10	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Demonstrates Resilience

Midwifery

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Communicates Effectively in Writing
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Communicates Effectively Verbally
3	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
4	Displays Cultural Competence	Works Independently
5	Works in Teams	Displays Cultural Competence
6	Thinks Critically	Demonstrates Resilience
7	Practices Ethically	Thinks Critically
8	Organises Effectively	Works in Teams
9	Solves Problems	Practices Health and Safety
10	Demonstrates Resilience	Organises Effectively

Nursing

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Demonstrates Resilience	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Works in Teams	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
3	Thinks Critically	Works in Teams
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Displays Cultural Competence
5	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Thinks Critically
6	Solves Problems	Practices Health and Safety
7	Organises Effectively	Demonstrates Resilience
8	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Organises Effectively
8	Displays Cultural Competence	
9	Acts Responsibly	Acts Responsibly
10	Practises Health and Safety	Practices Ethically

Occupational Therapy

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Displays Cultural Competence	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Works in Teams
3	Solves Problems	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
4	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Solves Problems
5	Works Independently	Communicates Effectively in Writing
6	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Displays Cultural Competence
7	Communicates Effectively in Writing	Works Independently
8	Demonstrates Resilience	Practices Ethically
9	Works in Teams	Organises Effectively
10	Thinks Critically	Thinks Creatively

Social Services (CDPW)

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Practices Ethically	Communicates Effectively Verbally
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
3	Works in Teams	Practices Ethically
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Works in Teams
5	Organises Effectively	Works Independently
6	Displays Cultural Competence	Demonstrates Resilience
7	Practices Health & Safety	Solves Problems
8	Displays Bi-Cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context	Communicates Effectively in Writing
9	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	Acts Responsibly
10	Solves Problems	Displays Cultural Competence

Visual Arts

TOP	EMPLOYERS	ALUMNI
1	Communicates Effectively Verbally	Works Independently
2	Thinks Creatively	Communicates Effectively Verbally
3	Organises Effectively	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
4	Works in Teams	Thinks Creatively
4	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	Communicates Effectively Visually
5	Thinks Critically	Organises Effectively
6	Works Independently	Demonstrates Resilience
7	Displays Cultural Competence	Communicates Effectively in Writing
8	Acts Responsibly	Practices Health and Safety
9	Solves Problems	Solves Problems
10	Communicates Effectively in Writing	

Alumni Survey and Interview Analysis by Research Area

Applied Science and Sports Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 13 respondents within the Applied Science and Sport cluster, five entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Realities of the Workplace

Many respondents suggested that students need to be prepared for the "real world" and indicated that learning methods such as on-site placement were important in achieving this.

> *More on course placement opportunities in a diverse number of topics*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 1.

> *Encourage students to challenge themselves and do at least a few placements in unfamiliar environments that interest them*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

> *At higher level qualifications, programme should be increasingly challenging and comparable to jobs being sought*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 12.

Just as students need to be ready for the workplace, one respondent noted that OP's educational offerings need to be known within the industry.

> *It's a brand-new course, and needs recognition from other industry organisations, i.e. Equivalence* [sic]
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 9.

The Role of the Student in the Learning Environment

Some respondents offered suggestions as to how students should be empowered within the learning process. One respondent noted that students should be asked to identify the areas in which they need to develop.

> *Opportunities for students to identify an area they need to develop, and allow them to focus on learning/developing this skill for a module/assessment…Encourage students to take responsibility for their personal growth outside of the classroom as well as inside of it*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 11.

Another respondent suggested ways in which students might take on leadership roles within the class/cohort and, thus, help form a social network.

> *In the last year of the degree students could buddy with a first-year student and provide them with advice, guidance, support, and community contacts*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

Similarly:

> *Have a class leader each week that is responsible for ensuring everyone turns up to classes (or communicates absence). They are also responsible for delegating jobs, organising equipment, and ensuring that everyone is on the same page with what they need to be doing. It's something we do at Police College and it's worked really well*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

This respondent links these suggestions to student welfare.

> *I believe it's important to ensure students are taking care of their wellness needs so they can be fully engaged and getting the most out of their classes. A good tip I was given as a student at OP was to take Vitamin D3, it helped to prevent those dreaded 'Dunedin blues' during the gloomy winter months. I was also incredibly thankful for always having oats and milk available in the OISA kitchen on those weeks where I was short on money*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

Broader Commentary

Three of the 13 respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" They touch upon two issues: Work placements and the ability to accept feedback.

Work Placements

Two respondents praised OP's work placement processes. However, they also noted that work placements could be further supported or developed.

> *Added support in gaining placement opportunities in the field you wish to work in. Although there is good support at present, more options would be desirable*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 1.

> *OISA provided a perfect balance of workplace placements and written assignments/research. To prepare us to be capable in the workplace it could be cool to work on a project at a chosen placement and consider ways students can use their skills and abilities to benefit that person or organisation. For example: if you were working with an athlete with a disability, identify some of their goals, research how you could help them achieve them, and do it!*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 5.

Accepting Feedback

Echoing commentary from employers consulted in previous stages of this research, one respondent stated that the ability to accept feedback on one's performance was a determining factor in succeeding within the industry.

> *From my experience in the workplace there is a common characteristic shared by employees who are viewed highly by their employers, are capable in their job, and subsequently enjoy their work. This is the ability to view feedback as an exciting opportunity to grow and progress, for the benefit of the company, individual and clientele. (As opposed to seeing it as criticism, and becoming defensive in response.)*
>
> – Applied Science and Sport respondent 11.

Design and Architectural Studies Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 24 respondents within the Design and Architectural Studies clusters, six entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Preparedness for the Workplace

As in many other clusters, respondents stated that they felt they could be better equipped for transitioning to the workforce. Content of coursework needs to be applicable to industry or local communities and, moreover, there needs to be an explicit career development aspect to what OP offers students/graduates.

> *Give students opportunities to collaborate with their local communities and use creative problem-solving to improve the community's well-being*
>
> – Design respondent 3.

> *Job support from mentors and lecturers*
>
> – Design respondent 5.

> *I think OP can help students to be more organised in terms of preparing students' journey to finding work afterwards. Help students to understand what they are good at and what they need improving* [sic] *and as well as general information going into workforce e.g. know what we should be getting paid, how much to quote for contract jobs. Help students to realise their abilities and their entitlement to proper pay and opportunities*
>
> – Design respondent 7.

> *The biggest obstacles I needed help with after graduating was not knowing where to look for work or how to network. I'm still really struggling with those and I think students need more preparation for the job hunt*
>
> – Design respondent 13.

> *Maybe learning more about the reality of fashion jobs and what they might be if you don't end up being an actual designer for your own label or another brand*
>
> – Design respondent 12.

> *Work experience was a joke un* [sic] *my programme programme*
>
> – Architectural Studies respondent 2.

Digital Competency

In relation to the above, two respondents noted that the industries in question often utilise digital technologies. Graduates need to be familiar with these.

> *Actually being in touch with industry standards in terms of software and adequate training in it programme*
>
> – Architectural Studies respondent 2.

> *In the course I did we could have done more with computer programs to do with design i.e.: more time spent teaching Photoshop, Illustrator, digital pattern making. As these things are so necessary today in any fashion/design job*
>
> – Design respondent 12.

Kaupapa/Te Reo Māori, Cultural Awareness and the Environment

Three respondents made comments highlighting the normative and pragmatic value of both understanding environmentalism and cultural diversity.

> *Students would benefit from an opportunity to develop understanding and use of te reo Māori as a capability*
>
> – Design respondent 19.

> *Encourage students to consider the ethics behind their decisions in the workplace; this includes consideration for Kaupapa Māori and responsible environmental practice*
>
> – Design respondent 3.

> *Being culturally aware of other cultures*
>
> – Design respondent 5.

Broader Commentary

Respondents also offered more general feedback on their experiences with OP. The aforementioned comment regarding work-experience was the one comment that could be read as an explicit criticism of OP.

> *Work experience was a joke un* [sic] *my programme*
>
> – Architectural Studies respondent 2.

Two repondents offered high praise of OP.

> *I feel like my time at OP equipped me well for my job and can't immediately think of anything that would help more*
>
> – Design respondent 4.

> *My lecturers were committed to ensuring my cohort are equiped with the deepest sense of ethics required to shape us into effective and responsible professionals, which I continue to appreciate not only in my professional, but also my personal life to this day*
>
> – Design respondent 3.

Food Design & Culinary Arts Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 24 respondents within the Culinary Arts cluster, 10 entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Preparedness for the workplace

Respondents noted that it was important graduates are work-ready and understand how capabilities are manifest in the workplace. OP should help graduates with their transition to work.

> *Help get a job before the course finishes*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 3.

> *Let them [students] know that not everybody you work with gonna have the same work ethic you do. Not everyone is going to understand that you have been taught high standards, some people don't care about the food they put out. Your gonna meet people that truly test your integrity. Believe in yourself no matter what. Competition is Healthy…You are often expected by employers to work understaffed*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 9.

> *Practical experiences in all industries*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 24.

The Need for Inspiration

Relatedly, multiple participants expressed a desire for greater interaction with, and inspiration from, people that have worked in relevant industries.

> *Provide examples of proven leadership (mentors)…Inspiration examples*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 16.

> *Having past students return to talk about their experiences since graduating from OP*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 24.

Structure of the Learning Environment/Experience

Two other matters that received attention from multiple respondents relate to students' learning experiences and how they can be improved. Two respondents noted that they would have preferred more one-on-one interaction with OP staff and, relatedly, smaller class sizes.

> *One-on-one learning opportunity…Smaller/table groups within the class for supportive learning*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 3.

> *Smaller classes*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 5.

Similarly, OP could incorporate more contemporary digital technologies to improve student experience.

> *For computer literacy: don't use Moodle, much better learning platforms are out there i.e. Dunedin based KuraCloud*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 12.

> *Update the printers so that students may be able to print off there* [sic] *smart phones as technology has a big role and makes it easier for students to get things done*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 5.

Broader Commentary

Respondents also provided more general feedback on their experiences with OP.

Praise for OP

Many repondents made a point of praising OP.

> *I think OP gave me a great foundation in equipping me with these capabilities. I've built on them as I've gone onwards in my work*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 1.

> *I think OP are doing are great job so can't think of how they can do things better*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 17.

> *I think OP really has widened my thought processes and inspired me to see that you can be so much more than just a chef when you do Culinary Arts. The lecturers in the BCA programme really helped me identify my potentials and saw that I was a nurturing and organised person who would sit well within the education system. They let me experience the education sector in the last year of my studies during project based learning and helped me identify my own capability and what I could be doing in the future. I absolutely think that without this programme I would still be chefing in a dark kitchen and not found my full potential. I have never stopped asking 'why' since I finished in 2016*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 12.

> *Don't change anything. Be the leader in innovation. Keep the ideal currently in place, doing things that relate and are work ready values*
>
> – Culinary Arts respondent 11.

Business Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 105 respondents within the Business cluster, 60 entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Workplace Readiness

Many respondents prioritised experience in the workplace and teaching methods that highlighted applying knowledge in that context. Moreover, respondents said that they would appreciate OP helping prepare them for their transition to work.

> *Application of real life scenarios should be incorporated more - for instance, business students could participate in case study competitions*
>
> – Business respondent 71.

> *Giving opportunity to students to practice theory in real world scenario during the study course by working directly under the employer*
>
> – Business respondent 48.

> *Provide good internship opportunities*
>
> – Business respondent 30.

> *Work experience - on the job training in their field of study*
>
> – Business respondent 23.

> *Guide graduating students with CV and cover letter assistance*
>
> – Business respondent 28.

> *Prepare students for best practices for interviews and resumes*
>
> – Business respondent 95.

Student Mentorship

A number of suggestions were made with regard to students having some type of mentorship/ guidance/inspiration from people other than OP staff.

> *Mentoring - mentoring program with experienced managers*
>
> – Business respondent 23.

> *Identify mentors to provide guidance*
>
> – Business respondent 64.

> *Have previous graduates (of notoriety* [sic] *such as ex All Blacks) discuss their learning with new learners at the start of their journey*
>
> – Business respondent 16.

> *Higher* [sic] *good professional speaker who can inspire more rather than focusing on study materials*
>
> – Business respondent 86.

> *Have more leaders share their own stories, not just successes but stepping blocks*
>
> – Business respondent 29.

Distance/Foreign Students

A handful of respondents wanted to highlight the challenges that came with being a distance or international student. Generally speaking, these comments were not expressed as complaints.

> *My situation was unique; sole student participating from France. I was part of a larger group, but due to time differences it became a group of 1 and a group of 9. Group activity was not possible*
> – Business respondent 10.

> *Being a distance student was difficult, not having a strong knowledge as to how to access the library, which would have helped...Not having access to a peer group was tough, though I did have a good tutor who was in touch regularly and gave good advice*
> – Business respondent 26.

> *Many of my classmates struggled to find placements being international students*
> – Business respondent 56.

> *Monitoring the progress of the online student more closely*
> – Business respondent 38.

> *NZ is a developed country and most students come from third world countries and so, NZ culture, do's and don'ts should be emphasized more during orientation*
> – Business respondent 52.

Communication

As in other survey clusters, communication was often cited as particularly worth instilling in students. Suggestions ranged from debating exercises, writing practice and learning how to communicate with angry customers.

> *A paper dedicated on teaching students how to write coherently, with support on what consitutes arguments, paragraphs, grammar etc*
> – Business respondent 25.

> *Professional communication is a very important skill so i think equipping students to communicate professionally with angry customers is a must*
> – Business respondent 32.

> *Equip with skills to communicate professionally*
> – Business respondent 44.

> *Talking about work capabilities, when you start working in an organisation main thing is your communication with your colleagues/boss/customers*
> – Business respondent 93.

Group Work

Group/teamwork was recognised as a valuable learning tool, but it was noted that these processes must be well managed to ensure equal participation.

> *Introduce more team building and effective team management activities*
> – Business respondent 47.

> *Unsure of how to support teamwork, because group assessments are not fun*
> – Business respondent 25.

> *More group assignments with mixed abilities and ethnicities*
> – Business respondent 28.

> *Provide more group projects, but always check that all group members are contributing equally. Sometimes, the group leaders are the only ones who feel responsible to complete the projects. This is also to check if students are being organised*
> – Business respondent 87.

> *More team learning or activities*
> – Business respondent 11.

Reflection/Problem-Solving/Critical Thinking/Creative Thinking

These capabilities were often linked together, which echoes previously analysed employer feedback.

> *Focus on developing critical thinking/reflection*
>
> – Business respondent 16.

> *Run workshops specifically to look at challenges, this could be community, business or their own, for students to work through a process which brings out their creativity and problem solving for solutions*
>
> – Business respondent 35.

> *Structured reflective process*
>
> – Business respondent 58.

> *Channeling/designing assessment for students to work on solving global issues such as pollution, water crises, recycling, energy, economy etc*
>
> – Business respondent 48.

Cultural Competency/Bicultural Proficiency

The importance of cultural competency and bicultural proficiency was valued by respondents for two reasons. Normatively, OP should recognise the value of multiculturalism by including it in their offerings. Pragmatically, graduates will have to work with people from diverse backgrounds in the workforce. OP needs to prepare them for this.

> *A humanities type of paper that provides awareness of different cultural constraints and views of the world*
>
> – Business respondent 25.

> *I work constantly with new migrants and very few people know how to make them comfortable and especially how to manage an existing workforce into the transition working with migrants and if someone hasn't had this experience then it should be something that should be a requirement*
>
> – Business respondent 40.

> *Greater appreciation of the need to cater for different cultural beliefs, customs, and needs... Impact of Te Tiriti, bi-culturalism, and partnership on organisation management*
>
> – Business respondent 61.

Praise and Criticism

As in other clusters, praise and criticism of OP and OP staff were presented. The vast majority of feedback was highly positive. I quote at length to illustrate the preponderance of positive feedback.

> *Having a supervisor who was engaged with the project that I was doing and guiding me in the right direction helped me*
>
> – Business respondent 56.

> *[Staff member name] was excellent and got the best out of me, without a doubt*
>
> – Business respondent 51.

> *I don't think that you could do any better*
>
> – Business respondent 92.

> *I thought the process was great. Well supported during the programme and feedback from written and verbal assessments*
>
> – Business respondent 4.

> *The support I received from my facilitator during my studies was excellent and I hope this support is maintained for all students*
>
> – Business respondent 36.

> *The support I received during my studies with Otago Polytechnic via my facilitator was awesome. I am actively encouraging my friends and whanau with years of work experience to take up this wonderful opportunity to get their degrees completed via Otago Polytechnic*
>
> – Business respondent 36.

> *You folks did a good job in keeping me motivated*
>
> – Business respondent 26.

This pathway to learning is amazing and I am so grateful that I found this to enable and empower me to complete a Bachelor qualification...Can't thank Otago Polytechnic enough for facilitating my learning journey

– Business respondent 63.

Studying via the Otago Polytechnic gave me the confidence to survive a very challenging workplace

– Business respondent 83.

However, there was also some negative feedback

I had done the ***iamcapable*** *module when I was doing my gdsm. I had reminded the program runners to have a look. But no one was bothered. I had even written this a couple of times but no one was bothered. I think this is waste of time and you are misleading the students at least with the* ***iamcapable*** *module. You guys need some serious monitoring here . Thanks*

– Business respondent 94.

Start a placement cell and provide what you commit to. That graduate diploma was a money minting gimmick and nothing else

– Business respondent 15.

CAPL that I experienced was about telling our story, very little about learning new. Unfortunately it has not helped me thus far, to get ahead, in fact I am seen as too flash to many employers

– Business respondent 13.

The business schools grading was too lenient. They were so focused on increasing graduation/ pass rates that they neglected their grading. This resulted in student having higher grades in subjects that they did not fully understand - myself included. This also resulted in a lack of understanding and expectation management when entering the workforce

– Business respondent 71.

Broader Commentary

Thirty-one of the 105 respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" The majority of feedback echoed the sentiments expressed above regarding the need for students to be work-ready and OP's role in assisting students with the transition to work. In addition, some comments noted the trend away from office-place work and noted that OP needs to prepare students for this.

Just to bring to notice, that I'm semi-retired, and working from home, so my work place is specifically online in making contact with a client/s, meaning out and about in the work place is not where I fit, but am still, and will remain in the workforce until I'm unable to do so

– Business respondent 38.

Working alone, working from home, working via digital communication and working time smart are the new ways we work now

– Business respondent 40.

Engineering Technology and Trades Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 21 respondents within the Engineering Technology and Trades cluster, 13 entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Work Experience and Work Preparedness

Many respondents highlighted the need to be work-ready. Course material and assignments should serve to familiarise students with relevant industries.

> *Work experience or internships for all diploma and degree students*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 8.

> *More realistic field trips to know what to expect when entering the workforce*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 9.

> *More hands on* [sic] *projects where students are faced with real life problems and pressure*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 18.

> *More projects or self-oriented* [sic] *assignments rather than exams. Things we study for an exam only lasts in the memory for max a week. On the other hand, experience and learning from self centered* [sic] *projects lasts forever*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 20.[3]

Digital Competency

One practical skill that two respondents cited as important, and which OP could further support, was digital competence.

> ***Exel*** [sic] ***spreadsheet trai****ning (an actual class for using Microsoft products)*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 11.

> *Exposure to some basic programming skills would have been beneficial to provide a background in mathematical modelling for engineering applications*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 10.

Social Skills and Communication

Communication, or social skills generally, were valued by respondents. There were multiple requests for either informal or formal opportunities to practice these skills during study.

> *OP run social events for the engineering department to develop social skills*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 10.

> *More interpersonal communication i.e. group projects, team building etc*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 13.

> *Communicate with clients…learn to ask good questions*
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 17.

[3] This quote was edited by the analyst due to formatting issues.

Broader Commentary

Six of the 21 respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, “Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?” This commentary largely emphasised the need for work-preparedness and preparedness for changes in industry, and called for greater OP assistance following graduation.

> *Students are preparing for the real world, some lecturers think everything should be fun and games, real jobs are not like that. It’s ok to have a laugh but remember to apply a serious nature when needed*
>
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 1.

> *OP needs to stay ahead of the game when it comes to preparing students for future industry changes and what is the current method or protocols*
>
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 7.

> *When I graduated there was no after graduation care or help with work placement. this has meant that I have had to rely on my past experience for my current job role. this has made my diploma essentially irrelevant*
>
> – Engineering Technology and Trades respondent 8.

Construction Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the nine respondents within the Construction cluster, five entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Work Experience and Work Preparedness

As in previous clusters, respondents stated that it was important that students be prepared for the workforce. Course materials and teaching methods should be conducive to achieving this.

> *More real practical study cases to be solved to get the feel in the industry...Internship is a part of compulsory subjects so all students get a better perspective about working in the industry, not just theoretical*
>
> – Construction respondent 6.

> *Preparing someone for a certain work place can be tricky but learning how computer systems work, health and safety, lingo on that subject and covering the real world scenarios can help hugely*
>
> – Construction respondent 9.

Teaching Methods and Course Resourcing

A number of comments were made with regard to how respondents would have liked to engage with lecturers. One respondent stated that more face-to-face interaction with staff is needed, suggesting that more time be set aside for this. Another respondent noted that visual demonstration could have help in a number of instances. A third respondent would have appreciated more homework throughout their study, linking this to developing creative thinking.

> *Visually showing us how things are to be done would have helped in many cases*
>
> – Construction respondent 9.

> *More assignment/homework are given so the students can get more practice to develop their creative thinking*
>
> – Construction respondent 6.

One respondent was critical of OP staff and resources.

> *Their technology could be improved hugely...Communication was not the greatest*
>
> – Construction respondent 9.

Another respondent, while not explicitly critical, made similar comments, bullet-pointing "effective tuition", "resource programme well" and "rigorous assessment".

Broader Commentary

Four of the nine respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" There were few points that were not covered in the preceding section. Points included:

- The individual's responsibility to continue their development once in the workforce (this echoes employer feedback).
- The importance of communication and, in particular, a positive attitude (this echoes employer feedback).
- A suggestion that people should be removed from courses if drug/alcohol use impacts on their participation.

Information Technology Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 26 respondents within the Information Technology cluster, nine entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Work Experience and Work Preparedness

As in other clusters, respondents stated that teaching/learning should be tailored to the work environments that students are likely to enter. Students should have interactions with industry via placements, for example, and in-class material should be taught in a way that highlights the practical applicability of knowledge. One respondent also mentioned the need to use the same technologies and tools in teaching as those that are up-to-date in the industry.

> *Have lecturers who are real world orientated, not academically focused*
> – IT respondent 4.

> *…having students complete more projects (team and individual) that are based on real world examples. Throwing in challenges that come with a real-world project. Scope change, timeline changes that sort of thing*
> – IT respondent 13.

> *Become more practical* [sic] *and less bookish in studies…Have orientation sessions to become more job ready to the market*
> – IT respondent 18.

> *OP should bring some tools and technologies which are actually used in Industry not the one which are traditional*
> – IT respondent 16.

> *A paper outlining the various roles in companies and how you fit in*
> – IT respondent 19.

Importance of Communication

Communication was cited as an important capability. Multiple respondents stated that greater emphasis on this capability in OP courses would be valuable.

> *Within IT I think commutation* [sic] *and organisation will go a long way. All techies can solve problems but not all techies can communicate those issues to laymen*
> – IT respondent 14.

> *I probably could have done something a bit more to improve my verbal communication but I feel it's easy to opt out of ways to do so*
> – IT respondent 5.

> *High level communication papers for all quals*
> – IT respondent 19.

Praise for OP

Numerous respondents praised OP's work in teaching capabilities to students.

> *The listed skills were very well covered in the field of study I was in at the time and I don't think there was improvement needed…*
>
> – IT respondent 11.

> *I think OP does a fantastic job at preparing students for the real world*
>
> – IT respondent 12.

> *I feel like OP has done a pretty good job already, in my degree anyway*
>
> – IT respondent 5.

Broader Commentary

Far fewer (2 of the 26) respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" The commentary simply reinforced the above.

Midwifery Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 16 respondents within the Midwifery cluster, four entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF. Unfortunately, there were few specific suggestions given.

Realities of the Workplace

One respondent noted that it would be valuable to help students develop their personal resilience, work-life balance and conflict resolution skills. Presumably, this need is driven by the demanding nature of the profession and is in line with respondents from other health disciplines, such as nursing.

Ongoing Support/Development?

Another respondent stated that a peer group formed from graduated students would contribute to equipping students with capabilities. From the comment it is unclear exactly what is being suggested. However, one reading of the comment is the suggestion that a graduating class (or part thereof) form a peer-support/review group upon completing studies in order to continue to assist each other with professional development moving forward.

Broader Commentary

Two respondents acted upon the question "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" Both respondents stated that OP did a good job in equipping them with relevant capabilities.

One respondent stated that, *I was incredibly well prepared by OP could not do more!* [sic] (Midwifery respondent 11) and links this to placements undertaken while at OP. Placements, in the view of this respondent, helped to refine skills and identify areas for improvement.

The other respondent was also impressed with OP, stating, *OP did a great job with providing the PG education, and I felt well equipped in these capabilities* (Midwifery respondent 14). However, this respondent questioned whether an emphasis on capabilities was needed at the postgraduate level; *I don't think that capabilities are particularly relevant to PG education. I don't think they add anything to the qualification*[4] – Midwifery respondent 14.

[4] The data analyst edited this quote to remedy formatting issues present in the original script.

Nursing Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 18 respondents within the Nursing cluster, seven entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Developing a Practical Knowledge Base

Multiple respondents noted the need for teaching to be tailored to the realities of the work environments in which graduates will ultimately work. Alumni noted the need for "real world" education and highlighted longer placements that focus on instilling capabilities, simulations and case studies/scenarios as means by which to achieve this. One respondent stated that nursing students should be encouraged to build relationships with students from other health disciplines.

Organisation of Coursework

A number of comments apply to the structuring or teaching of course material. Multiple respondents noted the need to learn how to work within teams. In particular, the need to problem-solve or think critically as a team was discussed. This suggests a desire for groupwork as a means of learning. Peer-mentoring in which OP staff facilitate student-to-student learning and student input into course development were highlighted. Group activities and trips were also seen as important in developing cultural competency.[5] One respondent said that, in general, OP should aim to utilise less online learning tools.

Personal Resilience/Confidence

Numerous respondents made references, either directly or indirectly, to the fact that nursing is a pressurised, demanding profession. The need for personal resilience, self-care and self-confidence to be instilled in students was noted. This spoke to both the ability to work with difficult patients, as well having the confidence to express one's ideas to colleagues.

Technical Skills Discussed

In addition to the above, the ability to write appropriate notes (e.g. initial assessment and progress notes) and a knowledge of what workplace materials cost were seen as important skills. The latter was seen to be a matter of sustainability (in a financial sense, seemingly).

Broader Commentary

In addition to comments made in regard to instilling capabilities in OP students, some respondents also offered broader commentary. This commentary centred around:

Emphasising that becoming more capable is an ongoing journey, only a small part of which takes place in tertiary study.

> *It takes time and support to get good, students need to remember we all started where they are now*
>
> – Nursing respondent 11.

> *As students we are exposed to practical work situations via simulation and placements, to demonstrate how it will be in the workplace…Work place capability is an on-going part of working, with exposure to new experiences, new technologies, new relationships with co-workers and clients*
>
> – Nursing respondent 18.

[5] The idea of having a cultural guidance counsellor was also mentioned.

The demands of the industry:

> *Student-time is surreal and sanitised until you are exposed to the real working world*
>
> – Nursing respondent 18.

> *Ability to go to work full time straight after study is hard, more emphasis on 40-hour study weeks, no skipping classes*
>
> – Nursing respondent 10.

The benefit of focusing on capabilities:

> *I know this is more of a focus since I graduated, but I feel that more of a focus on the value of these attributes is important, as the workforce looks at more than just grades and qualifications. I think it's easy for students to get burned out striving for academic success, while neglecting the other skills/attributes they have, which are equally as important to the workplace*
>
> – Nursing respondent 5.

Occupational Therapy Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 32 respondents within the Occupational Therapy cluster, 15 entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Teaching Methods

Respondents were in favour of learning methods that replicated scenarios they are likely to confront in the workplace and valued placement on site.

> *More practical, real world scenarios. And a variety of. Not the same re worked scenario each time. Use a variety of practice contexts, education as well as health. Through a range of ages and conditions*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 2.

> *Make sure they know the real work is very very different from training scenarios- its never just the condition, its the whole person*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 9.

> *Make the course 4 years and have the last year focusing on 3-4 specific work areas (I know a lot of new grads felt as though they were under prepared to socialise unless they happened to have a placement in that specific area)*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 12.

In addition, the survey commentary suggests that there would be benefit in utilising interactive methods that encourage students to work with one another and OP staff.

> *Regular mock MDTs with students in other health fields would be of benefit in helping students improve verbal communication skills*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 7.

> *More time in class, less independent reading from a text book*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 28.

> *More opportunity to be involved with other students to assist with study*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 29.

> *Offering one on one help for students* [sic]
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 3.

Which Capabilities to Focus on?

The analysis of how alumni rank capabilities in terms of importance is being undertaken by other OP staff. For this reason, we are unable to comment on whether those capabilities discussed in respondents' qualitative responses matches quantitative data on how capabilities are ranked by alumni. However, in the data analysed here, personal resilience, work-life balance, communication skills and confidence are clearly the most commonly discussed capabilities (or associated qualities).

As in responses from other health disciplines, the commentary noted that the industry in question is pressurised and requires resilience and work-life balance.

> *Again, life experience is what has helped me succeed in this field. Include real-life coping strategies for anxiety in this training so students can develop the resilience required to cope with the pressures of professional life*
>
> – Occupational Therapy respondent 7.

In final year have more discussions about balancing work and personal life

– Occupational Therapy respondent 10.

Both written and verbal communication were deemed important, with the latter being linked to confidence. Graduates need to develop confidence in voicing their opinion and articulating their clinical reasoning to others.

In more depth discuss clinical reasoning and how that may look different in a variety of settings, in order to again gain confidence in verbalising not only verbally but additionally when writing clinical notes

– Occupational Therapy respondent 16.

…more opportunities to build confidence speaking up about clinical reasoning to a group

– Occupational Therapy respondent 12.

In addition to the preceding capabilities, which were the most commonly discussed, cultural competencies and the ability to work with minority groups were noted by multiple respondents.

Seek out more kaupapa Māori fieldwork placements for tauira or more placements with Māori practitioners. If I wasn't Māori myself I would not be anywhere near competent based on my training alone

– Occupational Therapy respondent 7.

Broader Commentary

Far fewer (six of the 32) respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" Most of the commentary recounted how working life differs from study and, relatedly, praised OP for trying to prepare students for this difference.

New grads need to be capable and confident to talk and relate to strangers, and often people wildly different from anyone they've ever met. Perhaps some way of encouraging people to get out of their comfort zone and relate to others in the safe setting of polytech before theyre released on the world

– Occupational Therapy respondent 9.

I felt as though going into a job where I have very little clinical support has been extremely difficult. I think making sure that the students understand what a healthy work place environment should be. Also early signs of burn out

– Occupational Therapy respondent 12.

It is difficult to teach these skills without realistic simulations or placements. OP gave me many placement opportunities and that made all the difference to my workplace capabilities - I graduated ready to work, as opposed to my previous University degree that gave me no workplace experience before graduating...I would also say that work place capability is something that is learned with experience and maturity and the best you can do with school leavers is alert them to the fact that they are going to have to upskill and fast if they want to succeed - a reality check can be useful early on so they can decide if they are ready for tertiary study - they might benefit from real world experience first

– Occupation Therapy respondent 32.

Social Services: College of Community Development and Wellbeing Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 38 respondents within the Social Services cluster, 19 entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Work Experience and Work Preparedness

Respondents often noted the importance of being able to apply knowledge to workplace scenarios and, therefore, valued workplace experience.

> *More support for work experience and finding work experience*
> – CDPW respondent 12.

> *Offer hands on projects to solidify the importance and application of these capabilities…Perhaps bring in industry professionals to the classroom setting for further explanation of expectations and applications of capabilities*
> – CDPW respondent 21.

> *Keep emphasising how content learned can be applied in real life. It's one thing to be able to write essays and do assignments and presentations but if you don't have the skills and capability to apply in a job it's not much use. I think all courses should have a practical component, like placements*
> – CDPW respondent 27.

Building Students' Social Network

Multiple respondents expressed a desire for greater collegiality among the student cohort.

> *More team building* [sic] *activities*
> – CDPW respondent 1.

> *More connections with other students*
> – CDPW respondent 20.

> *Bring students together from time to time*
> – CDPW respondent 26.

Positivity Regarding OP

Pleasingly, many respondents spoke highly of OP and OP's efforts at instilling students with the types of capabilities identified by the LCF.

> *I think OP do a very good job. I had a good lecturer who was always available to discuss options*
> – CDPW respondent 13.

> *I think that they provided great support to find resources to look at*
> – CDPW respondent 22.

I think OP does this very well. My experience is a little different, in that I was already working in my field and had a post-graduate qualification prior to gaining my undergraduate qualification, along with a long work/life experience. I also completed my studies from a distance (Australia) and therefore did not have access to on-campus tools/activities. I suspect that, for younger students the very fact of OP having made a commitment to naming and valuing these capabilities has a positive impact

– CDPW respondent 25.

I think this course was run very well and all points were met but it was up to the individual learning to take this all on board

– CDPW respondent 8.

However, one respondent reported that attending OP was detrimental to their wellbeing.

OP didn't help me with any of those. I had to choose one to get to this question. OP DID help my depression and anxiety get worse, made me realise that going to OP was one of the worst mistakes of my life

– CDPW respondent 7.

Given the serious nature of the above comment, it is important to emphasise that this respondent was the only one to express any negativity about OP or the courses in question. The subject of mental health, however, provides a segue to further commentary from respondents.

Student/Graduate Wellbeing

Two further respondents noted the importance of wellbeing for students. One respondent suggested that OP needs to be careful about who is accepted to the courses in question.

I think OP could be more careful on who they select to go into the course I did (human services) as not all personallys [sic] *would suit to working with other…I think you need to be well in yourself*

– CDPW respondent 8.

Another respondent called for equipping students with the ability to be resilient once in the workforce.

Giving students the ability to build resilience in the work place [sic]

– CDPW respondent 28.

Broader Commentary

Six respondents from this cluster elected to respond to the question, "Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?" The majority responded with praise for OP similar to that highlighted above.

It was an amazing process to go through

– CDPW respondent 22.

I think overall my degree definitely helped me to gain my current employment. At the time of studying it felt a bit wishy washy but career practice was fairly new back then. It definitely gave me the base line skills to gain employment in my chosen field

– CDPW respondent 12.

As it transpired my learning appears to have equipped me well for the role

– CDPW respondent 36.

One respondent noted that many capabilities come with work and life experience.

Visual Arts Comments

What OP Could do Better in Equipping Students with Capabilities

Of the 26 respondents within the Visual Arts cluster, 14 entered responses when asked what OP could do to better equip students with the capabilities identified by the LCF.

Preparation and Ongoing Support for the Workforce

By far the strongest theme in respondent feedback was that course offerings should be tailored to employability within relevant industries. Students need to know how course content can be applied to a variety of job opportunities. There should be a clear career development aspect to what OP offers students/graduates.

> *To be honest I needed to get out of the school environment and get into really life to grow up and learn those skills. School has a culture where it's their responsibility to do all the work and the student just relaxes and lets them do all the work. So work experience for a month or longer*
> – Visual Arts respondent 1.

> *Could go more in depth into career choices after Visual Arts - Use success stories of artists, curators, writers, teachers etc*
> – Visual Arts respondent 10.

> *Better career guidance and possibly opportunities for more than one internship/work experience built into the course*
> – Visual Arts respondent 11.

> *We need to move to real enterprise, e.g permanent shop for students to sale* [sic] *their works?*
> – Visual Arts respondent 13.

> *Real world skills eg. Networking, how to get funding/fill out forms*
> – Visual Arts respondent 16.

> *Make recent graduates aware of support systems in the community , esp. with self employment*
> – Visual Arts respondent 23.

> *Nobody wants to hire an artist, even for an art job. Higher focus on technical skill could help chances of getting a real, practical job*
> – Visual Arts respondent 17.

Student Wellbeing

Two respondents noted that student wellbeing is a prerequisite for capable graduates. Students should be made aware of mental health support that exists.

> *Increased student awareness of mental health support*
> – Visual Arts respondent 16.

> *Established support for emotional challenge management*
> – Visual Arts respondent 18.

Communication

As in other clusters, respondents noted the importance of developing their communication and interpersonal skills.

> *Help shy students with more verbal communication skills*
> – Visual Arts respondent 22.

> *Get students used to talking about their art and what they do, build confidence*
> – Visual Arts respondent 10.

> *I found the essays and assignments I did at polytech lacking majorly. I could not write well and my mistakes were not corrected or pointed out in a way that I could improve to a university standard. Because of this, my verbal communication skills were also inhibited, despite constant group presentations*
> – Visual Arts respondent 24.

Collaboration

Perhaps related to developing communication and interpersonal skills, respondents expressed a desire for greater collaboration with students from different disciplines and people from different institutions, such as the University of Otago.

> *Combine with the university in theory papers in design/visual arts papers (at a minimum) so that the papers are to a higher standard of responsibility and teaching*
> – Visual Arts respondent 25.

> *I think Capability can create real opportunities, allows all area of students to work collaboratively in a fun way, on meaningful and achievable projects. For example: [a lecturer] organises the Art and Water project with Uni...Nature of OP programme are multi-disciplinary, but in reality it lacks collaboration with other fields. e.g. can art students work with food design student to come out with a project? I think Capability have the ability to close rapport between different fields*
> – Visual Arts respondent 13.

Broader Commentary

Praise and Criticism

Respondents also offered more general feedback on their experiences with OP. Some reflected positively on their time, while others were more critical.

> *I went on to study a Master of Arts with Wintec Institute of Technology and can without hesitation say that the teaching infrastructure at the Otago Polytechnic is far superior...I have no complaints with the Otago Polytechnic I think it is a wonderful school that has International comparisons only outside of New Zealand*
> – Visual Arts respondent 5.

> *Breadth of scope for Art generally I received at OP has enabled me to critically evaluate my work...Has given me workable tools to develop my own voice*
> – Visual Arts respondent 12.

> *Staff could work ethically. ie. not [go away] at the crucial endgame to further their own interests*
> – Visual Arts respondent 25.

With regard to the last comment it is to be noted that research and currency in the arts is a prerequisite for quality teaching to occur in the institution, meaning that some staff have external gallery and research commitments that clash with teaching calendars. This comment, although valid, does not reflect the school as a whole.

Appendices

LCF Research: Otago Polytechnic Alumni

Q1 Learner Capability Framework Research

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ALUMNI RESEARCH

The Learner Capability Framework Research will provide information to the research team at Otago Polytechnic around the most desirable capabilities required to successfully negotiate the working environments experienced post qualification.

By accepting to participate in this study participant information and answers will be used to inform the teaching and learning practices undertaken at Otago Polytechnic. All the information will be secured confidentially and the research team will use pseudonyms to refer to me and my organisation if material gathered in my answers are included in future publication.

I understand that they can only reveal my name and that of my organisation if I agree to it.

I understand that documents related to this project will only be used for this project and will be securely stored until it is destroyed after seven (7) years, at the end of this project.

This project has Otago Polytechnic ethics approval.

- ○ I agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined.
- ○ I do not agree to participate in this study under the conditions outlined.

Q2 When did you graduate from OP and what qualification have you received?

- ○ Year
- ○ Qualification
- ○ Programme

Q3 If you have more than one qualification or if your qualification is not on the list, please let us know in the space below:

- ○ Year graduated _____
- ○ Qualification _____
- ○ Programme _____

Q4 Number of jobs you have had since graduating from OP?

- ○ _____

Q5 Do you have a job at present?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q6 What is your present job?

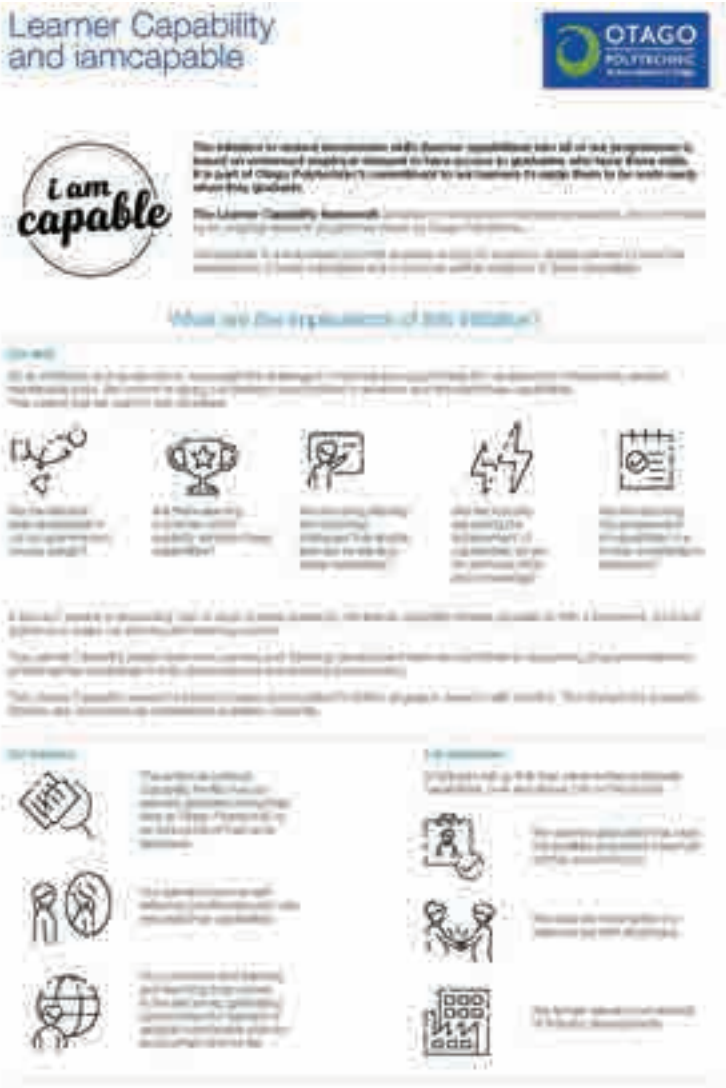
_____

Q7 Please tell us what your previous jobs were since graduating from OP (starting from the most recent one). You may skip this question if it's not applicable.

- ○ Previous job 1 _____
- ○ Previous job 2 _____
- ○ Previous job 3 _____
- ○ Previous job 4 _____

Q8 On the following pages you will see an introduction to the Learner Capability Framework describing:
What it means for Students, Staff and Employers, and the list of the 25 identified capabilities that are central to this research project. Alongside each capability is a description of what might demonstrate each capability and will help you answer the questions in the next part of the survey. Please think about this in relation to your current employment or job history. What is important to you, and how this occurs in your current role or experience.

Q9 Learner Capability Framework (LCF) Project



Q10 **The 25 Learner Capabilities**

Otago Polytechnic Learner Capability Framework

Capabilities	Indicators
Communicates Effectively in Writing	[illegible]
Communicates Effectively Verbally	[illegible]
Communicates Effectively Visually	[illegible]
Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour	[illegible]
Displays Cultural Competence	[illegible]
Displays Bi-cultural Proficiency in a NZ Context	[illegible]
Works Independently	[illegible]
Works in teams	[illegible]
Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning	[illegible]
Acts Responsibly	[illegible]
Practises Health & Safety	[illegible]

Q11

[illegible]	[illegible]
Demonstrates Digital Competence	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Organises Effectively	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Demonstrates Resilience	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Thinks Creatively	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Displays Leadership	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Inspires others	[illegible]
Enterprising	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Practises Sustainably	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Practises Ethically	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Thinks Critically	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Solves Problems	[illegible]
	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Communicates Bilingually	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Displays Work Life Balance	[illegible]
	[illegible]
Performs Community Service	[illegible]

Q12 What are the most important capabilities that you need in your current work place? Please select your top 10.

- ☐ Communicates effectively in writing
- ☐ Communicates effectively verbally
- ☐ Communicates effectively visually
- ☐ Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- ☐ Displays cultural competence
- ☐ Displays bicultural proficiency in a NZ context
- ☐ Works independently
- ☐ Works in teams
- ☐ Reflects on performance & applies personal learning
- ☐ Acts responsibly
- ☐ Practises health and safety
- ☐ Demonstrates digital competence
- ☐ Organises effectively
- ☐ Demonstrates resilience
- ☐ Thinks creatively
- ☐ Displays leadership
- ☐ Inspires others
- ☐ Enterprising
- ☐ Practices sustainably
- ☐ Practices ethically
- ☐ Thinks critically
- ☐ Solves problems
- ☐ Communicates bilingually
- ☐ Displays work life balance
- ☐ Performs community service

Q13 Please rate the importance of each of the 10 chosen capabilities

	Low	Medium	High
Communicates effectively in writing			
Communicates effectively verbally			
Communicates effectively visually			
Displays effective interpersonal behaviour			
Displays cultural competence			
Displays bicultural proficiency in a NZ context			
Works independently			
Works in teams			
Reflects on performance & applies personal learning			
Acts responsibly			
Practises health and safety			
Demonstrates digital competence			
Organises effectively			
Demonstrates resilience			
Thinks creatively			
Displays leadership			
Inspires others			
Enterprising			
Practices sustainably			
Practices ethically			
Thinks critically			
Solves problems			
Communicates bilingually			
Displays work life balance			
Performs community service			

Q14 Which of these 10 capabilities did OP help you develop during your studies? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Communicates effectively in writing
- ☐ Communicates effectively verbally
- ☐ Communicates effectively visually
- ☐ Displays effective interpersonal behaviour
- ☐ Displays cultural competence
- ☐ Displays bicultural proficiency in a NZ context
- ☐ Works independently
- ☐ Works in teams
- ☐ Reflects on performance & applies personal learning
- ☐ Acts responsibly
- ☐ Practises health and safety
- ☐ Demonstrates digital competence
- ☐ Organises effectively
- ☐ Demonstrates resilience
- ☐ Thinks creatively
- ☐ Displays leadership
- ☐ Inspires others
- ☐ Enterprising
- ☐ Practices sustainably
- ☐ Practices ethically
- ☐ Thinks critically
- ☐ Solves problems
- ☐ Communicates bilingually
- ☐ Displays work life balance
- ☐ Performs community service

Q15 What could OP do better to equip you with these, please make up to 5 bullet point comments on how you think OP could do better in equipping students with these capabilities.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q16 Anything else that you might like to add about work place capability?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q17 What is your name?
(optional - if you want to go into the draw for the $200 Prezzi card you need to submit your name)

_____

Q18 Invitation to participate in interview. Please let us know if you would like to participate in a short interview (10 mins) to further discuss the capabilities in the workplace.
The interview will have the following questions:

1. Do you currently work in an industry associated with your qualification, what is this?
2. You will be presented with the industry choices relating to their current employment.
3. Do you agree with the 10 employer choices?
4. What opportunities does your work provide you with to develop these capabilities?
5. Do you have any examples of these.
6. What do you do yourself?
7. Do you have any examples of these?

○ Yes, count me in!
○ No

Q19 Thank you! If you have responded to participate in a short interview, a person from the research office will contact you in the coming weeks. Please provide your contact details below:

○ Email address _____
○ Mobile number _____

Interview with Alumni - Business Programmes

Q1
Thank you for choosing to complete this follow up via electronic interview.

On the following page you will be presented with a list of the most desirable capabilities as prioritised by a collection of employers and stakeholders in your industry.

Employers and stakeholders were interviewed in 2018 and asked to select the ten most desirable capabilities from the same list of 25 that you reviewed earlier, and were also asked to rank them from 1-10. A frequency analysis was conducted from all of the selections to arrive at an overview of capabilities that are most desirable in the work areas that you are currently engaged in.

You are going to be asked a series of questions about these capabilities and how they impact on you in your work, and also about developing capabilities in the workplace.

Thank you again for taking the time to respond to these questions, we greatly appreciate your participation.

Q2 Here are the most important capabilities ranked 1 - 10 by employers and stakeholders in your industry. (Number 1 being the most important).

1	Works in Teams
2	Communicates Effectively Verbally
3	Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour
4	Solves Problems
5	Communicates Effectively in Writing
6	Organises Effectively
7	Demonstrates Digital Competence
8	Displays Cultural Competence
9	Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning
10	Acts Responsibly
10	Works Independently

Q3 Please identify how the applications of the following capabilities relate to your work environment according to low, medium or high importance.

	Low	Medium	High
Works in Teams			
Communicates Effectively Verbally			
Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour			
Solves Problems			
Communicates Effectively in Writing			

Q4 Please identify how the applications of the following capabilities relate to your work environment according to low, medium or high importance.

	Low	Medium	High
Organises Effectively			
Demonstrates Digital Competence			
Displays Cultural Competence			
Reflects on Performance & Applies Personal Learning			
Acts Responsibly			
Works Independently			

Q5 Are there other important capabilities that you need / deploy in your workplace that are not included in the list?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q6 Please list them in the space below.
These may not be a part of the OP Learner Capability Framework, may be capabilities that you experience as important / desirable for you to be able to effectively deliver your role in your workplace.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The following pages will be questions on what you think about your job(s) in the future.

Q7 Do you see your job changing in the next 10 years?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q8 In which aspect(s) do you think your job may change? Example: A shift in technology may mean a change in your role, which could lead to the need for different capabilities.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q9 To support you in your role, what opportunities does your work provide you with to develop capabilities?

- ○ Professional development opportunities
- ○ Specific capability building opportunities
- ○ Both
- ○ None
- ○ Other (please specify): _____

Q10 What does your organisation/workplace specifically do to provide you with such opportunities? Please provide specific examples of these.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q11 What do you do for yourself in the area of professional development? Please provide specific examples of these.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q12 Have you thought about changing your workplace due to new opportunity or interests?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q13 Do you think you would need to develop new capabilities in order to change jobs?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q14 What do you think these capabilities might be?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Q15 What would assist you in developing new capabilities?

- ○ Further tertiary study (Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma or other postgraduate studies)
- ○ EduBits (microcredentials that you could achieve while still in the workplace)
- ○ Other (please give us an example)

_____

Q16 Which one would you consider for further tertiary study?

- ○ On campus
- ○ In your workplace

That's it! Thank you again for your time, it is extremely valuable to get feedback from Otago Polytechnic alumni to help guide this initative.

We will be in touch with links to the research conducted already for the initial phase of this project and also to send you a $20 Prezzi card for assisting us in this stage of the research.

Please leave your contact details and submit your response by clicking the "Submit" button below.

- ○ Name _____
- ○ Email address _____

What does it take to produce New Zealand's most employable graduates?

Research and actionable insights exploring Learner Capability at Otago Polytechnic

5

What does it take to produce New Zealand's most employable graduates?
A synthesis of research to date and actionable insights exploring Learner Capability Framework at Otago Polytechnic
November 2019
Version 1.0

About this document
Research team
Report authors
Research team members
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OTAGO POLYTECHNIC
Ako

Otago Polytechnic's goal is to produce the country's most employable graduates

It has been internationally recognised that the nature of the workplace, the environment, technology, the economy and society is changing. Key to supporting learners for this changing environment is the development of capabilities, or transferable skills, that can be applied in multiple and fluid work situations.

To meet these changing needs and opportunities Otago Polytechnic has set itself the goal of producing New Zealand's most employable graduates. To do this, it has embarked on a journey of action research to answer these questions:

- How can New Zealand teaching institutions equip learners to be more employment ready for the fast-changing world of future work?
- Which capabilities or transferable skills are priorities for employers and stakeholders when they consider graduates as employees?
- How might we create buy-in amongst staff and students?
- What are the barriers and enablers to embedding capabilities further at Otago Polytechnic?

These questions are central to the development of the LEF at Otago Polytechnic, and the implementation of the MyCapable tool, an online platform for learners to store validated evidence of their capabilities.

In 2015 and 2016 Otago Polytechnic undertook research with employers, alumni and Otago Polytechnic staff to better understand the role of capabilities in the workplace and to more understand how to embed learnings from capability research into programme and curriculum, systems and processes.

"I think OP really has widened my thought processes and inspired me to see that you can be so much more. My lecturers really helped me identify my own capability and what I could be doing in the future. I have never stopped asking 'why' since I finished in 2016"

Culinary Arts respondent

Introducing the capability tools

The initiative to embed transferable skills (learner capabilities) into all our programmes is based on evidenced employer demand to have access to graduates who have these skills. It is part of Otago Polytechnic's commitment to our learners to equip them to be work-ready when they graduate.

i am capable

LEARNER CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK (LCF)

'IAmCapable' TOOL

The Learner Capability Framework offers a common language to build, define and grow capabilities

Capabilities are highly valued by employers and alumni and the LCF is a way for all stakeholders to have more effective conversations and understandings with each other about what capabilities are, and how they manifest.

Making New Zealand's most employable graduates means aligning goals and tensions

All stakeholders need to 'buy-in' to the LCF and use the tools for the wider potential value to be gained. There are tensions in the system that risk unhinging the value. There are goals of each stakeholder that need to be aligned, and tensions addressed for the LCF to truly bring value.

Our journey to date

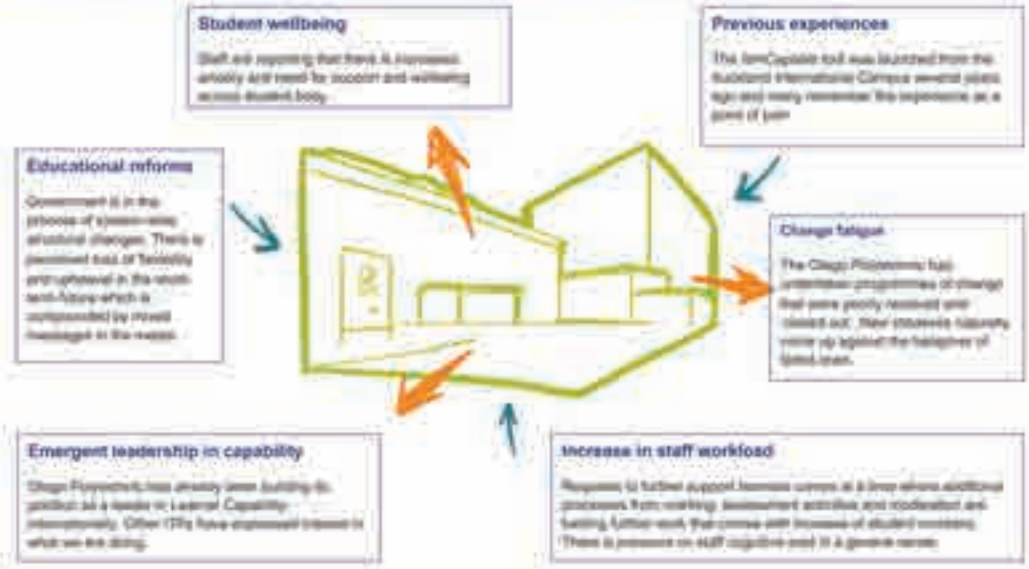
Our research to date has involved a number of different 'strands' all exploring the LCF and the *I Am Capable* tool. The voice of employers, alumni and Otago Polytechnic staff have been considered collectively for the first time.

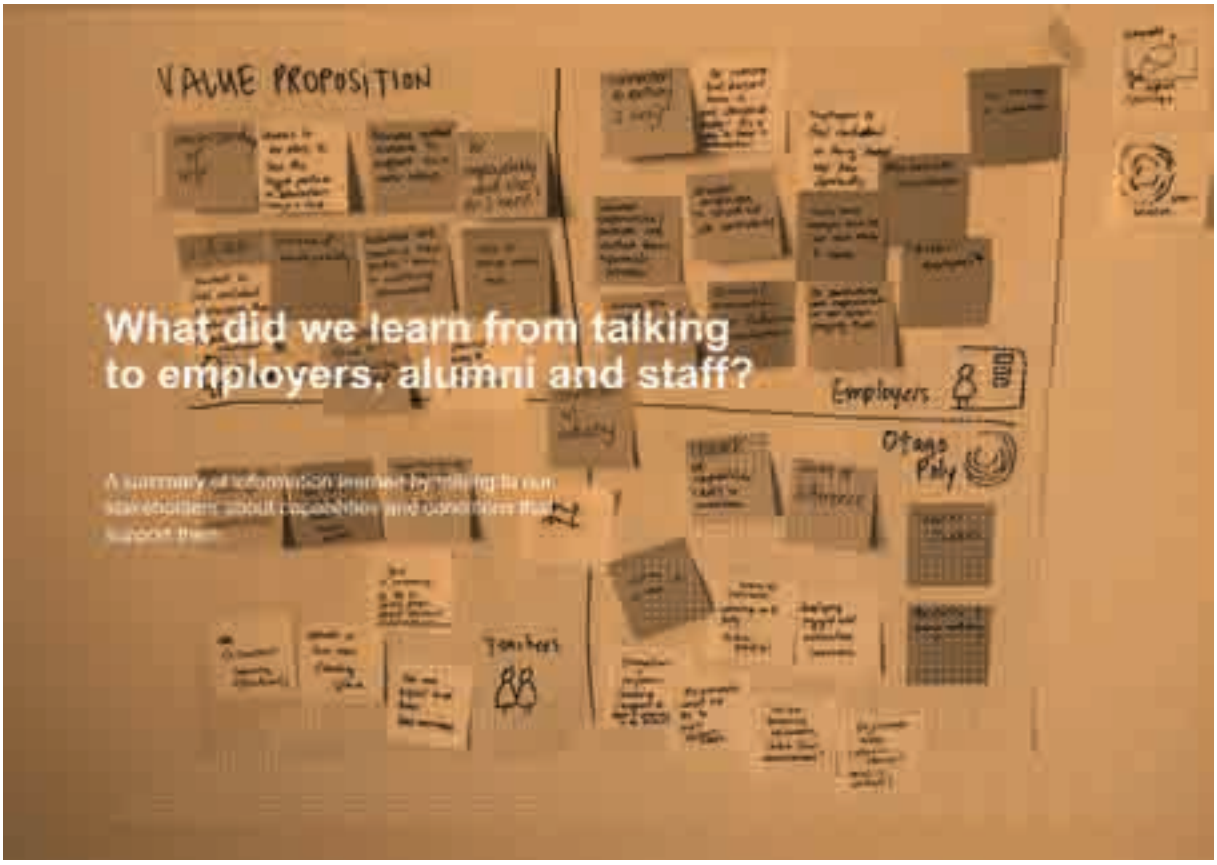
A snapshot of our research

The research with employers, alumni and Otago Polytechnic academic staff involved a number of people.

The context for this work is dynamic

The context is influenced by several factors internal and external to Otago Polytechnic.





What did we learn from employers?

Employers largely recognise the importance of capabilities. They are looking at capabilities from multiple lenses – individual capabilities (what a person brings) and team capabilities (how a person can contribute to the wider capability pool of a workplace).

These capabilities were highly valued by employers

These capabilities were highly valued by employers

What does this mean?

Staff can be assured that employers do value capabilities, and to some based as much as, or more than competencies.

This means that the LLP can be reinvented, that their effort in this space will be valued by employers, and effective for students.

To be truly employable, graduates of need a combination of capabilities, competencies and personal attributes – to a sense a holistic person, or one that will suit the conditions of the workplace.

Key capabilities need to be evident in an interview setting, although they are open to other means such as evidence-based portfolios and practical demonstrations.

Some believe that competencies can be taught on the job, so what they are looking for are people who are teachable.

Ways to enable employers to achieve this goal include:

- The ability for graduates to both show and articulate why they are good at a particular capability.
- Tools and ways that will help them prepare people with capabilities more effectively and could enhance the existing recruitment process.

What did we learn from Otago Polytechnic alumni?

Alumni typically concur with employers about which capabilities are highly important to their role in the workplace.

ALUMNI AND EMPLOYERS ARE ALIGNED

Most alumni placed a higher value on the ways in which the students were exposed to critically, working in teams and solving problems being more important in the workforce than the technical skills that can be learned on the job.

WORK READINESS

Students need to be workplace-ready upon completing their studies. CP must prepare students for the realities of the industries they are likely to enter and play an active part in assisting their transition from study to work.

Alumni would have liked more training in 'soft skills', such as interview techniques, as these prepare them for the transition into the workplace.

Alumni felt that capabilities had been well taught and that, in general, they had been well prepared for post-study work and life.

CAPABILITY OR COMPETENCY?

Alumni frequently demonstrated a misunderstanding of the difference between a capability, and a competency. Nonetheless, a number of capabilities emerged as important for alumni for employability success.

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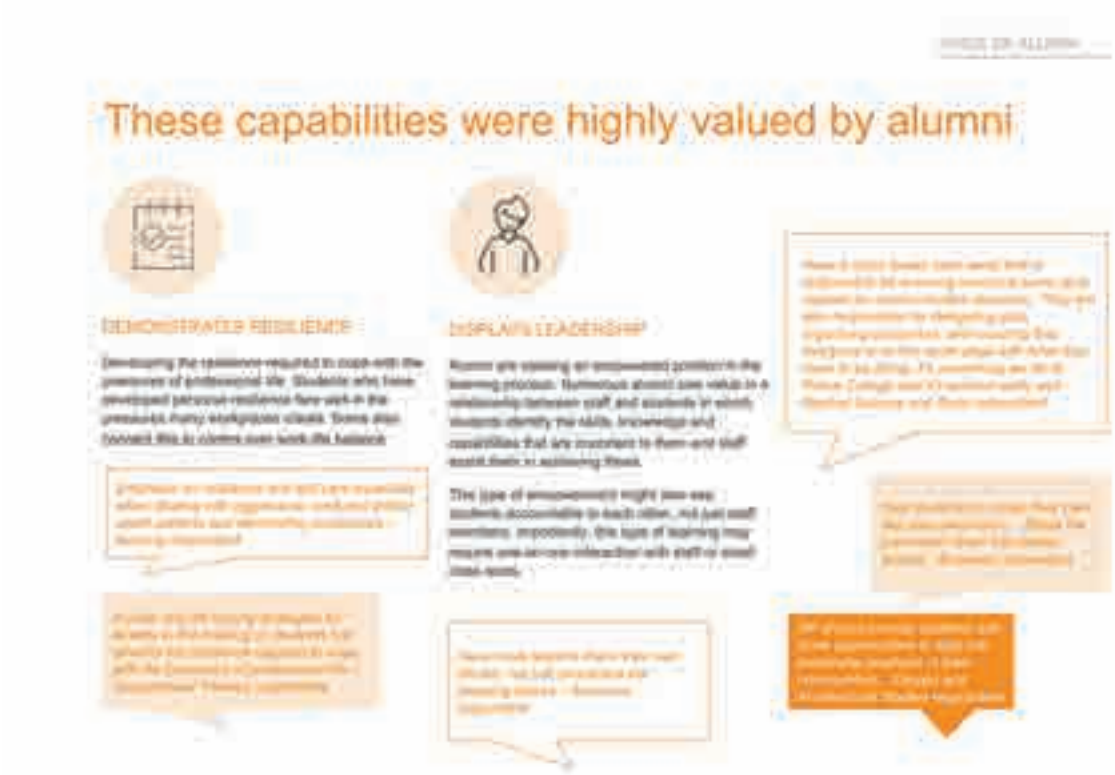
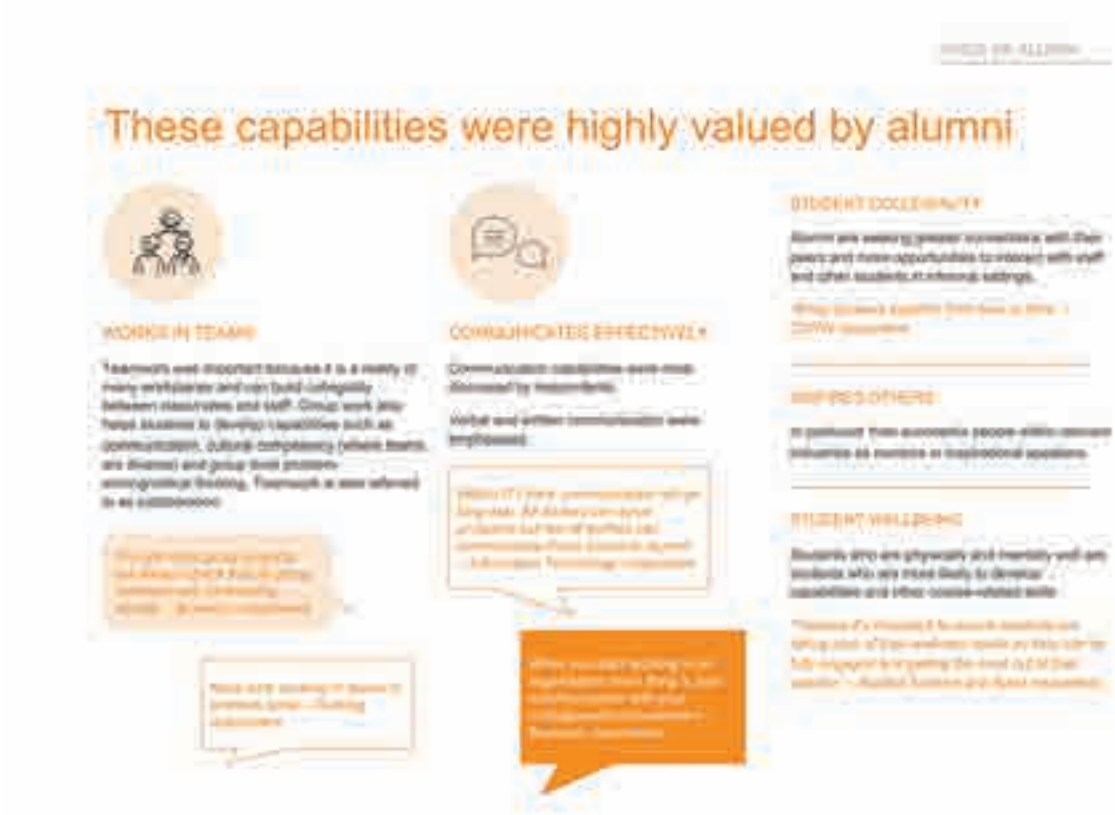
The summaries are available online.


These capabilities were highly valued by alumni
DEMONSTRATES RESILIENCE
DISPLAYS LEADERSHIP


These capabilities were highly valued by alumni
WORKS IN TEAMS
COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY
STUDENT COLLEGIALITY
INSPIRES OTHERS
STUDENT WELLBEING

What helps build strong capabilities?

Alumni suggestions about how capabilities can be built at Otago Polytechnic, with a view to creating easy transitions into workplaces

What helps build strong capabilities?

Alumni suggestions about how capabilities can be built at Otago Polytechnic, with a view to creating easy transitions into workplaces

Project-based learning

Real-life scenarios to suggest how to solve real problems (e.g. role plays)

Programmes that encourage collaboration with other disciplines

Activities that reflect industries

Connection with professionals

Internships, outside work placements and work experience

Team-based projects

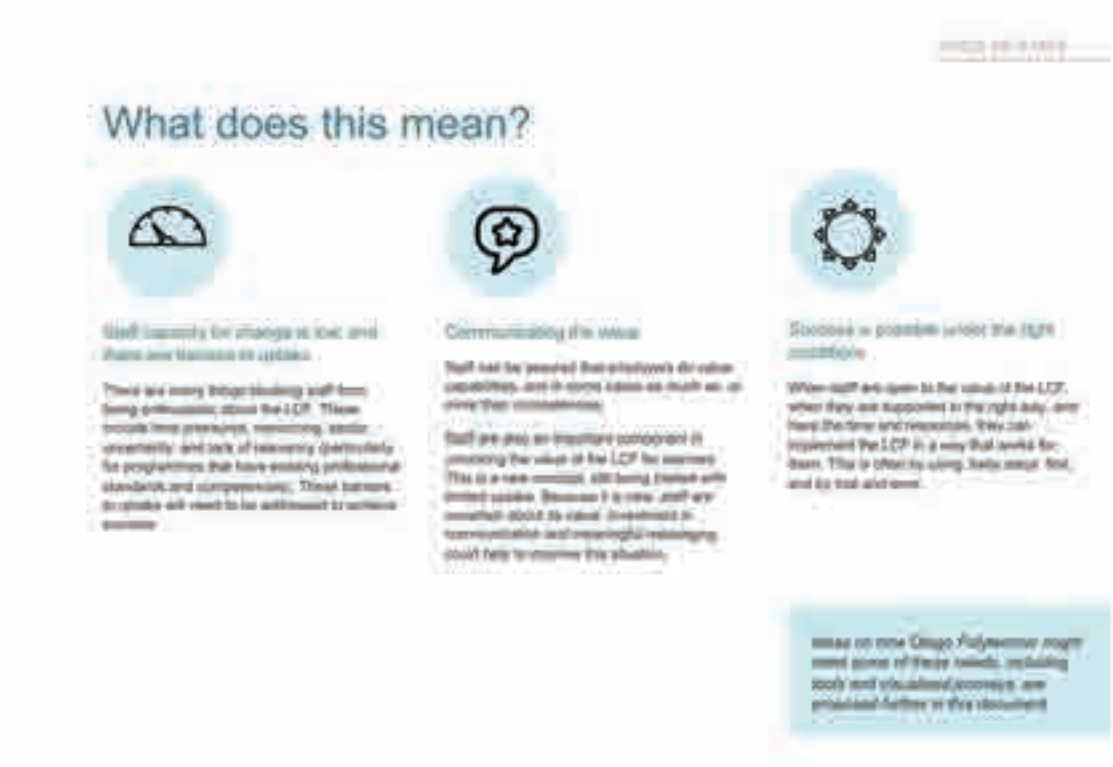
Infrastructure that reflects the realities of the workplace (e.g. 'technology utilised in the classroom should be up to date with technology used in industry')

Ethnicity and equity for wellbeing

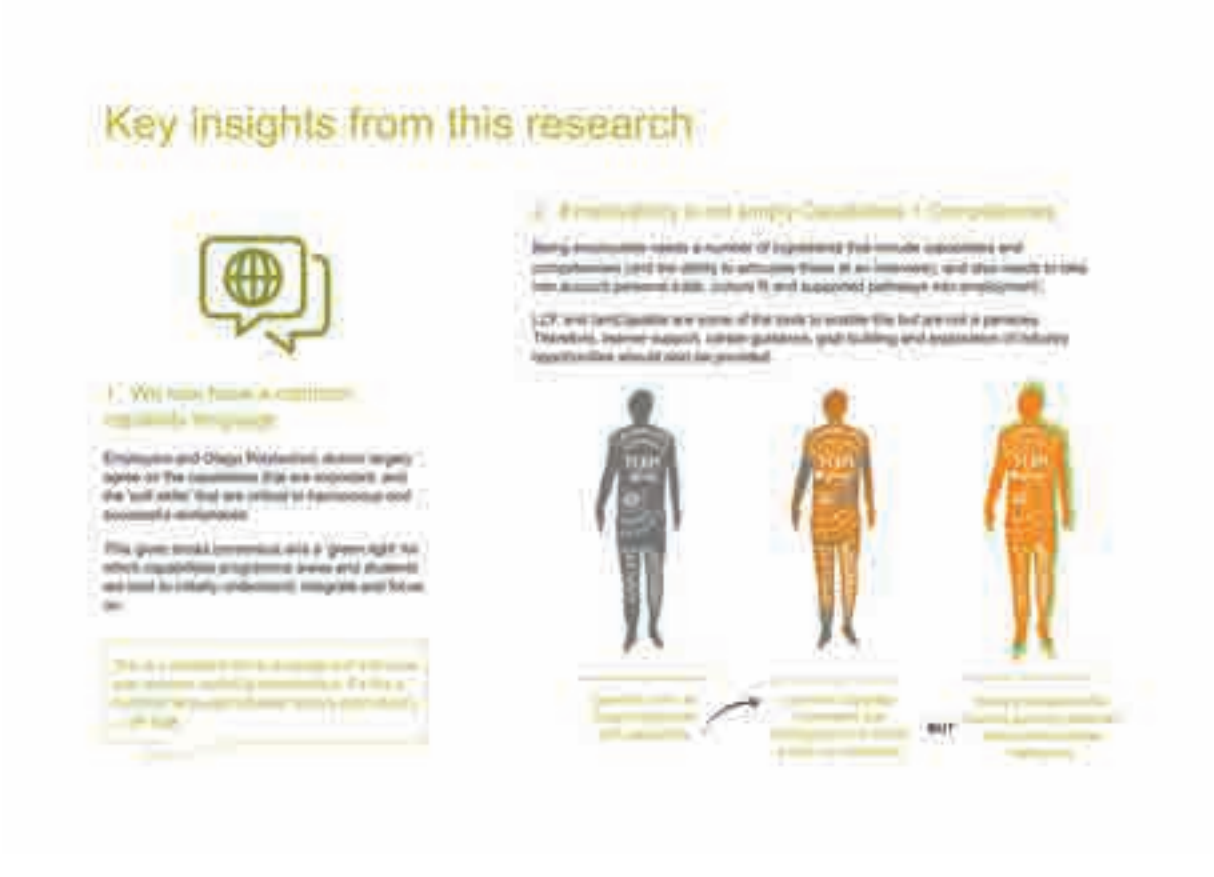
What does this mean?

What did we learn from staff?

There are two sides of the story for academic staff. On one hand many staff understand the value and can see a pathway to embed capabilities. For others, they simply don't need this.


What does this mean?

Key insights that emerged from this research
The research brought together different strands of validity for the LCF, creating actionable insights to help the Otago Polytechnic objective of enabling learners to develop and evidence transferable capabilities and to to set them up for success in employment.
ALUMNI
What OP does well


Key insights from this research

Key insights from this research

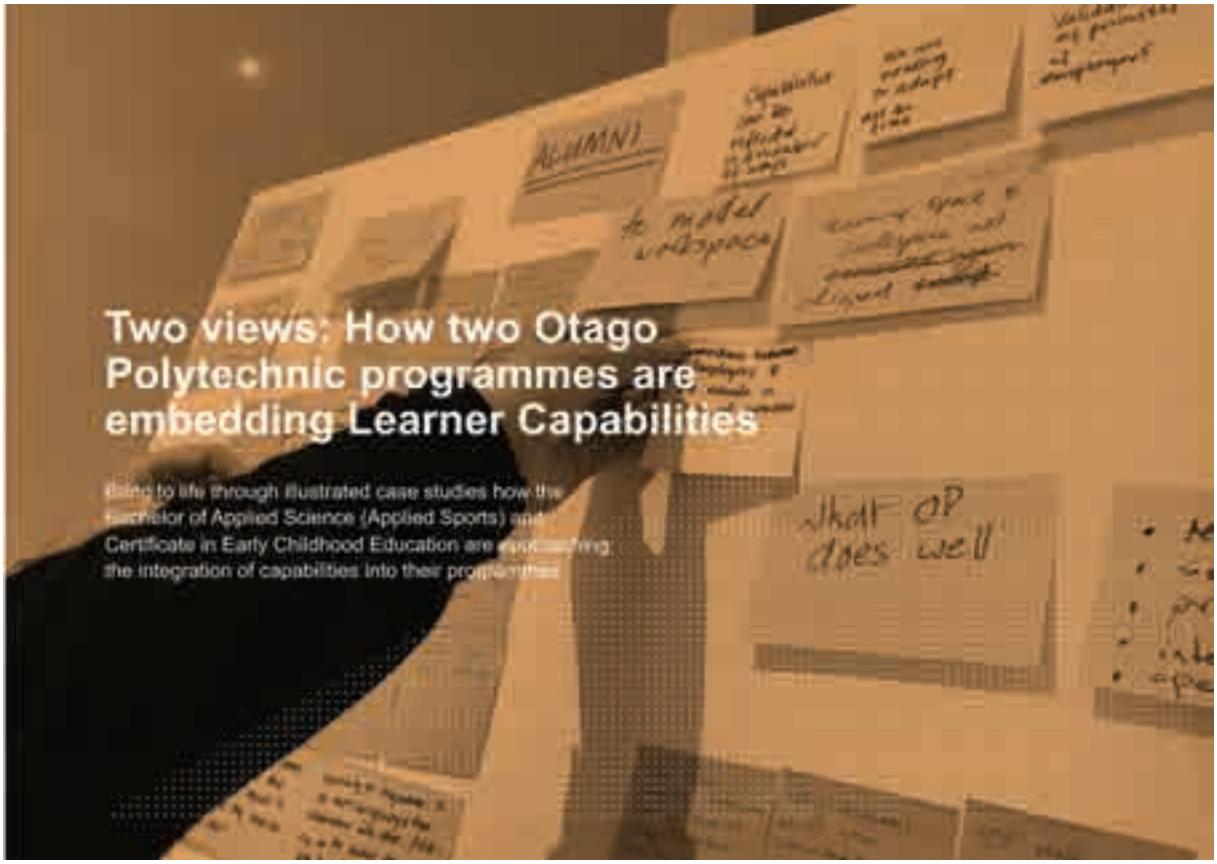
What needs to be in place to develop highly employable graduates?

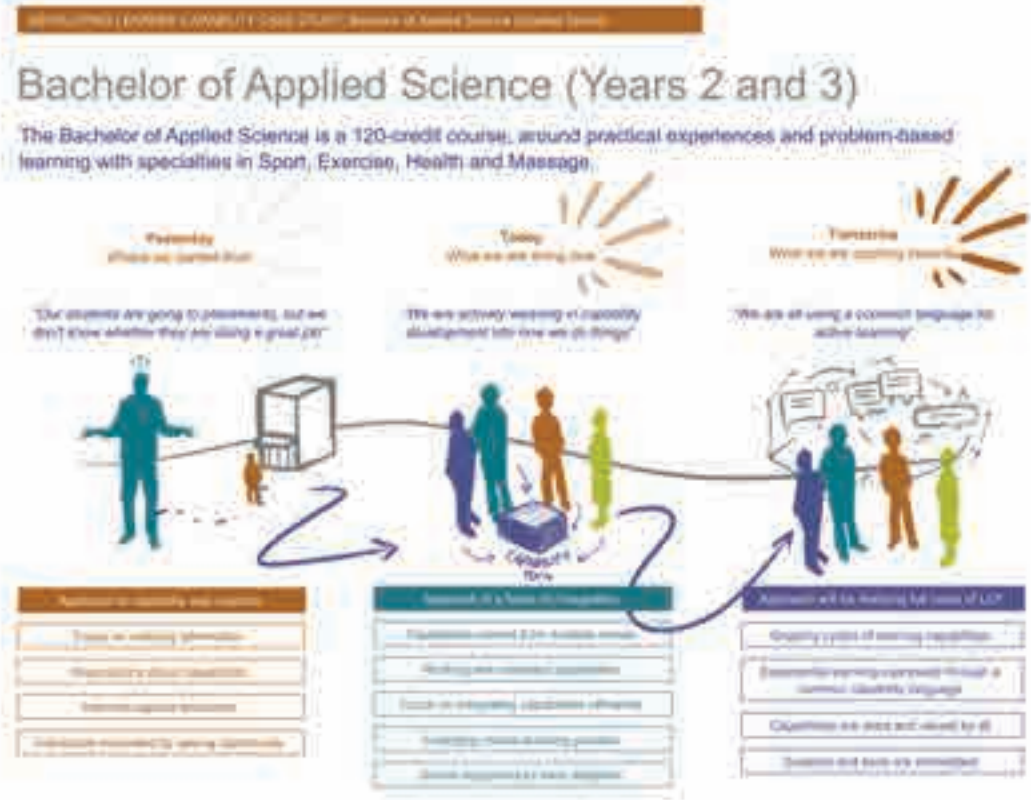
Looking at needs from stakeholders' perspectives
Understanding stakeholders' needs will help to inform future actions to create New Zealand's most employable graduates. Here are some questions to be addressed.
FROM AN OTAGO POLYTECHNIC STAFF PERSPECTIVE

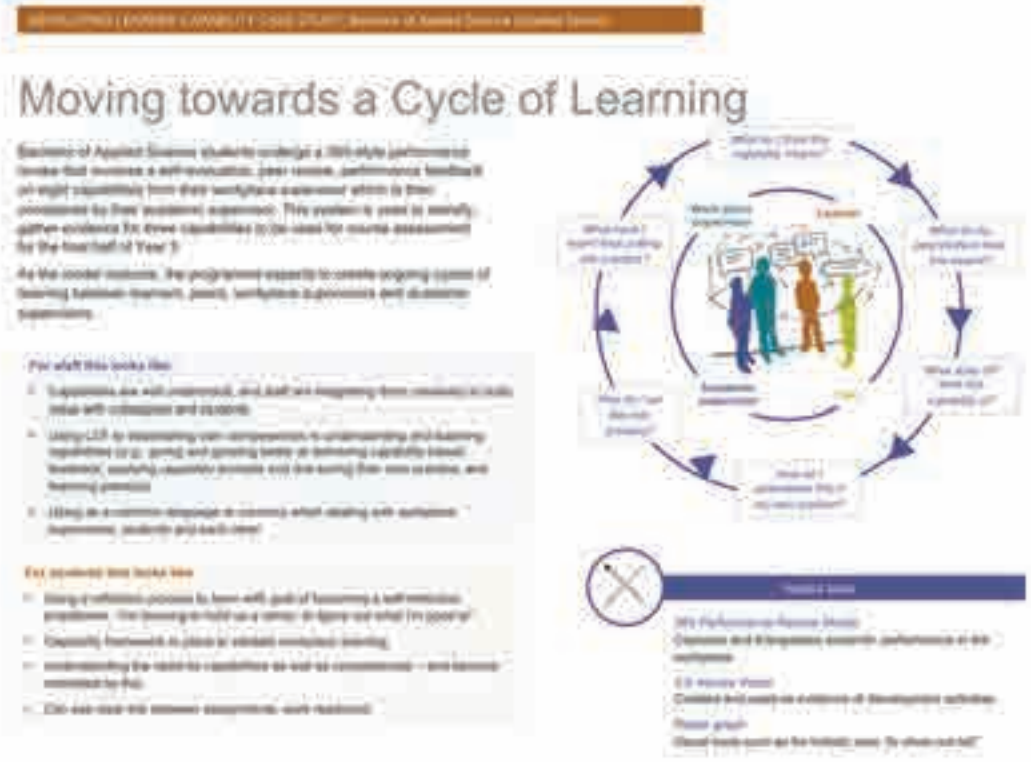
A staff pathway to embedding the LCF

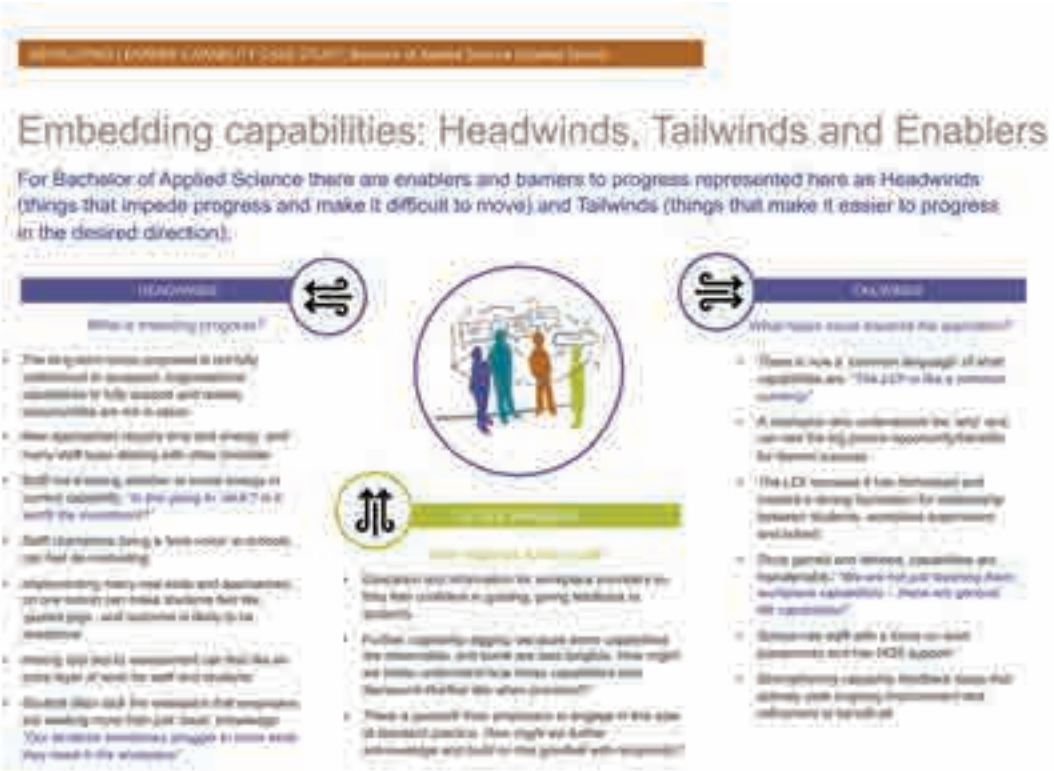
Enablers for success
Successfully embedding the LCF for student success in employment requires several enablers to work in unison. Here are the enablers for success.
TOOLS
COMMUNICATION
INFRASTRUCTURE
CAPABILITIES
ROLES
CULTURE/MINDSET

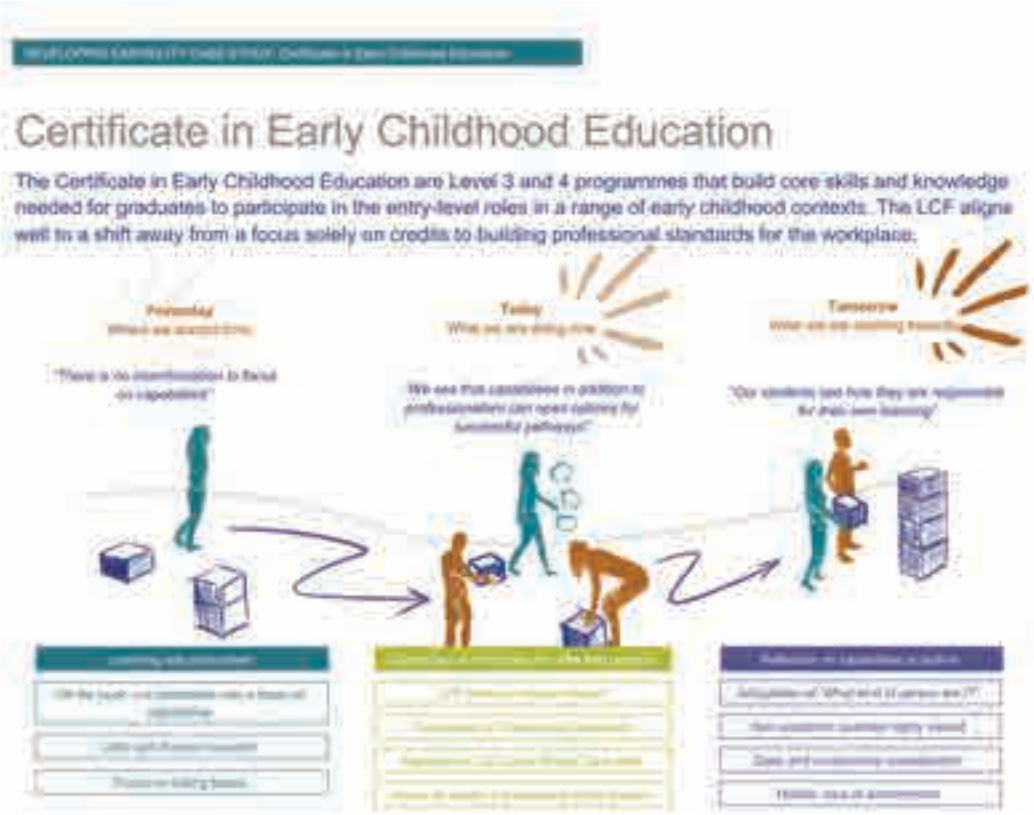
A Theory of Change to achieve success
Organisational factors required to achieve the goal of producing the most employable graduates.
Long term GOAL
Short term OUTCOME
OUTPUTS
ACTIVITIES
INPUTS
Current STATE
OUTPUTS
INPUTS
ACTIVITIES


Two views: How two Otago Polytechnic programmes are embedding Learner Capabilities
Bring to life through illustrated case studies how the Bachelor of Applied Science (Applied Sports) and Certificate in Early Childhood Education are embedding the integration of capabilities into their programmes
ALUMNI
What OP does well


Bachelor of Applied Science (Years 2 and 3)
The Bachelor of Applied Science is a 120-credit course, around practical experiences and problem-based learning with specialties in Sport, Exercise, Health and Massage.


Moving towards a Cycle of Learning


Embedding capabilities: Headwinds, Tailwinds and Enablers
For Bachelor of Applied Science there are enablers and barriers to progress represented here as Headwinds (things that impede progress and make it difficult to move) and Tailwinds (things that make it easier to progress in the desired direction).

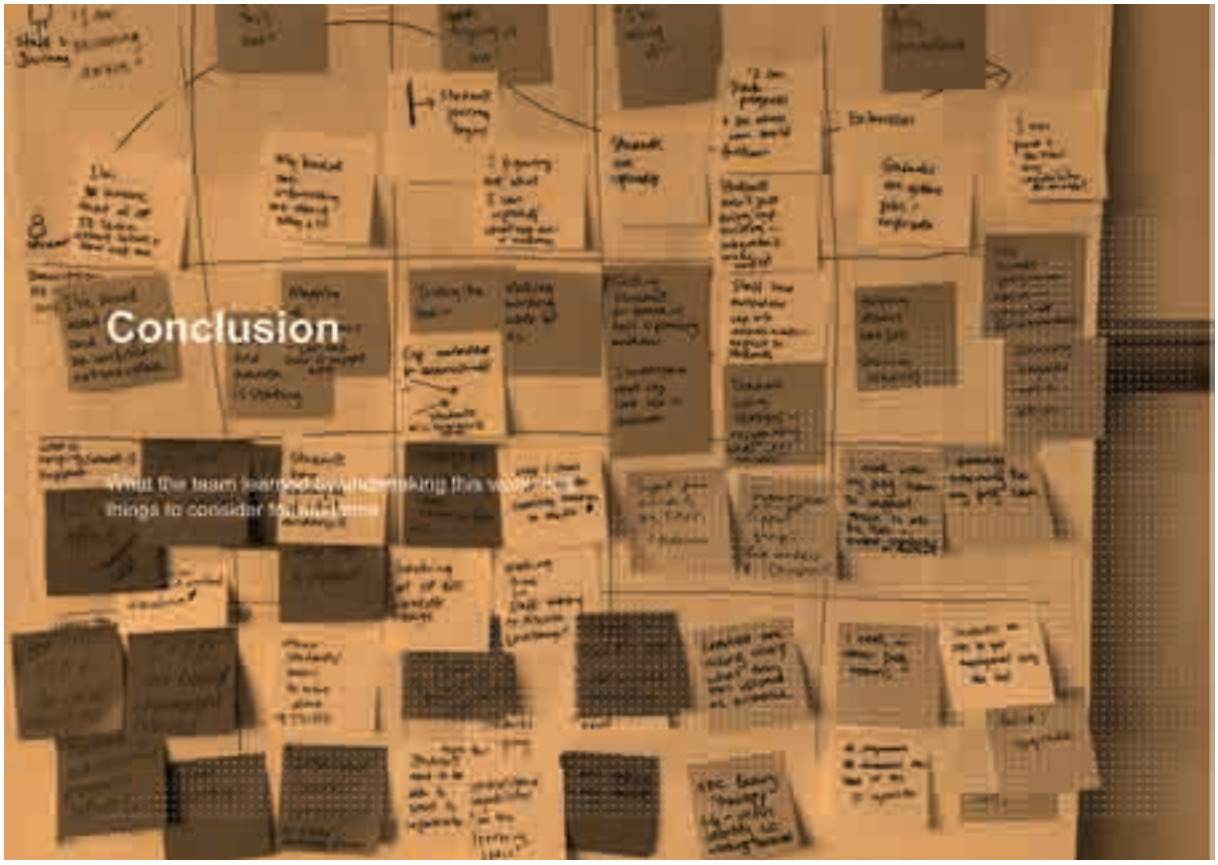

Certificate in Early Childhood Education
The Certificate in Early Childhood Education are Level 3 and 4 programmes that build core skills and knowledge needed for graduates to participate in the entry-level roles in a range of early childhood contexts. The LCF aligns well to a shift away from a focus solely on credits to building professional standards for the workplace.
Yesterday
Today
Tomorrow

Building self-reflective learners

For Certificate in Early Childhood Education staff, the LCF is a "perfect fit" for their programme. *"It helps us understand what is relevant."* It also helps to articulate and develop resilience required to work in this sector: *"It's hard to give to others when you aren't healthy yourself"*.

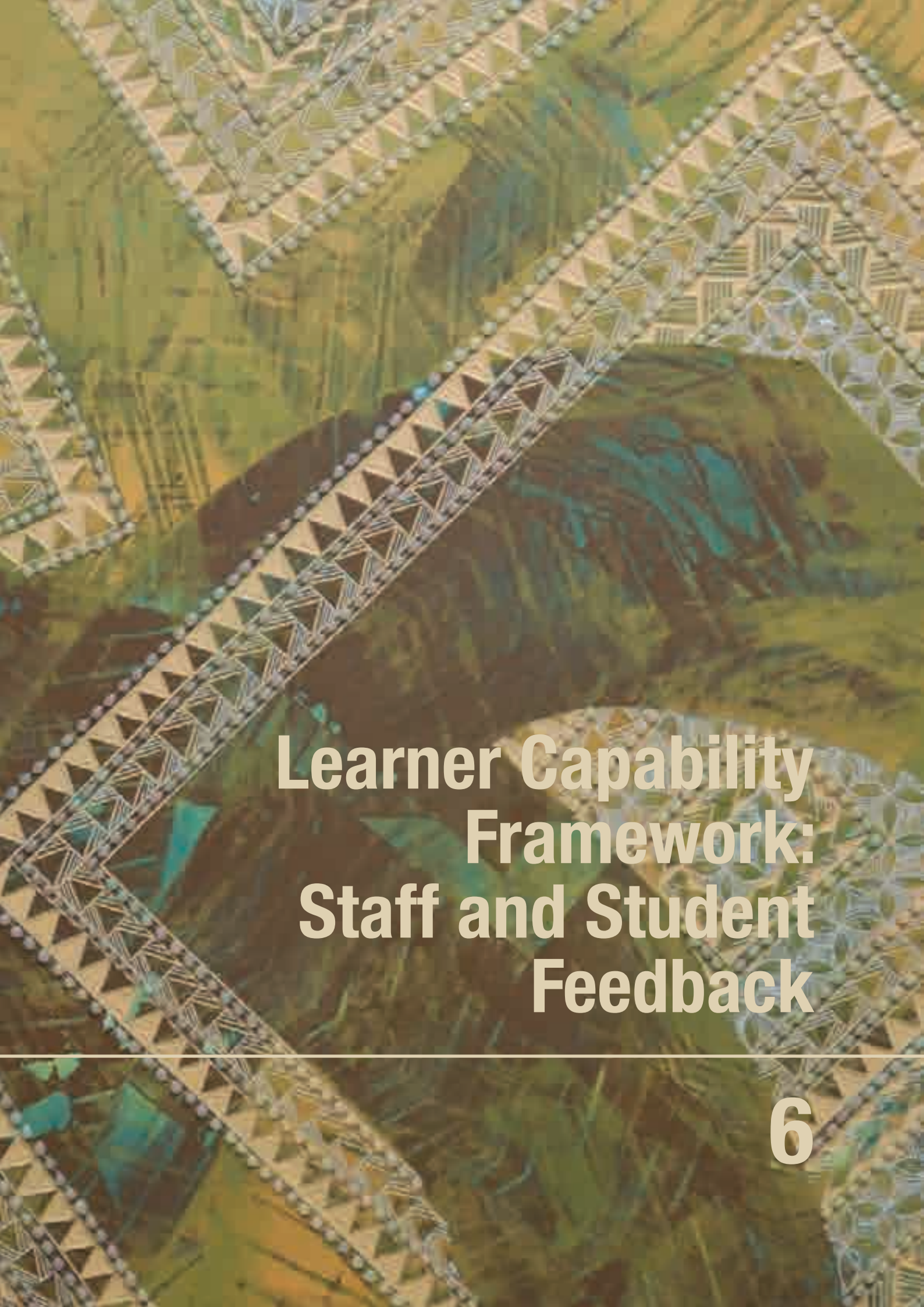
Embedding capabilities: Headwinds, Tailwinds and Enablers

For Early Childhood Education there are elements that act as enablers and barriers of progress represented here as Headwinds (things that impede progress and make it difficult to move) and Tailwinds (things that make it easier to progress in the desired direction).



What we have learned

- Capacity for data
- Length of project
- Imagine engagements holistically
- Frame the research objectives for your stakeholders
- Check for bias
- Use methods for maximum value
- Qualitative yields richer data
- Build in time for planning and recruitment
- Don't leave room for assumptions
- Baseline data allows for aggregation



Learner Capability Framework: Staff and Student Feedback

6

Staff and Student Feedback

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Tattoo the Men and not the Women*, 2015.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 122.5 x 122cm.

Introduction

The Learner Capability Framework research and implementation as well as the *iamcapable* tool integration has been a huge undertaking for Otago Polytechnic, involving a large array of participants, including employers, stakeholders, industry, and external training organisations. There have been multiple voices and interests in the reflections and the development of the research undertaken. In order to close the loop, we have undertaken to interview both staff and students who are working with curriculum development, and who are having interactions with the *iamcapable* tool. We have included this aspect in order to gauge both the aspirations and the actualities of the Learner Capability Framework and how it is impacting on learning in the classroom space.

During the first phase of research all areas of programme offerings at degree level were included in the research scope. Comprising 15 initial clusters, this was extended at a mid-point to include the certificate and diploma level areas, making 18 in total. Staff from each programme area were important to this stage, reaching out to industry, stakeholder and employer groups that align with graduate outcomes and destinations of their programmes, thereby adding efficacy to the project. By including the staff at this stage, we invested in the relevance and engagement of their positions in our process, prioritising that the value of this engagement was essential to both the institution and to the programme outcomes for the Learner Capability Research Project. Including these staff from the outset was a strategic decision to be connected with again in the later stages of the research by gauging the effectiveness of the project at curriculum and classroom level.

There are often instances in a long term research project that necessitate a pivot, and during this phase of the research project we experienced the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic placed a great stress on teaching staff and students alike, and thus our initial aspirations for this phase of the project had to be rescaled. We have, however, undertaken to make this aspect of the Learner Capability Framework and associated *iamcapable* tool use an ongoing part of the project into the future. We will do this in order to continue to learn more about the way that the development and implementation of the framework in the classroom is relevant and current for learners to use in transitioning into the workforce post qualification.

Included in the following pages is an analysis of the staff feedback interviews undertaken with 18 of the initial staff involved, and related to the entirety of the programmes included in the initial project. This report summarises the analysis of these interviews on the subject of the Learner Capability Framework (LCF). The interviews were conducted by the research assistant for the project – Michael Greaves – via an online communication platform during lockdown under COVID-19 Level 3. The interviews were carried out in order to understand staff perceptions of the LCF and whether these perceptions had changed over time. Understanding staff perceptions, alongside those of other stakeholders, such as employers and students, is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the LCF is implemented in a way that is maximally beneficial to all parties concerned (see appendix 1) and informed a conversation around the implementation of the Learner Capability Project that sought to understand the changing value of the process, curriculum reflection, usage of the framework and noted issues and problems in staff experience thus far. Considerations of the relationships between employers/industry and classroom were also broached informally and the impact of the feedback of the employer/industry on the curriculum as a beginning for transformation of the delivery of the Learner Capability Framework was also discussed.

Student feedback is also included in this report and is seen as an ongoing process as more students begin to use the *iamcapable* tool in developing a Learner Capability Portfolio for use in entering the workforce post qualification. The report offers a thematic summary of six interviews conducted with current learners at Otago Polytechnic (OP). The interviews were conducted in order to understand their perspectives on, and experiences with, OP's Learner Capability Framework (LCF) and, in particular, the online tool/portal via which learners accumulate evidence of possessing capabilities included within the LCF.

Also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, this aspect of the study is underdeveloped at this stage, but we are beginning to see more and more engagement by students undertaking qualifications with Otago Polytechnic. The students that we chose for this part of the research reflect those early programmes that have explicitly implemented the framework into the taught programmes of the qualification. We expect to see this number exponentially increase into the 2021 academic year, and will continue this feedback loop with learners in these cohorts. The responses for this part of the study were in phone interview form, undertaken by the research assistant to the project – Michael Greaves. The questions asked (see appendix 2) sought to understand the student's current usage of the *iamcapable* tool, the value that they see in having such a tool and the idea of capability.

The collection of feedback data and student engagement with the *iamcapable* portfolio tool were both significantly affected in this semester by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has provided us with problems and opportunities for research and implementation. As mentioned above, completing the research in the timeframes that we had projected, was not possible due to the uncertainty and added stress of the national and international situation. However, this problem has identified a very important and significant opportunity in terms of what the workforce might look like in the future and how important the development of capability skills will be to assist learners in transitioning into new and different work contexts. This shift proposes a new and exciting pivot to the research and emphasises the importance of the Learner Capability Framework in acknowledging the significance of capability alongside competency in developing a sustainable and agile set of skills to support potential employment in a post–COVID world.

Analysis of Staff Feedback Interviews

Introduction

Introduction

This report summarises the analysis of 18 interviews conducted with Otago Polytechnic staff on the subject of the Learner Capability Framework (LCF). The interviews were carried out in order to understand staff perceptions of the LCF and whether these perceptions had changed over time. Understanding staff perceptions, alongside those of other stakeholders, such as employers and students, is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the LCF is implemented in a way that is maximally beneficial to all parties concerned.

Initial Staff Perceptions

It is important to note that no interviewee challenged the importance of capabilities, as such. Any reservations were linked to the framework; how it would be implemented and what would be required of staff. Most, in fact reported initial positivity regarding the LCF.

> *Ok, I thought it was a good idea, yeah, so like, I volunteered to be part of that because I need to be research active, sorry, research engaged because I teach on the bachelor's programme within engineering, and so, yeah, I was quite excited about the opportunity to get out and speak to employers and I found the whole experience was really good to be honest… (Interview 2, Lines 88-92).*

> *… I feel like it's really important in our area, a really important way to ensure that what we're doing within our language programmes simultaneously focused on language but on explicitly developing capabilities for our students that will enable them to potentially be aware and develop what is attractive to employers in the future (Interview 3, Lines 71-75).*

> *I think I thought it was great concept, very valuable to find out what the employers thought was valuable for our trainees, our students… (Interview 14, Lines 85-86).*

> *Quite positive, I think it gives an opportunity to collect evidence of those sort of what we refer to as soft skills, those things that aren't assessed in more formal learning, it sort of fleshes out a CV for a student I think. And gives them the opportunity to show that they have some other skills apart from the ones that have been assessed and accredited for (Interview 10, Lines 64-67).*

However, there were those who felt they simply did not understand what the LCF was intended to achieve or the value it would add.

> *Yeah, I didn't understand it and I wasn't sure about the purpose of it, and as I learnt more about it I did understand it more and I have to say I was a little bit sceptical about it, about the need for it I suppose, seemed like just another, top down decision made by people who are perhaps going under the older model of where they are trying to make money out of the polytech, you know, this idea of research for profit or trying to add more income streams to the polytech, somehow, that's the impression I had about it at the beginning (Interview 1, Lines 55-61).*

> *I thought it was quite confusing, I didn't really, when I first seen it, I was, "I don't even know what this is" (Interview 12, Lines 84-85).*

This commentary speaks to a need for ongoing assistance to staff as the LCF is rolled out. Numerous interviewees reported positively on working with Amber Paterson in order to better understand the LCF.

> *…she* [Amber Paterson] *actually reassured us a lot as we looked through how the mapping would work and how we realised and chose our actual capabilities, what would be mapped onto our curriculum I guess… so she simplified a lot of stuff and showed what could be used with students at that level as far as training went (Interview 3, Lines 86-91).*

> *Amber, she came in and got her hair done in the salon and she said to the girl who did her hair, "hey, this is a creativity one, have you thought about taking a photo of me, and you've had this conversation with me and you've done this and blah, blah, blah", and it was like, "oh man this is so easy to use, this is actually true"… (Interview 12, Lines 150-153).*

Some staff did have outright concerns regarding the LCF. These mostly related to the workload required of staff and are discussed immediately below.

Challenges for the LCF

Staff Workload

One concern for some interviewees, or, more commonly, their colleagues, is the potential for the LCF to require extra work for already busy staff. Some felt that this concern was mitigated when staff learnt more about the LCF. Yet, the concern still persists.

> *Yes, just in general, so there was worry in my team about the amount of work that the lecturers or assessors would have to put into this and if it did just become a box ticking exercise then it would be of little value, so we're not really like, verifying what the students have said, if it becomes too much work and just a box ticking exercise (Interview 1, Lines 225-228).*

> *I think still, in terms of the workload allocation and the fact that still the requirement for staff to check things off in terms of those capabilities and that includes some teaching staff as well as admin staff, and I know one staff member in particular had a real reaction, when they realised that they could be assessing sort of up to so many capabilities in the first instance they didn't, probably didn't understand that it narrows down, and they were freaking out for want of a better term, as to what that job might require. They've since realised it's not as massive as that, so it's* [the list of capabilities] *narrowed down over time and I think that's reassured people a bit more about workload (Interview 14, Lines 107-114).*

> *…sometimes, I wasn't getting like, an alert, when say for example a student had uploaded some information, I think sometimes, and you know, we get busy with our lecturing and other additional responsibilities, so for me I was a little bit late in reviewing the evidence, so I don't know if there was a way that students knew that I was late in responding or whether they knew that was sufficient so I guess that bit was a bit of a gap for me last year… (Interview 7, Lines 222-227).*

> *I thought, "what the heck, this is just something else I've got to do" (Interview 12, Lines 111-112).*

As is discussed further below, such sentiments could perhaps be mitigated by concerted effort to understand how the teaching requirements of the LCF may already be met by many staff; many capabilities are already embedded in teaching practices.

Student Uptake

Interviewees reported varying degrees of student enthusiasm for the LCF. Some students were (or were thought to be) eager to participate.

> *I think so, we've* [staff and students] *had some discussions around it, and I've actually got them to look at the capabilities and think of them as an employer and what they would value as important and I think they kind of found it a useful exercise so I think it's got them some buy-in really, around that, so yeah, so I found it useful to talk about it with the learners and actually think about how they can improve, and for them to think what's most important as well (Interview 2, Lines 127-131).*

> *…with our cohort particularly of refugee background students, they are in a hurry to get jobs and they are trying to work out how it actually works with making your capabilities apparent to employers… I suspect that it* [the LCF] *will be quite attractive to them and they actually have a range of things that they've done, that they are doing outside our curriculum that they'll be able to upload and refer to as well (Interview 3, Lines 125-130).*

> *…the students had to first understand what the capabilities are and for me to clarify what I understand them to be, the capabilities versus the technical skills that they need for the job. But I think once we had that session done and when we kind of quietly incorporated some of the capabilities from the course number one in my programme, they understood when it was done, oh, communication is actually really important. Then they started to work on their projects, and again that teamwork and collaboration became a key for them, realising what happens if a team member does not participate as much as the others (Interview 11, Lines 137-144).*

However, feedback also suggests that students still need to be brought on board.

> *So, the way we were talking about implementing it would be as voluntary for the students and we imagined a handful of students would go for it, that's our impression, and the handful of students that would go for it are the A students anyway who probably don't need the extra help, if you know what I mean. So, it's a difficult situation, we think (Interview 1, Lines 243-247).*

> *I think it's been a bit challenging for us with our students, when we first raised it, one of them said, "why would I use the Learner Capabilities when I'm already using something like LinkedIn as a way of networking and getting my CV out there and for people to see who I am and the sort of skills I have to offer and my background" (Interview 14, Lines 24-127).*

In sum, the feedback suggests that students will or will not participate on the basis of two factors:

1. The perceived value of the LCF in raising their employability.
2. The perceived work required to produce and collate evidence of capabilities (via the online tool).

> *So I think that it's really important that they just see that it's a seamless approach, what they're doing may be as part of assessment or extracurricular volunteering in the sector that can be utilised, and it's just a different way of being able to show that, whereas normally they would have written some of those skills on their CV… (Interview 5, Lines 118-121).*

> *But I think the biggest thing really was to try to continue to talk about the relevancy of it for students, because we really needed the students to get buy-in, we talked as staff how we were going to try and tie this in with assessment, because we know many of our students will only do things if it's tied with assessment, and in some of the earlier trials students were reluctant to buy-in because they didn't think it was for assessments so I guess it was more about trying to embed it in the programme effectively. I still think it's a good idea (Interview 6, Lines 49-55).*

> *…what I find is, if we're adding additional work on students they kind of, if they're not being assessed I guess or there's nothing in it for them at the beginning they find it hard to see the benefits, even though I've tried to tell them about it being like a tool that they could use… (Interview 7, Lines 162-165).*

> *Yes, I think the problem is at the moment the students, because it's very new to the students, they don't see the end product, I think once students see the end product, I think it's like anything, everything starts to come together then once they see* [the end product]*… (Interview 15, Lines 140-142).*

> *It is quite a process to set a profile up: …their* [student] *feedback was, you have to answer millions of, it's a process to get everything set up, you have to answer a million questions (Interview 9, Lines 113-115).*

> *…one of the frustrations, we use Pathbrite[1], and I know Pathbrite's used in a lot of other schools for putting up evidence and of course it doesn't, the Pathbrite and the proposed online tool don't talk to each other… (Interview 15, Lines 157-159).*

> *I think there's definitely some positive in there but it does take a bit to sell it* [to students] *I think, just because people are very wary of something that they perceive as something extra so talking about it and how they're gathering this* [evidence of capability] *as they go along is, I think it's quite key to it (Interview 10, Lines 159-162).*

It is important to note that a number of interviewees recognised that student uptake would take time and that only after multiple cohorts have been familiarised with the LCF will results/lessons be evident.

> *…I have to say it could be a timing issue as well, was introduced more like halfway through the year, they're halfway through their third year so I think it needs to be introduced at first year and that's the other thing I guess, I didn't really talk about, was the implementation of it, it's much better if we introduce it in Year One, and they start accumulating then, rather than, the third years' are almost finished, they've almost done what they need to do and they don't really want to start something new… (Interview 14, Lines 261-267).*

[1]Pathbrite e-portfolios. www.pathbrite.com

…I mean we introduced it last year to our first years', and I think we only had about a 35 to 40% uptake but now they've gone into Year Two and we've added another, I think we've added another four capabilities in Year Two, just really interested at the end of this year to see whether the uptake is better and also for our first years' that we started with, 'cos we started with it with our first years' now from the start of semester whereas last year we didn't introduce it until Semester 2, just because of the timing so I'd just be interested to look at if those figures increase this year (Interview 15, Lines 196-203).

Probably my strongest thought would be it will be good to talk again after we've been through a cycle of it and for us to have one semester length programme, so I assume that we'll be looking at this at the end of this semester and seeing how it works in practice (Interview 3, Lines 307-309).

…certainly there are still some students that are still questioning why we need to do this, so, "why do we need to upload on the framework, when we're already doing an e-portfolio", and that kind of thing, so I think they'll come on board as we just, as it continues to embed, that's just probably our messaging (Interview 6, Lines 106-110).

Overlap with the Requirements of Regulatory Bodies

A number of interviewees working in areas (primarily health) that have regulatory bodies were concerned about the relationship between the LCF and regulatory requirement. The primary concern was a potential lack of added value in conjunction with increased work for staff and/or students.

… initially, my sort of reaction was, I wasn't too sure about how it would fit with our occupational therapy students… I was just trying to figure out how it would work alongside that e-portfolio, and I think initially I was maybe a little bit unsure, but I think once I found out a little bit more I kind of got to grips with what it was about and how it would help and support our students (Interview 7, Lines 69-75).

I guess, coming from a profession that, where we have a regulatory body and students have to meet competencies in order to be able to practice as a professional, then I; yeah, I had some reservations around how this would actually fit in, because they, I didn't feel that it was going to add a lot more to what the expectation would be already on the competencies for the student to meet at that regulatory level (Interview 8, Lines 72-76).

My initial thoughts were that it was a very comprehensive framework that covered a lot of the capabilities that we would want our learners to do, however, because of the health schools, and I'll say nursing, occupational therapy and midwifery, one of my initial frustrations that I did air with [name] *right from the outset, was that I thought there was a lot of duplication, because on health programmes we are accountable to a professional body… (Interview 15, Lines 80-84).*

Interviewees who held these concerns were not necessarily opposed to the LCF. Rather, it is a question of the LCF being implemented in a manner that recognises the unique situation of particular schools. For example, one of these interviewees noted that the tool itself might be of value in advertising one's capabilities.

…so the employers could see that there would be benefit in using some of those competencies [capabilities]*, or when they were putting them all down and asking a potential employee to identify the ten that they felt that they could most closely align with or that they would be bringing into the organisation, so from that perspective I could see that there was probably some quite justifiable merit in using those competencies* [capabilities]*, or using the framework (Interview 8, Lines 85-90).*

Another who mentioned the issue of overlap with regulatory bodies explicitly noted that there is great benefit for the LCF in areas without regulation.

I think if I'm looking at it from the sport [programmes]*, now I've got the sports school under my umbrella as such, I think it's probably a really, really good framework for them because I think it's something that they would come out with a really, really good portfolio in evidence that they can take to their employers so I think for a school like that, that hasn't got any professional responsibilities I think it's really, really worthwhile for them (Interview 15, Lines 115-119).*

Positives of the LCF

As noted above, the commentary was generally optimistic about the LCF. The perceived positives of the LCF can be categorised as follows.

Employer Relationships

Many interviewees value the increased communication with industry that the LCF will, and already has, created. OP and its staff benefit from strong links with relevant industries/stakeholders.

> *As I joined it* [the LCF research process]*, and I was very interested in the opportunity to talk to employers, which I thought was awesome, and I think, myself and the whole team in general, I think we gained a lot from having that opportunity to formally talk to the participants (Interview 1, Lines 62-64).*

> *…interesting to get to know some of the industry representatives, that was really quite fruitful for me… (Interview 4, Lines 204-205).*

> *I thought it was a good idea because I thought it was the polytech responding to the need to develop the links with industry. That's got to be a good thing for the polytech and for the Art School in particular (Interview 9, Lines 62-64).*

> *Ok, I thought it was a good idea, yeah, so like, I volunteered to be part of that because I need to be research active, sorry, research engaged because I teach on the bachelor's programme within engineering, and so, yeah, I was quite excited about the opportunity to get out and speak to employers and I found the whole experience was really good to be honest… (Interview 2, Lines 88-92).*

Adapting Teaching and Increasing Employability

Links with industry are valuable in their own right. However, a clear outcome (and one actively sought by staff who participated in industry interviews) was that conversations with industry now inform teaching practice and increase student employability.

> *…we found that there was some very common preferences in terms of their priorities, for the learner capabilities, and certainly it has changed my thinking around what I saw as important and what the workforce see as important, capabilities that we need to try and build on, really, for our learners and help them succeed and move into the workplace… (Interview 2, Lines 118-121).*

> *…the connection to highlighting the ways that students can present themselves and their skills and their soft skills, as that has direct impact on the way that I've been teaching, so that I feel like I'm on top of what currently is of interest to employers, and I can directly feed that back to graduates, the graduating class, which I feel is useful (Interview 4, Lines 208-212).*

> *…it was great to be able to actually start to look at what we were already doing within our courses that would match capabilities… but also then it was about being able to get that feedback from our industry partners… it was good to either see where some areas of capabilities have moved on in industry or to be able to say, yes actually what we are teaching at the moment actually does match what industry are wanting of our graduates (Interview 5, Lines 74-81).*

> *…what it* [the LCF] *might identify are particular strengths or weaknesses that the student might, or the learner might feel they have in any one particular area, so therefore it might identify something that they might continually work on… (Interview 8, Lines 160-163).*

> *…so I'm reviewing those five capabilities* [currently utilised in my teaching] *with the top ten which we've got for our Food Design Institute, and see if there are some which are the same and which ranking do they have in the top ten, to come to a new set of five capabilities that I would like to introduce in Semester 2. So I think that that research and the top ten for our Food Design Institute have been absolutely brilliant for exactly that* [reviewing course content] *(Interview 11, Lines 188-193).*

I teach in a paper called strategic design and the idea behind it is to prepare students for professional participation in the industry and so I started sort of mentioning some of the things that came up in the Learner Capability Framework, that were key to what employers may be looking for, and I've started to directly mention them and talk to students about them so that they, it's not just about grades or not just about their portfolio, it's about these other skills too that set them aside from other students… (Interview 4, Lines 90-96).

Embedded Capabilities

A recurring theme in the interviews was how the teaching of capabilities might be embedded within course work. Notably, to be embedded does not mean to be implicit, as such. In fact, making the importance of capabilities explicit is one strength of the LCF. I include this section here within the broader discussion of perceived positives of the LCF as most interviewees appreciated the fact that capabilities were already present in many courses and that the LCF simply meant reconceptualising how these might be taught. However, a minority view saw this as unnecessary duplication. Some of this minority view was driven by concern over alignment with regulatory bodies mentioned above. Demonstrating the overlap between existing teaching practices and the requirements of the LCF may serve to ease concerns over staff workload mentioned previously.

…for our teachers, once they see that something runs quite well and does what it says it's going to do and doesn't add too many layers of needing to know new tools, or for students to conceptualise, then I think they will leap on board with the potential of it; I mean a few of them immediately saw how things they were already doing would be easy just to be mapping against that… (Interview 3, Lines 117-121).

Initially I, and I still do, think it's a really good idea. We had already been implementing some capabilities within our programme and with advent of the D4LS we were putting those into the programme anyway so we knew that it was kind of coming so yeah, I was pleased, actually. It's really positive (Interview 6, Lines 34-37).

I'm still really positive about it but I started thinking how were we going to get other staff on board initially, how were we going to manage, if there was extra assessment required. We looked really carefully about how we could embed the assessment needed for the Learner Capability Framework into our programmes and we've done that quite successfully (Interview 6, Lines 45-49).

… I think for us in the school what we decided was, let's make it work alongside what the students are doing currently, so for example, in Year One we looked at their first field work placement and we looked at, you know, if they competently passed and successfully passed that particular placement, which of the capabilities tie in with that specific placement (Interview 7, Lines 155-159).

…I could find a way of integrating that into tutorials, if it was clear what the expectation was and it didn't take over my course… (Interview 9, Lines 161-163).

Yeah, but the girls have to do like an in-depth consultation… I actually developed a consultation form that has really, I used it last year, it's really upped the game, it actually gave them a good insight of the expectations of what a thorough consultation is, so when my girls get that actual unit, that will cross over very well to the communication [capabilities]*… (Interview 12, Lines 205-213).*

…we're quite fortunate in engineering that we have the 12 graduate attributes which tie in quite nicely with the learner capabilities and so a lot of our learners are already aware, at their end, they are thinking about them, and how they can improve in those areas (Interview 2, Lines 151-154).

…certainly in nursing, and I think OT and midwifery have done the same, is to try and look at where the capabilities we've chosen, that they can look at whatever assessments or academic piece of work that they are already uploading, that sort of covers them off really so that we're not trying to create a lot of work for them (Interview 15, Lines 96-99).

Moving Forward

The fact that the "Challenges for the LCF" section above constitutes a larger section of this report than the immediately preceding "Positives of the LCF" section should not be seen to indicate pessimism regarding the LCF. The discussion of challenges was not often associated with negativity. Rather, there is a general willingness to support the LCF with an attendant recognition that its success depends on its implementation. Thus, challenges to that implementation were often discussed. Two further specific considerations for implementation were discussed.

A Limited Number of Capabilities

Interviewees noted that in order to be feasible, and in order to capitalise on existing teaching practices dealing with capabilities, staff should only endeavour to focus on a handful of capabilities in a given course. Trying to embed too many capabilities runs the risk of overwhelming staff and students.

> *Yes; yeah, I can see it can give them, it can give them some confidence, I guess the capabilities, there's so many of them it can be completely daunting for them as well, so I think it's quite important we've just stuck to one or two capabilities and not exposing them to all the capabilities, they just tune out quite frankly (Interview 13, Lines 117-120).*

> *I think definitely the fact they've been refined down, we were working in the beginning and I think that was where the staff couldn't quite get their head around it, working in the beginning with 25 or 30 capabilities and it was huge, really, for our students, so, for our staff I mean, and that's where they were sort of like, "oh, this is huge", but then, but that was a really good exercise because they could see what was valuable in each paper, from that we have now distilled that down further into what's valuable in each overall and it's come down to ten. And I think that's actually a much more valuable exercise, really, yeah (Interview 14, Lines 179-186).*

> *… I'm quite reassured by the fact that we've kept it* [the capabilities we are focusing on teaching] *very select and they're actually very obvious, the descriptors, and how they match up against the things that, some of them match with the descriptors we're using within curriculum and within assessment, for example, around effective communication, and writing… (Interview 3, Lines 168-172).*

> *…when they've been refined down into the top ten, say, we can see that these are very clearly in our first, second or third year, because we've just actually broken those down further into three or four per year, and that again confirms, you know, that being on the right track and we then can sell those things to students a bit more in the sense that they can see the alignment, and I think that's a key thing for students, to see that it's actually valuable, and I think we hadn't quite reached that stage last year, so we couldn't quite defend the position as we will be able to this year, I guess (Interview 14, Lines 135-142).*

Capabilities at Different Levels

Another important point for the LCF's implementation will be ensuring that capabilities are taught in a way that recognises the different needs of students at different levels of experience or qualification. There should be a clear pathway of gaining additional capabilities, or strengthening existing capabilities, as students progress from year to year or level to level.

> *…if you have that kind of platform ready and introduced to them right at the beginning you could identify maybe three things that a Stage One student could do that could be added to their Learner Capability Framework in the first year and they could slowly built it so that when they get to Stage Three, when they're writing their CVs for an application, they've got that all there, you know like, something about the way it gets staged and rolled in, I think it worked quite effectively… (Interview 9, Lines 143-149).*

…but what a student can do with us, what constitutes the ability to communicate effectively, is communicating effectively at the level that we have them, but their ability to communicate effectively by the time they're in Level 5, or they've got Level 7 part will have changed, and there'd be a higher expectation, so it will be curious whether that degree of subtlety can be brought into it (Interview 3, Lines 275-279).

I think it's about being able to sell it to the students, of what the end benefits are going to be, how they can continue using it after their time here at Otago Polytechnic… especially for students where they might be just on a year programme, it's about that buy-in, I think it will be different for, if you start with your first year's on a three year degree, they're more likely to be able to build on that and over three years they'd see that would be easier (Interview 5, Lines 150-155).

…I wanted them to kind of reflect back and think about, ok, what development have I gained, where's my growth from Year One to Year Two and then following on from that to Year Three, I think I was able to kind of see that transition process alongside them, and also get them to think and self reflect, and think about what have I achieved and what are my skills and what knowledge have I gained as a result of being engaged in this Learner Capability… (Interview 7, Lines 84-89).

…in Year Two we're thinking a little bit more creatively, thinking ok, there are numerous assessments, there are numerous sort of part time jobs that students will be doing, but equally they'll be engaged in another field work placement but it's not just about saying, "look, I can meet these capabilities", it's more about that next level, you know, so you're right, it's about scaffolding it from Year One up into Year Three and at Year Three I would be looking at more sort of that critique, that ability to be doing that… (Interview 7, Lines 165-171).

The learners I deal with are Level Three… we did a bit of a pilot project with a group in Semester 2 last year and there was very little take-up of it, but I can certainly see that it's something they can build on and give more value to as they progress through a series of programmes (Interview 10, Lines 78-81).

…with some of our Level Three guys, they're coming out on work experience already, so we're trying to give them things like interview skills, and that sort of thing, you know, so that they turn up in the workplace and they're going to make a good impression, and hopefully arrive on time, and some of the basic skills that we probably take for granted but in the workplace they really value them (Interview 2, Lines 187-191).

Analysis of Student Feedback Interviews

Introduction

The following report offers a thematic summary of six interviews conducted with current learners at Otago Polytechnic (OP). The interviews were conducted in order to understand their perspectives on, and experiences with, OP's Learner Capability Framework (LCF) and, in particular, the online tool/portal via which learners accumulate evidence of possessing capabilities included within the LCF.

Initial Perceptions of the Online Tool

The vast majority of interviewees were initially (and remained) positive about the general usefulness of an online tool.

> *I thought it was just a great idea and kind of wondered why no one had thought of it sooner. It was easy to use and I liked how there's the, like approval kind of thing, to just add validity to it, so yeah, I thought it was a great tool, on first impressions (Interview 1, Lines 55-57).*

> *I think it's great, I think it's great that employers can actually go in and get all the information, 'cos sometimes when you're in an interview base your nerves get the better of you and you leave things out so it's actually quite good that you can send the link away and they can actually have a look on all your achievements and everything (Interview 5, Lines 56-59).*

It is clear from the commentary that the usefulness of the tool (and the rate at which students utilise it) is highly dependent on its usability. Most interviewees felt that the tool was accessible and user-friendly.

> *Yeah, I think it's a good idea and it is really easy to use, once you, like the, what's it called, how it's laid out and things, is really straightforward and clear (Interview, Lines 49-50).*

> *Yeah, yeah, the tool was easy to use definitely, for sure (Interview 4, Line 75).*

> *No, it's really simple, I found that, like there's instructions on there and it's pretty much, upload your work, and it's really easy (Interview 3, Lines 55-56).*

> *It was, like as soon as you start it's easy to use, I was more meaning like once you get to know that you do the, first you fill out the, like whether you have the capability or not and whether you have evidence and then you go to the next stage which is providing evidence so, yeah, no I think that it's all self explanatory, I don't think that there's anything unclear about it or anything that you wouldn't be able to find if you just had a quick flick through the website (Interview 2, Lines 73-77).*

However, there was a learning curve in getting to this point and the initial stages of setting up an account were not always easy.

> *Ok, so we started it last year and it wasn't easy to use, it was very confusing, it had a lot of questions to start up with and then we went back through it at the start of this year and it was a lot more user friendly and a lot more um, yeah, mainly user friendly, it was a lot better this year than it was last year (Interview 6, Lines 68-71).*

> *I do think that having someone that runs that particular framework coming round and teaching you how to use it is definitely the best way to go, yeah, 100% agree with that, because I think a lot of people get confused, especially people that have learning difficulties, as to how that actually runs and works, so I think having someone give you an introduction to it is the best way to approach it (Interview 6, Lines 99-103).*

There was one interviewee who was sceptical of the online tool in a general sense. This had to do with being enrolled in a course that already required a personal portfolio of competencies.

> *Ah, my first impressions were that it was a bit of an overkill in terms of having, well just in the nursing context, that we already have a CV and a portfolio and it seemed kind of like another thing for employers to look at, was how I saw it as, yeah, I don't know, I understand maybe in other courses you don't have a portfolio but for nursing you usually have a portfolio as well, so it kind of seems like a lot to go through (Interview 4, Lines 62-66).*

Types of Evidence the Tool Provides For

Learners recognise that the online tool can be utilised to upload evidence of capabilities that come from experiences outside of OP or formal education more broadly. However, commentary was mixed as to whether interviewees felt that the online tool was well positioned to do this. Some had, or intended to, include such evidence.

> *Yeah, definitely outside* [I include in my online portfolio]*, I would say probably 90% outside experiences, yeah, I think there's so many different experiences and involvement that I'm able to draw on more so than in the classroom kind of thing (Interview, Lines 71-73).*

> *At the moment I've only done stuff to do with my nursing but I have done volunteering overseas that I want to put onto my* ***iamcapable*** *(Interview 3, Lines 70-71).*

One respondent wanted to do so but felt that there was not a natural place for the types of experience they wanted to provide evidence for within the tool.

> *So I'm in Search and Rescue here in the Catlins area, and I've got sort of IT certificates and all that type of stuff that I've done through Search and Rescue, and there's actually nowhere where I can actually put those apart from volunteering stuff, which, yes ok, I volunteer but it's actually an achievement and it's NZQA credited as well, that stuff that I actually get through there (Interview 5, Lines 69-72).*

The same participant suggests that they not only want to be able to upload documentation in support of these experiences, e.g. certificates, but also wants space to discuss their experience.

> *…*[there] *wasn't really a lot of places* [in the online tool] *that sort of touches that* [work experience]*, you know, there was questions on there, 'do you think that you're capable of leading a team',* well *obviously if I'm a bar manager and 2IC then yes I am, but how do I prove it, I had no way of really proving it apart from putting my bar manager's license, so I felt like I, I actually put that on quite a few different questions, so, 'cos that sort of answered it, that was my proof that I sort of answered it with (Interview 5, Lines 108-112).*

Going slightly further, one participant was sceptical as to whether they would ever want to utilise an online tool to highlight these experiences/capabilities. Instead, they would prefer to speak to such experiences/capabilities in a job interview setting.

> *Yeah, I guess, like I've been out of school a wee while, I'm 26, so I guess, and I do play netball and things like that, but it kind of seemed to be very based towards school leavers, when you still have all those certificates and you still, like I don't always need them any more… Like I just felt that, if I were, I guess maybe it's more to get an interview but a lot of the things I would put on my* ***iamcapable*** *I feel like I could get across in an interview sense... Yeah, I just felt like it was definitely more based towards the people who hadn't been through a job process before or, you know, applied for a job, like I've had full time work before and things like that so, yeah (Interview 4, Lines 90-112).*

Feedback on Evidence

Interviewees typically reported that evidence they submitted via the online tool was accepted without delay and without feedback.

> *Yeah, it's been easy, to be honest, I can't say there is a whole lot to comment because I find it just comes back and, yeah… Yeah, no, everything's just been approved (Interview 1, Lines 83-90).*

> *Yeah, and they're really fast, like there's quite a fast turnaround for them accepting or not, the evidence. I haven't yet been, I haven't been told yet that the evidence wasn't relevant enough but it's good to know that after I was reading it says somewhere on the website I think, that if it doesn't quite meet the requirements that they will let you know so that's reassuring (Interview 2, Lines 116-119).*

> *Pretty good, I haven't uploaded a whole lot of my other course stuff, I've done a few, I think I've done a few reflections and stuff like that, and it's all been fine (Interview 3, Lines 86-87)*

> *No, I've had no feedback, they just accepted my evidences, but no, I've had no feedback from them (Interview 6, Lines 109-110).*

While most seem to view this as a positive, one interview wondered what this meant for the process of validation. Is it rigorous?

> *…I just didn't know how it was validated in terms of, how is it known that I didn't just type up the certificate myself which I guess was what I was unsure about (Interview 4, Lines 162-164).*

Another interviewee would have liked a little bit more information about the submission and feedback process at the outset.

> *…one thing I just, as a perspective from a student when I first started I was a bit unsure about the uploading the evidence because before I really got into using it, I was, like although it's really easy to upload the evidence I was always unsure about whether the evidence was good enough, or like whether it was relevant enough, like, but once I started uploading and it was being accepted and things, I found it easier, and like, because I was scared that I'd put it in and it would end up denying and then I wouldn't know what to put and I see that the people who accept it can provide feedback and things so that makes it easier to have a go and see (Interview 2, Lines 106-112).*

Value of the Online Tool

The challenges posing the current online tool are discussed above in conjunction with broader themes from these interviews. However, the bulk of commentary suggests positivity regarding the online tool. For that reason, I make space here to discuss the most commonly cited benefits of the online tool for learners.

Accumulated, Centralised Evidence

A benefit of the tool for learners and potential employers alike is that the online tool accumulates evidence of capabilities in an updatable, easily accessed location.

> *Yeah, absolutely, I think that it's valuable, and that the evidence, well I started uploading evidence, and I think that's a really like, valuable tool because when you're applying for jobs and things you can always say what skills you have but it's really hard to know whether you, how you demonstrate that and how to convey that to the employer, that you do have the skills, so tools like this will yeah, make it really easy and more streamlined for them to see straight away whether you have the skill or not, and yeah, I think it will be another, like, yeah, in short I think that it's really valuable and I will continue to upload evidence and use it for job opportunities later on (Interview 2, Lines 86-92).*

> *Um, well just having all my work and everything in one kind of area to be able to go into like a job interview or something, to be like, this is what I have and this is, you know, by the lecturers and professors and what-not, have said, you know, yeah I have reached that capability, I think it's something official to take into the workforce (Interview 3, Lines 98-101).*

> *I think so, yes* [the tool is useful], *I feel like it is a very good way to have everything all in one position so that employers and others studying at places like Otago Polytechnic and other polytechnics and things can all see exactly what you've done, where you've done it, where you're at, that kind of thing, so yes I do (Interview 6, Lines 82-85).*

Growing Awareness of, and Confidence with, Capabilities

The process of compiling evidence of one's capabilities:

1. Encourages reflection on coursework and life experience to see how these might align with valued capabilities.
2. Motivates the learner to seek out experiences that develop capabilities.
3. Gives the learner greater confidence in articulating their capabilities and work-readiness generally.

> *Yeah, I mean on a personal level I find it's just really valuable to kind of be able to reflect, just look back on experiences and see them for more than just what they were and kind of identify the capabilities and the skills that came out of that. And then the kind of, more of a work-based view, I guess it just allows me to pull on, at getting experiences that may not necessarily come up in like an interview or in a CV kind of thing, it's kind of pulling out different parts in a bit greater depth than what might get covered otherwise (Interview 1, Lines 97-102).*

> *Yeah, some of it* [evidence I've submitted] *I've looked at and I've thought, "oh, I don't do that at the moment but I can start doing that," like it sort of prompts you to think about, be more conscious of things that could be used as evidence and encourages you to do more things so you can improve on skills (Interview 2, Lines 97-99).*

Appendices

Appendix 1

Learner Capability Framework Staff Interview

The aim of this interview is to gauge changes in staff understanding of the concept and implementation of the LCF, from the early stages of development to where it is now being introduced into curriculum.

Questions.

1. What were your initial thoughts about the Learner Capability Framework?
2. What changed when you became more familiar with the concept and the process?
3. What are you thinking now about the value of the Learner Capability Framework?
4. What future do you see for the Learner Capability Framework for learners?
5. What problems do you see with the Learner Capability Framework?
6. What positives do you note about the Learner Capability Framework?

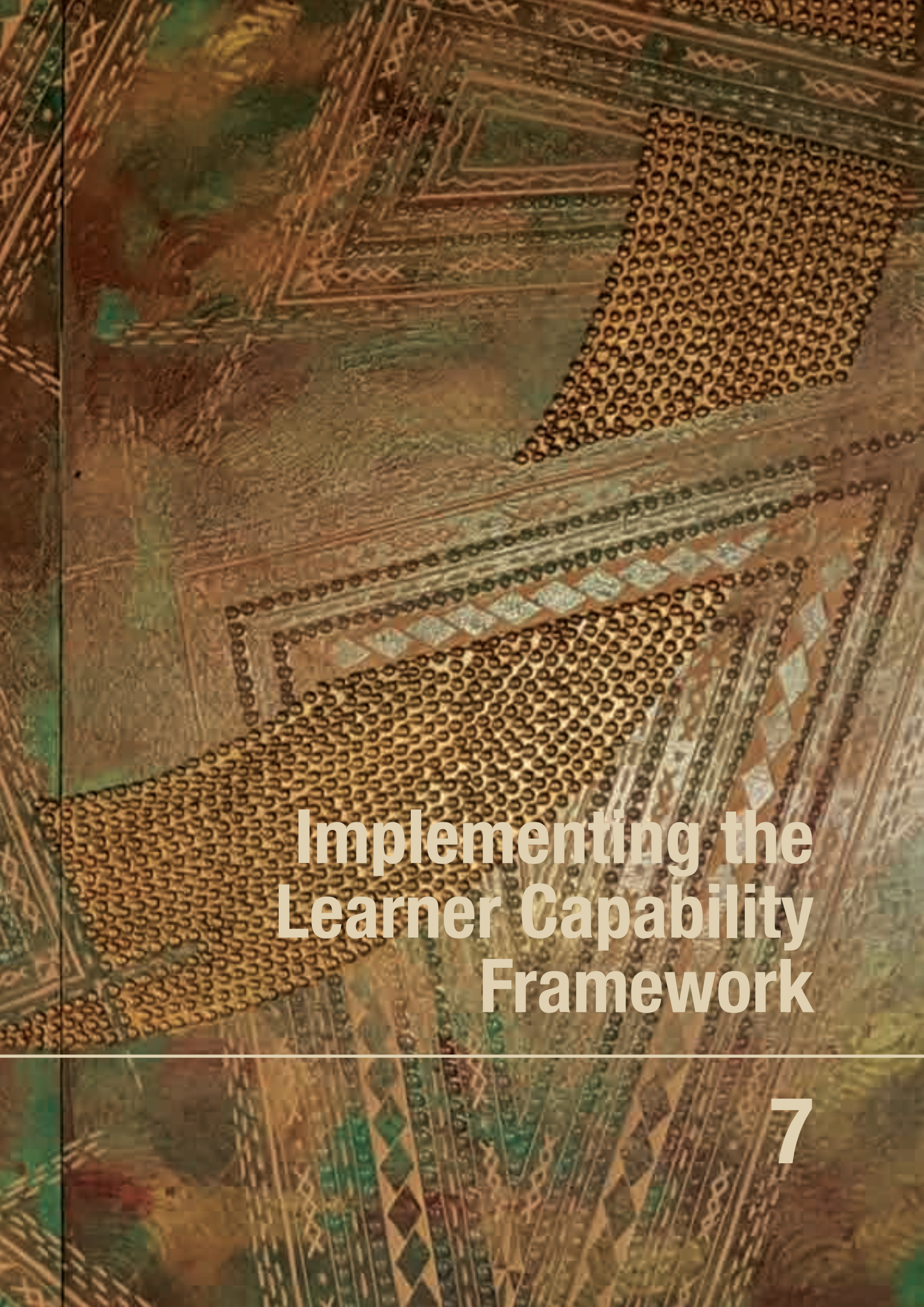
Appendix 2

Learner Capability Framework Student Interview 2020

The scope of this interview is to gauge students' understanding of the value of the LCF.

Questions.

1. What are your first impressions of the *IamCapable* online portfolio tool?
2. Is it easy to use?
3. Does the tool make sense to you in relation to your study?
4. Do you use the online tool and upload evidence only in relation to your studies at school? Or do you also include experiences and evidence from outside of school? For example, from clubs and other activities or in other work-based learning situations?
5. Have you experienced any issues or problems with the online tool?
6. Can you please comment on these?
7. What is your experience with evidence feedback from those who are evaluating the material that you upload?
8. Do you see value in this type of portfolio developed for presenting yourself to future employment opportunities? Please comment.



Implementing the Learner Capability Framework

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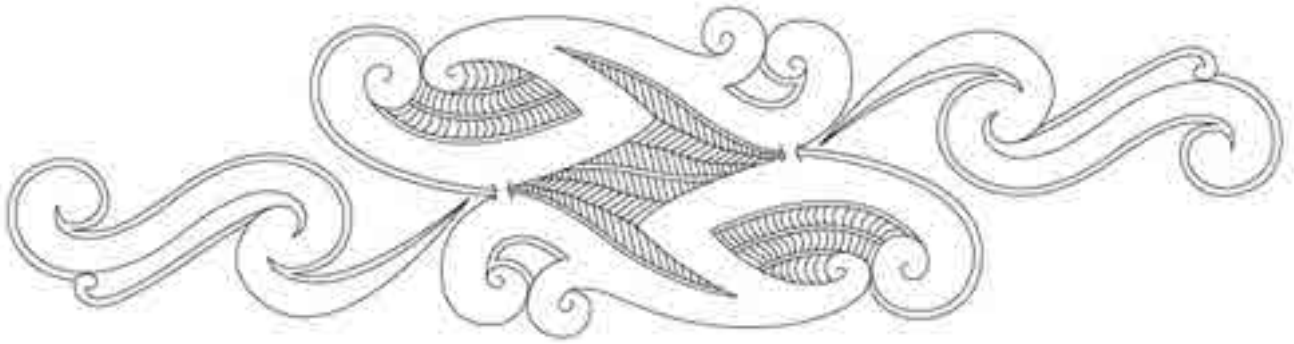


Implementing the Learner Capability Framework

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *New journey awaits*, 2020.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 120 x 240cm (Triptych).

Introduction

The Learner Capability Framework was first used at Otago Polytechnic's Auckland International Campus in 2017. Since then, the process of implementing it into degree and diploma programmes has been coordinated by Amber Paterson, a staff member with expertise in educating staff and assisting students to use *iamcapable*, a web-based tool used by learners to upload evidence of their work-ready capabilities.

In the first semester of 2019, the Learner Capability Framework was implemented into five degree and diploma programmes at the Dunedin campus. By the second semester, a further 25 programmes; degrees (N=16), certificates (N=8) and one diploma, had adopted the Learner Capability Framework and *iamcapable tool*. To facilitate a greater uptake, a new staff member was appointed to work solely as the Learner Capability Operations Coordinator. By March 2020, 12 more programmes had embedded both the Learner Capability Framework and *iamcapable* tool into their curricula bringing the total to 43.

The implementation process

Information and training

The Learner Capability Framework implementation process has been voluntary and consultative. Staff have received information, updates and information about the project via a series of blog posts. These have provided staff and students with an explanation and example of each of the 25 Learner Capabilities. This information has been disseminated via Tuhono (see appendix 4), Otago Polytechnic's electronic communication channel. The *iamcapable* logo appears on student communication home page to promote awareness of this tool.

Training sessions have been provided for staff, particularly at the beginning of each semester. Amber Paterson has visited Schools and Colleges, demonstrating the *iamcapable* tool to student groups and providing support and training for teaching and administrative staff.

The capability mapping process

A mapping process is used to identify Learner Capabilities that relate to courses. Image 1 shows staff working a hands-on activity to map Learner Capabilities into their academic programme. In this scene, staff are exploring the differences between a 'competency'- a term used in course outlines, and a 'capability' – the term used in the LCF. As a first step in this embedding process, staff could select up to five Capabilities for their courses.

Image 1: Staff hands-on mapping activity.

The outcome of the mapping process for the Bachelor of Applied Science Programme is shown in Table 1.

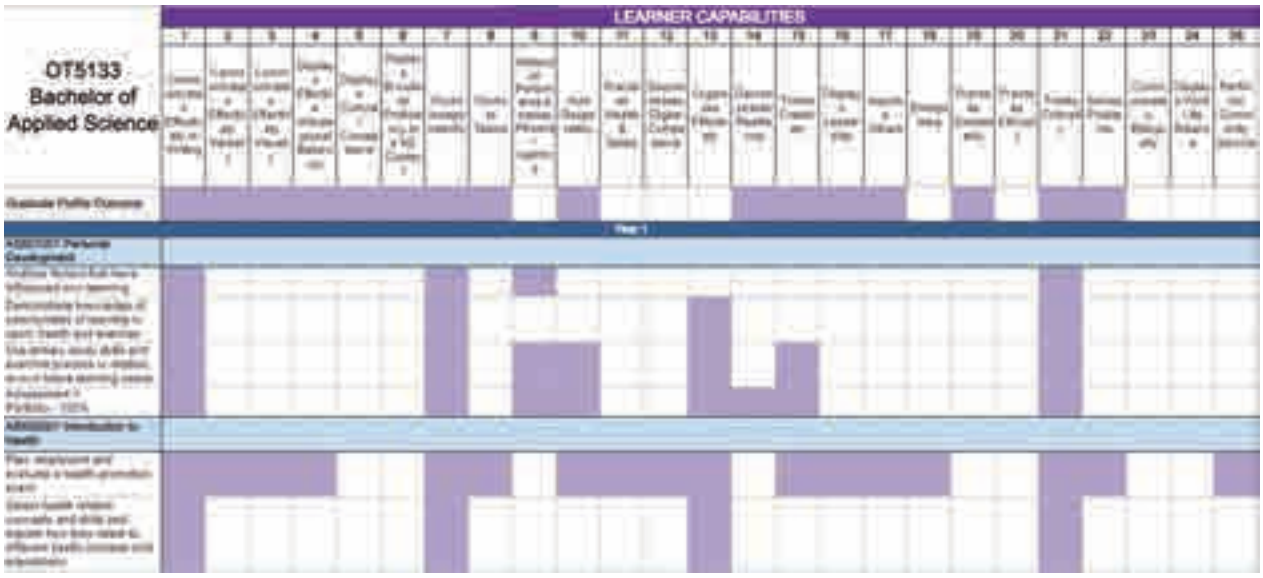


Table 1: Learner Capability mapping matrix.

In Table 1, the programme number (OT5133), the degree (Bachelor of Applied Science) and the 25 Learner Capabilities are on the horizontal axis. The shaded squares indicate Learner Capabilities matching the Graduate Profile Outcomes and the Learning Outcomes for courses in the Bachelor of Applied Science programme.

For example, for the course number AS5010001, two Learner Capabilities (1: ***Communicates Effectively in Writing***, and 7: ***Works Independently***); match all four Personal Development learning outcomes.

After the mapping process is completed, information is shared among teaching groups via Microsoft Teams for them to adjust accordingly.

Learner Capability uptake

In 2019, the Learner Capability Framework was introduced to all first-year students enrolled in degree programmes. Based on the success of this roll-out, it was extended to a range of certificate and diploma programmes. Table 2 (see Appendix) shows that at the beginning of Semester 2, 2019, a total of 25 programmes had embedded the Learner Capability Framework and *iamcapable* tool into their courses. In the first two months of 2020 an additional 12 programmes have followed suit (see Table 3, Appendix).

Students use the *iamcapable* tool to upload material, e.g., written work, images, certificates, etc., from their course work which is then verified by academic staff. This contributes to a portfolio of evidence demonstrating proficiency selected capabilities.

For example, to demonstrate Learner Capability 1, *Communicates Effectively in Writin*g, a student can upload an essay, blog, project as evidence that can be shared with a potential employer. An advantage of using the *iamcapable* tool is that evidence can be uploaded for all Capabilities, not just those that are course related.

In the first weeks of 2020, between 40 to 100 per cent of students enrolled in 12 programmes had logged into the *iamcapable* tool (see Table 4, Appendix).

"This is so logical" - staff

"This fits perfectly with what I do" - staff

"Can I use *iamcapable* for my own learning?"
- staff

"My boss would love this, can I show them?"
- part time student

Further Embedding

Learner Capability is now part of course and programme planning at Otago Polytechnic. Staff at the Learner Capability office are available to assist staff to map and embed Learner Capabilities in new or revised programmes. This process has made the teaching staff more aware of where the Learner Capabilities fit within their programmes, or potentially where capabilities exist in their course design. Several strategies for educating staff, students and the wider community and disseminating knowledge about Learner Capability Framework and the *iamcapable* tool have been developed. These include the following:

Communications and Marketing

1. Video screens across Otago Polytechnic show an advertisement for *iamcapable* (see image 2).
2. There is a large drop flag indicating the position the Learner Capability team in the Hub – Otago Polytechnic's shared staff and student space situated at the entrance of the Dunedin campus (seen in the background of image 3).
3. Several local employers agreed to be professionally photographed. These images were made into life sized 'cutouts' for display in the Hub area and at public events (seen in the foreground of image 3).
4. Professionally printed bookmarks have been distributed to students and staff at training sessions, and at the help desk.
5. Tri-fold flyers have been printed that are used for further external dissemination. There are two versions of these – one has a graduate on the front, and one has a builder.
6. *iamcapable* is now featured on the Otago Polytechnic external website. https://www.op.ac.nz/students/i-am-capable/ (image 4: Learner Capability icons shown on Moodle)
7. There is a link on every Otago Polytechnic Moodle course to *iamcapable*. This is now a standard Moodle template.
8. In 2019, a #iamcapablenz Twitter account was set up and the aim is to grow this in 2020.
9. An overview booklet about each Learner Capability is being created.
10. A new staff award was added in 2020 for Excellence in Learner Capability (image 5: staff recipient of the inaugural award).

"Fundamentally I completely agree with LCF but how much time will it take from my already packed timetable?" - staff

Image 2: Advertisement.

Image 3: Employer 'cutouts' and advertising banner in background.

Image 4: Learner Capability icons.

Image 5: Staff awardee. (Photo used with permission)

Staff Assistance

A site on Moodle, the Learning Management System, has been created for staff to connect with. This site provides information about each capability; contains links to videos, training websites and learning activities for teachers and students.

Student Assistance

Students are introduced to the ***iamcapable*** tool in classes. They then have 24-hour access to a resources section, help section and a user guide through their tool. A support email address is also available at support@iamcapable.co.nz for help. The Dunedin-based Learner Capability team answers all emails so that feedback and queries can be tracked.

Learning and Teaching Development Team

The Learning and Teaching Development Team (LTD) at Otago Polytechnic have been upskilled in using the Learner Capability Framework and ***iamcapable*** tool. More sessions are booked to cover integration of Learner Capabilities into daily planning and how to use the support materials. Staff from the Learning and Teaching Development Team also assisted during the first three weeks of Semester 1 2020 at the Help Desk (see image 6).

Image 6: Help desk in the Hub.

Staff and Student Feedback

This is a sample of email and verbal feedback from staff and students about the LCF implementation.

"Fundamentally I completely agree with LCF but how much time will it take from my already packed timetable?"	- staff
"This is so logical"	- staff
"This fits perfectly with what I do"	- staff
*"Can I use **iamcapable** for my own learning?"*	- staff
"My boss would love this, can I show them?"	- part time student

Next Steps

The next steps associated to this project planned for 2020 and 2021 include developing staff support around the Learner Capability Framework. This has a focus in both their teaching and facilitating the framework in the classroom, as well as the use and application of the tool for learners and validations of evidences. We plan to use the Moodle application for staff training and support, as well as key focus groups and feedback sessions for staff engaged in this project at regular intervals.

Key to the value of the Learner Capability Framework is the inclusion in all programme levels across the Polytechnic, to ensure that this becomes a regular and understood part of the learning and teaching that occurs, and to disseminate internally and externally our progress in these endeavours.

Appendix 1

Table 2: LCF uptake 2019

LCF uptake as at July 2019
Bachelor's degree Programmes
Bachelor of Culinary Arts - third year
Bachelor of Leadership for Change - all year levels
Bachelor of Visual Arts - third year
Bachelor of Information Technology - third year
Bachelor of Occupational Therapy - first year (Dunedin and Hamilton)
Bachelor of Social Services - third year
Bachelor of Nursing - first year
Bachelor of Architectural Studies - first year
Bachelor of Design (Communication) - second year
Bachelor of Design (Fashion) - second year
Bachelor of Design (Product) - second year
Bachelor of Applied Science - third year
Bachelor of Engineering Technology - second year
Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Practice - all year levels
Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice - all year levels
New Zealand Certificate Programmes
New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Emerging Stylist) Level 4
New Zealand Certificate in Hairdressing (Salon Support) Level 3
New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing Level 4
New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care Level 3
New Zealand Certificate in Food and Beverage Service (Cafe Services) (Bar Services) Level 3
New Zealand Certificate in Early Childhood and Care Level 4
New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Studies Level 3
New Zealand Certificate in Horticulture (Amenity and Landscape Construction) Level 3
New Zealand Diploma Programmes
New Zealand Diploma in Wellness and Relaxation Massage Level 5

Table 3: 2020 uptake

Programmes that have started using *IAMCAPABLE* up to18/3/2020
Bachelor's degree Programmes
Bachelor of Nursing - first year
Bachelor of Culinary Arts - first year and second year
Bachelor of Applied Science - first year and third year
New Zealand Certificate Programmes
New Zealand Certificate in Information Technology Essentials Level 4
New Zealand Certificate in Computing (Intermediate User) Level 3
New Zealand Certificate in English Language Level 2
New Zealand Certificate in English Language Level 3 (General and Applied)
New Zealand Certificate in English Language Level 3 (General and Academic)
New Zealand Certificate in Cookery Level 4
New Zealand Certificate in Beauty Therapy Level 4
New Zealand Diploma Programmes
New Zealand Diploma in Enrolled Nursing Level 5
New Zealand Diploma in Beauty Therapy Level 5

Table 4: Students using *iamcapable* (February and March, 2020)

Programmes	% of students that have logged in	% of students that have started their initial assessment	% of students that have uploaded evidence
Bachelor of Nursing Year 1	85	53	14.3
Level 3 New Zealand Certificate of Hairdressing	71.5	54.35	7.69
Level 3 Certificate of English Language General	73.4	53.33	
Level 3 Certificate of English Language Applied	82	18.18	
Level 4 Certificate of English Language Academic	90	85	5
Level 3 Certificate of Computing (Tech Essentials)	88	68	4
Level 4 Certificate of Computing (Intermediate user)	70	70	
Bachelor of Culinary Arts Year 1	75	75	
Bachelor of Culinary Arts Year 2	40	33.3	
New Zealand Diploma of Beauty Therapy Level 5	100	93	20
Certificate of Cookery Level 4	86	86.6	6.67

Appendix 2

Summary of 2019 Learner Capability research outputs

Research outputs

1. Presentation to ITP Tertiary Educators at 2019 ITP Symposium at EIT in Napier
Title: Creation of an Employability Centre, a behavioural change process
Venue: Eastern Institute of Technology, Napier
Date: 15 April 2019
Presented by: Andy Kilsby

2. Presentation to Employers and Stakeholders
Title: LCF Employers and Stakeholders Event
Venue: Otago Polytechnic
Date: 15 May 2019
Presented by: Leoni Schmidt and Amber Paterson

3. Presentation to Primary and Secondary Schools in Otago and Southland
Title: LCF intro to Primary and Secondary Schools
Venue: Otago Polytechnic
Date: 20 & 21 May 2019
Presented by: Andy Kilsby and Amber Paterson

4. Presentation for 'TechWeek', 2019
Title: Innovation that is Good for the World: Interim findings of the Learner Capability Project
Venue: Otago Southland Employers Association, Dunedin
Date: 22 May 2019
Presented by: Andy Kilsby

5. Presentation for the 28th National VET Research Conference 'No Frills', 2019
Title: Embedding learner capabilities and using the *iamcapable* online validation tool to create the most employable graduates in NZ
Venue: Adelaide, Australia
Date: 10-12 July 2019
Presented by: Andy Kilsby and Amber Paterson

6. Presentation for the Industry Training Federation Conference, 2019
Title: Learner Capability Framework and Research
Venue: Wellington
Date: 15-16 October 2019
Presented by: Amber Paterson

Appendix 3

Communications

Being Agile for Change and Learner Capability

Created by Amber Paterson
Learning and Teaching Development

Tutorials | Auckland Hub

It is imperative in today's world for people to be agile, that is, the ability to adapt quickly and promptly to new and changing demands. Being agile means that we can respond and pivot when needed.

Through the potential changes with RoVE in 2020 and beyond, it is important that we all have an agile mindset which allows us to have a supportive and agile working environment. To have an agile mindset we need to ensure that we have:

> Respect
> Collaboration

> An eye for improvement and open to the cyclic nature of learning
> Pride in ownership
> A focus on delivering value to our stakeholders
> The ability to adapt to change

While 2020 will bring about some changes, it is vital that we remember our core business – our students. We need to use what skills we have to guide us and our students through times of uncertainty. At Otago Polytechnic we have three strategic frameworks which guide what we do to help make a student's learning experience holistic.

> Mâton Strategic Framework
> Sustainability Framework
> Learner Capability Framework

We are excited to see Learner Capabilities be embedded through our everyday teaching, and for all students from undergraduate to postgraduate have access to, and be using the I am Capable tool as part of what they do from the start of semester 1 2020. I am Capable is our point of difference and something that is causing a positive stir among businesses, employers, and other tertiary institutions.

The Learner Capability team the Learner Capabilities and I am Capable for February, please feel free to book a personalised lesson with me if you would prefer for you and your staff.

Published on 6 Dec 2019

Ka rawe!

I am Capable and Learner Capability Staff Help Space

Created by Amber Patterson
Learning and Teaching Development

Tuhono | Auckland Hub

For the week of the 10th of February, there will be a staff help space running in the Hub for all of your questions regarding the Learner Capability Framework and I am Capable.

Just look for Amber and the big blue I am Capable flag in the Hub.

I am happy to chat through how it works in a programme, how to login, how to approve or decline evidence etc.

Times:

Monday and Thursday 10-11am

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 2-3pm

If you see me around the campus, please just let me know you would like to chat. You can also book me in via my calendar to come and talk to your team or just you.

Published on 25 Jan 2020

Ka Hurel

Merry Christmas from the Learner Capability Team

Created by Ambik Patanjali
Learning and Teaching Development

Auckland Hub | Tuhono

A warm Merry Christmas from the Learner Capability team. We will be finishing up for the year on the 19th of December, and returning on the 15th of January.

All the I am Capable users will be getting an email to tell them how to share their uri with potential employers, as well as informing them that evidence will not be marked by our teach from 5pm on the 19th until the 15th of January.

For those staff that have been marking their students evidence this year, as your students will be assigned to me and then those that are carrying on with study will be reallocated in 2020 to their new tutors, and you will get your new group in 2020.

Meri Kirihimete me ngā mihi mo te tau hou, kā kite ano a te tau 2020

Published on 10 Dec 2019

Ka rawe!

Professional Development and Support

Created by Amber Paterson
Learning and Teaching Development

Tuhoco | Auckland Hub

I hope that you all had a lovely Christmas break and you are all geared up for 2020. There have been lots of positive discussions happening all over OP regarding the implementation rollout of I am Capable to all our programmes and students.

I appreciate the time that people are taking from their schedules to have a catch-up and get on board with embedding the Learner Capability Framework in their courses. As LCF is one of our 3 strategic frameworks it is important that we offer as much information to all staff, without swamping you all.

We are offering information professional development sessions throughout the year for 30 minutes per session. A number of these have been organised for early in Semester 1 starting on Monday the 3rd of February.

Please follow the link to enrol in one of the sessions, which will be based in the Forth Street campus, and also in L block. These sessions are open to all staff – professional and academic https://www.op.ac.nz/hub/news/item/4826.

Another source of teaching support is the Learner Capability Moodle https://moodle.op.ac.nz/course/view.php?id=8715.

Whoowhoo is delle mittaluvange - Fill the basket with knowledge

Published on 18 Jul 2020

1 Acknowl

Kia ora Rhina Chan,

Welcome to 2020 and another year with **I am Capable**

We've listened to your feedback so we have done some exciting new features on the tool

We have combined the Help assessment screen with the capabilities screen to make it much easier for you to see your capability status and the actions you need to take, all on one screen.

You no longer need to complete the full initial assessment before you can get started uploading evidence.

Now you can assess yourself as you go and as soon as you tick one of the three capability status boxes for a behavioural indicator you are underway.

We have also made some updates to the Capability Profile. You now have the ability to add additional files that you may want a potential employer to see, such as references and certificates.

We have also added an extra feature in your settings. You can now tick if you have a current driver's licence or not. This is a filter that employers have been asking for so please pop into your profile and update this. You can find your settings by going to the 3 dots in the top right corner of your profile.

For full details of the changes, go to the user guide for learners on the help screen. If you have any issues please contact us at support@iamcapable.co.nz

We will occasionally send you emails with updates and other notifications. So you don't accidentally 'junk' us, please add support@iamcapable.co.nz to your contacts.

Thank you!

Kia pai tō rā

your **I am capable team**

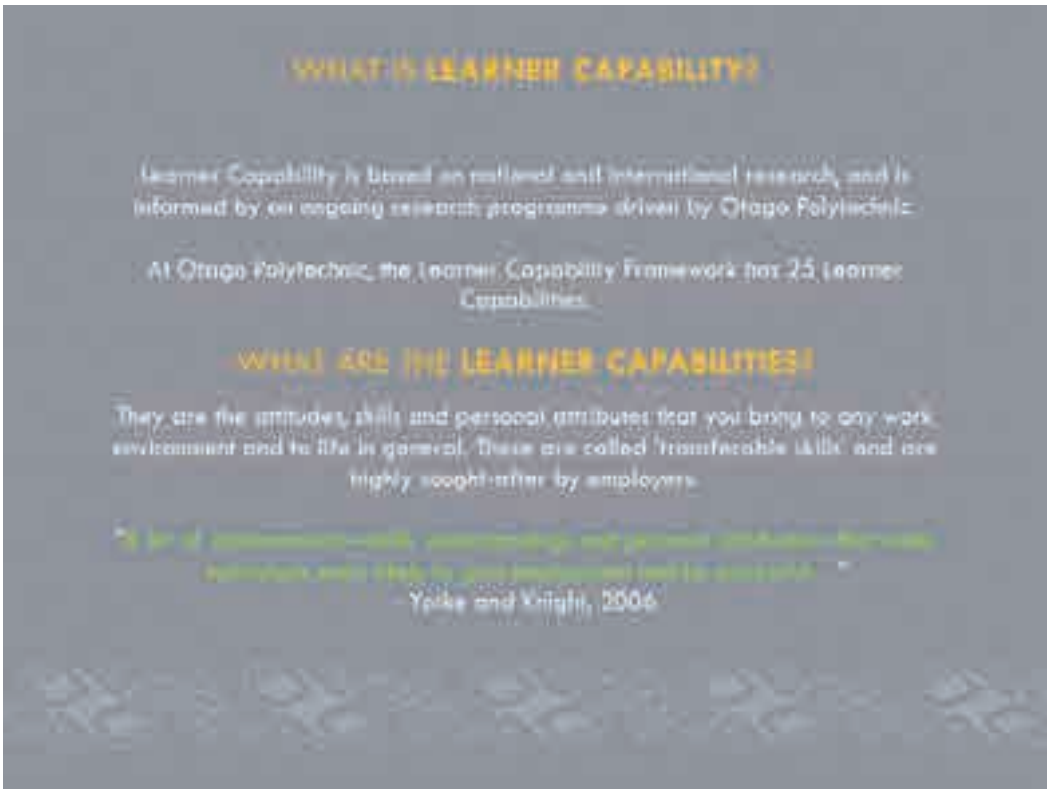
iamcapable.co.nz

support@iamcapable.co.nz

© I am capable 2019

Appendix 4

Dissemination



KEY QUESTIONS

- How can New Zealand teaching institutions equip learners to be more employment ready for the fast changing world of future work?
- Which capabilities or transferable skills are priorities for employers / stakeholders when they consider graduates as employees?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Nature of the workplace, the environment, technology, the economy and society is changing.
- Development of ***capabilities***, or transferable skills, that can be applied in multiple and fluid work situations.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

- Address imbalances between discipline-specific competencies and workplace capabilities in Otago Polytechnic's curricula.
- Enable learners to gain validated evidence of their transferable capabilities.
- A e-portfolio reflecting capabilities will complement the competencies gained in their education.
- Development of the Learner Capability online tool for learners, through which they will be able to bring already identified and evidenced capabilities to the learning environment, and also to identify areas in which they need to develop.
- Learner Capability is aimed at improving learners' understanding of capabilities and their value for employment.
- Learners become self-reflective practitioners, with a highly developed awareness of their own learning pathway and how to document evidence of it.
- Learners articulate to employers what capabilities they have acquired and how they have gained these.

LEARNER CAPABILITY - REPORTS

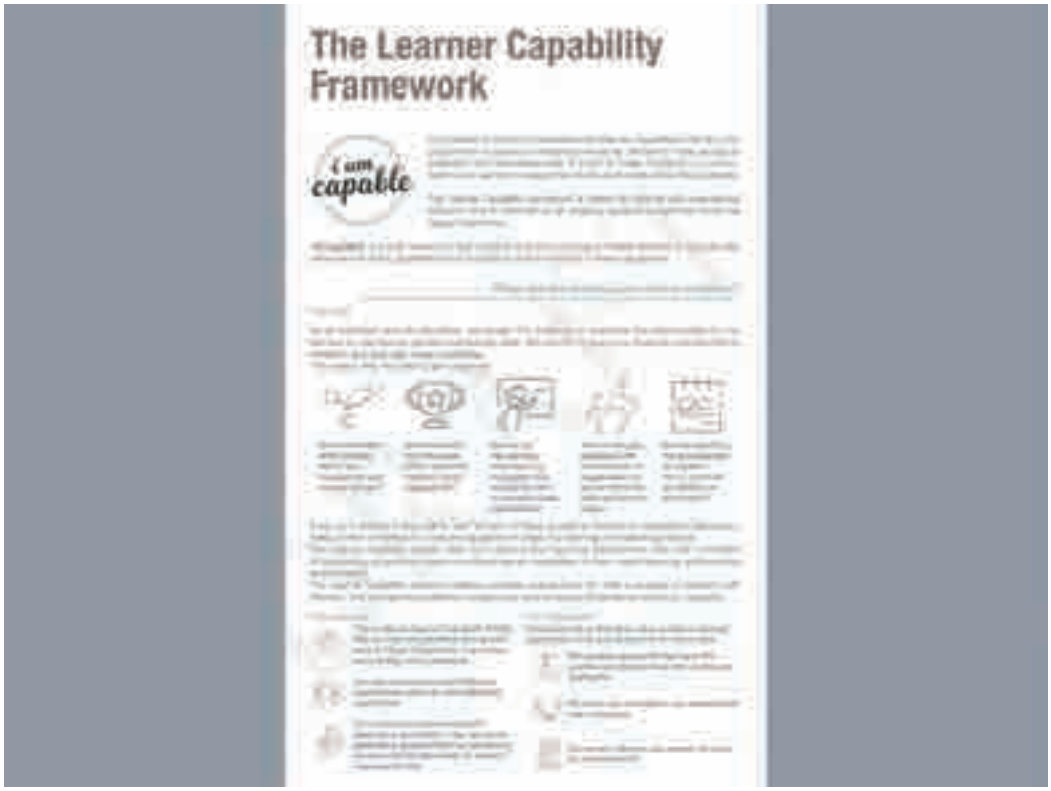
Learner Capability Framework: Employer Priorities Index
View here >>

Learner Capability Framework: Field Research Toolkit
View here >>

Learner Capability Framework: Employer Transcript Analysis Report View here >>

Learner Capability Framework: Alumni Survey and Interview Analysis
View here >>

What does it take to produce New Zealand's most employable graduates?
View here >>



The Learner Capability Framework

I am capable

Otago Polytechnic Learner Capability Framework

OTAGO

I AM CAPABLE

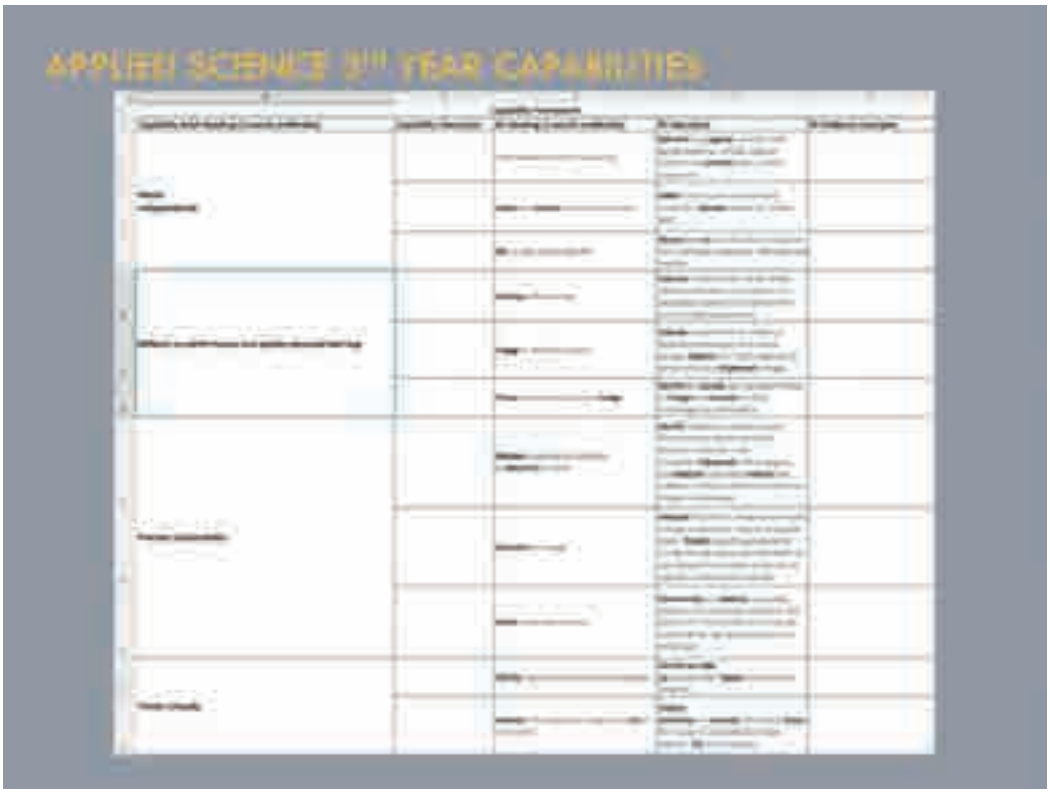
IMPLEMENTATION - OP

- Applied to Auckland International Campus programmes 2017/18
- Trialled with 5 Otago Polytechnic Dunedin programmes 2018
- Bachelor programmes and some Certificate and Diploma programmes have launched in the second half of 2019
- All programmes will be underway from the beginning of 2020

LEARNER CAPABILITY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

CASE STUDY
APPLIED SCIENCE 3RD YEAR

LCF MAPPING SPREADSHEET – APPLIED SCIENCE
OT5133
Bachelor of
Applied Science


APPLIED SCIENCE 3RD YEAR CAPABILITIES

APPLIED SCIENCE – EMPLOYERS PRIORITIES

Applied Science (Sports)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

I AM CAPABLE

IMPLEMENTATION TO SECONDARY AND PRIMARY

- 4 partner secondary schools
- 2 partner primary schools
- On line tool has been developed and applied across all programmes
- The tool is being used in secondary schools with students and with staff
- In primary schools, the staff use it for personal and professional purposes

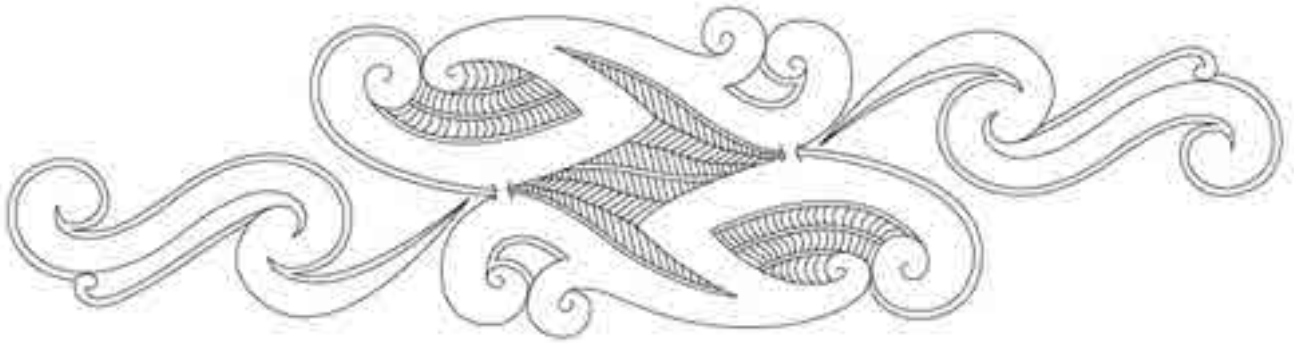
I AM CAPABLE
i am
capable

i am
capable

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions:
Amber Paterson: amber.paterson@op.ac.nz

Learner Capability Framework: Kōkiri Training Centre Employer Responses

8



Kōkiri Training Centre Employer Response

Cover Image: Ana Teofilo. *Know your roots*, 2015.
Mixed media on painted and carved board. 122.5 x 122cm.

Introduction

Capability in potential employees is universally accepted as qualities that employers are looking for to fill roles and develop teams in their workforces so as to positively build and maintain business in diverse and challenging sectors in the economy. However, the ways that potential employees negotiate and understand differing contexts and the diverse world views underpinning these are vitally important. In the first phase of the research into employer priorities regarding capabilities we aimed to explore a wide cross-section of employment destinations that also reflect the bicultural nature of the New Zealand workforce and community. What we found was a skew towards a work-centric model of understanding capability, specifically in relation to the stated occupation or position. This absented the diverse nature of the New Zealand workforce and its relations to community and other outcomes linked to developing student capability.

In order to address this absence, we pivoted our research, and reached out to a local training provider that has a distinct Māori focus and presence. In partnering with the Arai Te Uru Kōkiri Training Centre (ATUKTC), a Dunedin-based kaupapa Māori training provider, for this research going forward we have been able to evaluate and critique the relationships between work focused capability and a world view of capability that have equal parts to play in developing a sound approach to capability in the New Zealand context.

The ATUKTC partnership provided a different lens through which capability can be viewed in terms of student needs and destinations. Specifically, there are two issues. One relates to the level of qualification and employment assistance that their courses attend to, and the second relates to the ways in which the learner is further developed. In consultation with the ATUKTC over the course of several months from June 2019 until May 2020 we reflected on our approach to understanding the Learner Capability Framework research undertaken thus far, and critically analysed the ways in which it aligned with the Kōkiri Centre's aspirations for their learners and their existing relationships with both employers and community groups. Consultation involved both Matthew Kiore, the outgoing manager of the ATUKTC, and Dr. David McKay. David's role was of consultation and advice on behalf of the ATUKTC in supporting learner aspirations and the existing community and employer relationships. It was clearly communicated that the way in which capability is fostered in their programmes centred on what the student already brought with them from both their work experience and life experience or their connection with community. This is not too dissimilar to the aspiration of the LCF, but it did highlight a people-centric nature of developing work skills as opposed to the work-centric model central to most other tertiary situations.

Interviews and candidates for interviews were proposed by both Matthew Kiore and David McKay. The interview group was then selected by the ATUKTC on the basis of existing relationships and timely access, as the research for the ATUKTC was impacted on by staffing changes and SITE issues beyond the control of the project. The interviews for the ATUKTC were conducted in late 2019 early 2020 by Matthew Kiore. While the same methodology as adopted in earlier LCF employer priority interviews was maintained, the broader aim of these interviews in particular was towards understanding how employers utilising a kaupapa Māori approach in their work environment (or who employ graduates that have been trained via kaupapa Māori approaches to education) view the LCF. 17 interviews were conducted by the ATUKTC, the interviewees are employers with whom the ATUKTC have pre-existing relationships.

The following summarises interview data collected in order to inform the implementation of Otago Polytechnic's (OP) Learner Capability Framework (LCF).

As discussed below, these interviews offer valuable insights regarding specific capabilities (namely, cultural competency, bicultural proficiency and bilingualism), among other things. The commentary within these interviews suggests valuable additions to our already existing understanding as to how these capabilities might be understood and how they might relate to concepts such as cultural safety. It is clear that these capabilities are highly valued by many interviewees within this Kōkiri cluster.

Analysis of Kōkiri Training Centre Employer Interviews

A desire for these capabilities in graduates is more apparent within this interview cluster than in previous clusters, but with a caveat, namely that there is a high degree of overlap with previous interview clusters in terms of how interviewees interpreted and valued certain capabilities. There were no substantially different interpretations of specific capabilities, nor was there evidence that the capabilities that interviewees found most important differed substantially from previous clusters. For this reason, this report does not set out to list those capabilities discussed most frequently by interviewees. Rather, the report aims to highlight areas of divergence and alignment between the ATUKTC interview cluster and previous interview clusters.

The analysis that follows reflects 17 interviews that were conducted by the ATUKTC in early 2020. The interviewees are employers with whom the ATUKTC have pre-existing relationships. The methodology of the interview process followed the same protocol as the interviews conducted by the Otago Polytechnic Staff Employer Interviews to identify the most desirable capabilities in new employees taken on board in 2018. Themes that emerged from these interviews were in many cases similar to the already gathered data and analysis in earlier contexts, but of significance is the addition of specific interpretations of capabilities in a kaupapa Māori context, which add valuable and important registers for this project going forward.

Learner Capabilities and the LCF

Generally speaking, interviewees were of the belief that capabilities are important to graduate employability, and that the LCF represents a good effort to identify relevant capabilities.

> *…you've got some really good things on there* [the list of capabilities], *it's just I've probably arranged a few things a wee bit out of tune but a lot of things there are, can be all one's and two's, they are all equally important (Interview 14, Lines 215-217).*

> *Oh, yeah there was quite a few* [capabilities] *there, I think you pretty much covered most things (Interview 15, Line 213).*

> *No, it was a pretty diverse range of options to be honest, so it was pretty covered, really. There [were] three different options on how you present stuff* [three capabilities referring to communication] *so yeah it was pretty covered. It's good actually (Interview 17, Lines 165-167).*

> *Yep, definitely. Definitely a complete framework (Interview 5, Line 226).*

Moreover, interviewees appreciated that the LCF attempts to show students that skills acquired in areas of life other than formal education are important in finding employment.

> *And I think perhaps for a lot of people, not just Māori, it's hard to compare being the captain of your team with having good leadership skills in the workplace, so bridging that gap for them, that, and I think building that confidence that actually they are transferable skill sets (Interview 9, Lines 169-172).*

There are two caveats, however. Firstly, there is the matter of where capabilities end, and personal traits begin. Secondly, a number of interviewees believed that in order to appropriately cover competent and safe interactions between cultures, or in certain cultural environments, additional capabilities needed to be added or current capabilities needed to be redefined.

Capabilities vs Personal Traits

As in other employer clusters, interviewees often found it important that potential employees are, for example, motivated, passionate, willing to learn, reliable (or professional), honest and a good fit for the team in question. Such characteristics were often mentioned by employers as the most important things they look for in potential employees, prior to being shown the LCF list of capabilities.

> *…like any other employer, trust is a big thing and that comes in a lot of different ways, it's about their ability to work unattended, work with someone, work with your clients (Interview 12, Lines 24-26).*

> *…it puts the pressure on everyone else in that team that if someone's sick or, well people are allowed to be sick, I mean if someone is generally not turning up for a different reason, yeah, it compromises the safety of the rest of that team if there's one man down or two [men] down (Interview 14, Lines 65-68).*

> *Just drive, they need to be there if they're going to even attempt it, so probably drive. Just not, jumping in the bunk in the first five minutes, if you're going to plan on quitting, just stick it out, do your best and then roll, yeah, so probably a bit of drive and a bit of guts (Interview 17, Lines 57-59).*

> *Confidence, I guess maybe outgoing and forthcoming, would be what I look for, someone who's not shy and not afraid to be honest, and open (Interview 8, Lines 23-24).*

> *I think it's a way you can shape an employee around what you need as an employer, round the values of your organisation and dedication to their work and their focus on opportunities (Interview 7, Lines 31-32).*

> *…looking to see how they interact and engage with you and how they may fit with the wider team, and the vision of the service going forward (Interview 10, Lines 32-33).*

It is an interesting question as to whether the aforementioned characteristics are capabilities or personal attributes. In any case, this is a largely academic question, as there seems to be overlap between these concepts cited by employers and the capabilities presently included within the LCF. For example, motivation, passion and drive might be associated with being enterprising. A willingness to learn is potentially related to reflecting on one's performance and applying personal learning. The question, then, is one of language and how the capabilities currently included in the LCF might be articulated in order to show employers that they include the concepts that are important to them.

Cultural Competence, Bicultural Proficiency and Bilingualism

Interviewees offered interesting insight as to how cultural competence, bicultural proficiency and bilingualism (particularly the former two) might be understood and applied within the LCF. Indeed, these capabilities are intertwined.

> *Yes, te reo, nga tikanga, kaupapa Māori, they are all inter-related, it's hard to find a person with lots of tikanga and no reo, they kind of, they go hand in hand… (Interview 11, Lines 72-73).*

> *Competency in te reo. For us, that's what we need. Not only that, and not so much in the language but being able to see that language covers a wide range of things* [such as tikanga and cosmology] *(Interview 16, Lines 179-181).*

At present the LCF summarises cultural competence as the ability to:

- Respect and embrace diverse perspectives
- Understand other cultures and engage appropriately
- Be responsible and manage behaviour

Bicultural proficiency in a NZ context is summarised as the ability to:

- Apply Te Ao Māori and tikanga Māori
- Incorporate mātauranga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi in decision-making
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi

Generally speaking, the commentary by interviewees aligns with these conceptualisations of the capabilities. Notably, there is not necessarily a need to be expert in Te Ao Māori, but one must be willing to learn.

> *…like we've talked about this, the way we* [Māori] *think as a people. And understanding, even if you don't understand, but if you're willing to listen and research more and find out more about what that word 'cultural competence' means… (Interview 16, Lines 103-106).*
>
> *…people may have a qualification but what I look for is their engagement within our Māori community, what they've done in the past related to our Māori community and that's important in looking to see that when someone comes into a role they've got a really rounded view of, and a good understanding of what some of the challenges and issues are for our whānau who might access health services… (Interview 10, Lines 25-29).*
>
> *…often they* [pākehā staff] *haven't really come from that spiritual background, and that's something that plays an important or a key, that comes up, it's a key role here with whenua, whakapapa, you've got that spiritual element, and so being able to understand that and not be dismissive of it is really important (Interview 1, Lines 132-137).*
>
> *So yeah, I think if you are not culturally competent or have a willingness to learn you're going to struggle in this role so that's really important, understanding that (Interview 1, Lines 220-222).*
>
> *…so obviously we're an iwi organisation so a strong understanding of our role as mana whenua, you know, the – our history which, and everything that that encompasses, and for our particular work, obviously being bilingual is essential to our team (Interview 9, Lines 112-114).*
>
> *…in the health system we need to ensure that our staff are competent in understanding of the Treaty, of Te Ao Māori, of tikanga, of the reo, of the language as well, which encompasses all of that cultural competency. Really, at the end of the day, it is about ensuring that staff working with our Māori whānau are respectful, understand how whānau units function so that when someone comes through the door they are there, they are supportive and they are asking the right questions to be able to support whānau coming into the (workplace) (Interview 10, Lines 137-142).*

Yet, the commentary adds insights that could be used to update or extend present definitions of cultural competency and bicultural proficiency. There are two main points here:

1. Focus on self
2. Authenticity and commitment

Focus on Self

Interviewees note that cultural competency is not merely a matter of trying to understand other cultures. Rather, it is also about trying to understand one's own culture and how one's own identity impacts behaviour and relationships with others. This applies to all people, Pākehā and Māori.

> *…we want, I'm Pakeha myself, I understand from my perspective what Te Ao Māori is, but I know I'm not in that, if that sort of makes sense (Interview 1, Lines 122-124).*

> *The thing for me when I'm working with people is about understanding what their own cultural values and beliefs are no matter what ethnicity they identify as, and that allows me to reflect and think about my own values and beliefs and how I need to respond in that and work alongside that person, on a daily basis really (Interview 10, Lines 243-246).*

> *So just to translate that into English, the reason resilience is so important here is because we are quite isolated and we're often challenged, and we're culturally vulnerable at times so when we are culturally vulnerable, because we're isolated, and lots of people don't understand our kaupapa, we have to be resilient enough and strong enough in our own practices and our own language in order to fulfil our jobs and work at (workplace). Is that right? (Interview 4, Lines 143-147).*[1]

> *Whether they've got cultural competencies in terms of understanding where they come from, and if they are Māori, whether they can articulate that in the interview, about their own journey (Interview 3, Lines 22-24).*

Authenticity and Commitment

Interestingly, cultural competence and bicultural proficiency were often spoken of as an attitudinal or normative commitment, as much as any specific ability. The commentary highlights that material acts of engagement with other cultures need to be underpinned by a normative commitment to understanding in order to avoid mere lip service. Thus, there was a focus from some interviewees on values and relationship-building within the relevant community(ies). This echoes the foregoing point of discussion regarding the relationship between personal attributes and capabilities.

> *Their abilities need to be around values as much as it is around skills and experience… (Interview 7, Line 20).*

> *If they don't have a handle on the whakapapa* [of our organisation] *then they may not contribute as much as we would like them to… It's the approach, it's the heart, it's the heart of what they do (Interview 2, Lines 66-73).*

> *…experience in the community helps, are they whānau orientated people… (Interview 11, Lines 48-49).*

> *Their commitment to the kaupapa, to the kaupapa of the kohanga reo (Interview 16, Line 20).*

> *Because it comes from a place of manawa where people want to be part of working with whānau and they are able to care… they've got a really caring support person alongside them. Someone that really genuinely cares about the mahi (Interview 3, Lines 53-58).*

> *But it's the grounding of everything, Te Ao Māori, to be able to work in this way. And not do lip service (Interview 3, Lines 88-89).*

Stemming from this normative commitment, some interviewees noted the importance of recognising previous work around cultural safety.[2]

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[1]These are the words of the interviewer, rather than the interviewee. The interview parties have a discussion on this matter and it happens that the interviewer's words best summarise the conclusion. The interviewee verbally agrees to this summary, so I take it to be representative of their thoughts also.

[2]The analyst claims no expertise regarding the concept of cultural safety; I understand the concept to have originated in the health sector.

Cultural safety potentially extends (or makes more explicit) the definition of cultural competence presently incorporated within the LCF. As cited above, the current definition calls for graduates to be able to "engage appropriately" with other cultures. Cultural competence, on the other hand, explicitly calls for the ability to provide services cognisant of the cultural identity of others.

> *A responsive service, to know what to do when they visit families, to know what to say when they visit families, to know their boundaries, to know how to relate to people out in the community, so evidence is what we do, so that's the evidence I can provide, we do that every time we go out in the community. We display cultural safety and cultural competencies… (Interview 2, Lines 192-197).*

> *…we all have different backgrounds and different whakapapas and I think being understanding of that is a really important one when we work with our whānaus, who could be displaced, and, but we can have like Māori features or we could have Māori whānau or be in a tau iwi setting so being able to understand that and be confident when you walk into a home visit, is really important (Interview 3, Lines 82-88).*

Cultural safety also has a personal aspect similar to the discussion of a focus on self above. Those working within a specific cultural framework, a kaupapa Māori framework, for example, require support to do this safely.

> [cultural safety] *Is knowing that actually I can go to my kaumatua, I can go to the … we've got people who can support us in our tika if we are ever not sure, so it might be around iwi validation or connecting with our whakapapa (Interview 1, Lines 538-541).*[3]

An Important Note

As the foregoing discussion indicates, cultural competence, bicultural proficiency and bilingualism are important to a number of the interviewees.

> *…so if it's kohanga, it's things like, do you have te reo, I don't care whether they've got a degree or what level in NCEA, they're no good to us without te reo… (Interview 11, Lines 46-48).*

> *…once again that's essential really for the business that we're in in working for an iwi, and being a representative of an iwi partner, you know, with the government (Interview 9, Lines 121-123).*

Yet, it should be noted that there was a clear divide within the data. Unlike preceding interview clusters, the present cluster contains employers from diverse industries. It is apparent that cultural competency, bicultural proficiency and bilingualism were more of a focus for those in areas such as health, education and law. Those involved in trades were less likely to cite these capabilities as important.

[3]These are the words of the interviewer, rather than the interviewee. The interview parties have a discussion around cultural safety and it happens that the interviewer's words summarise the concept. The interviewee verbally agrees to this summary, so I take it to be representative of their thoughts also.

Diversity

Diversity was discussed typically in terms of culture or skillset, and, to a lesser extent, gender. The commentary highlights the value and importance of diversity, both in a normative and business strategy sense.

Regarding business strategy, it is simply prudent to have the input of people from diverse backgrounds in decision-making processes and to reflect diverse clientele.

> *Yeah sure, a good example of this is that we took on six staff from Work and Income and Corrections last year, two of them were females. Females in our team, we think they're really important because they bring something different to the workforce, and their skills are different to some male skills, don't want to be sexist here but they have a finer tune for detail sometimes and they're more meticulous in the way they do things, where you might find males rush into things and make a mess or something where females tend to sit back a wee bit and think about that and then approach something systematically (Interview 14, Lines 136-142).*

> *I think it's really important to have a variety of backgrounds and experience, it brings that richness to the decision making and the work that you do, so being really considered about someone's viewpoint, and then understanding their background and why they made the decisions that they do, and providing some feedback as they do, I believe that everyone's input is really, really important and collectively you can make some really sustainable decisions if it's done collectively rather than just someone doing it on their own (Interview 10, Lines 250-255).*

> *…we're a language team, and we're looking to, you know, develop kaupapa that have never really needed to exist before because nobody needed to revive languages, you know, in the past… so we always make sure that we do have a diverse range of people and backgrounds in those sort of contexts* [brainstorming meetings] *because they can then represent the exact demographics that we're trying to engage with* [in revitalising te reo Māori]*, you've got to be able to see what you bring and what you don't bring, or what you would like at the table and who can bring that (Interview 9, Lines 191-199).*

> *Yeah, I get excited with anybody new because they can always bring something new that we've never seen before. So eight years in the industry, I always believe that, you know, ten heads, ten thinking heads are better than one so we thrive on new ideas and being an establishment that we can pretty much go down whatever line we want to, that's a real positive for us so no, we rave about that man, we're all about that, new ideas…You can break it down to specialised areas for health care, you know, and yeah there's definitely different niches for different people (Interview 6, Lines 176-190).*

Diversity was also discussed in a normative sense in that it was seen as an important principle or value within certain organisations. These types of discussions had similarities to discussions regarding cultural competency and bicultural proficiency. Diversity being acknowledged requires these capabilities.

> *We, I think we would like to think that we are quite diverse and open and accepting of people's uniqueness and an example of that would be the principles on which we kind of, you know, are our foundation, manaakitaka, kaitiakitaka, tino rakatirataka, all of those things I think are elements of autonomy or diversity and those are things which we embrace and encourage (Interview 9, Lines 183-186).*

> *By diverse backgrounds I'm taking it you mean diverse range of iwi; that's a strength for us because we need to understand where we are and who we are in the place and acknowledge the fact that we are but visitors in Te Waipounamu and so we need to respect the kaitiakitanga aspect… (Interview 11, Lines 173-174).*

> *Thus, the strategic benefits and normative aspirations of diversity are not achieved by merely putting diverse people in a room together. Effort and certain capabilities are required.*

> *Social equity. And diversity. I enjoy different nationalities, different languages, I think it's a natural place in our organisation to have diversity. That doesn't always necessarily mean it gets the same outcome, I think you have to get people to be honest around their prejudice and their unconscious bias around people, and having those courageous conversations. Getting people to think for themselves (Interview 7, Lines 195-199).*

Assessing Capabilities and the Potential of an Online Tool

General Methods of Assessing Capabilities

Interviewee feedback on how they assess potential employees capabilities echoes feedback from earlier interview clusters. Methods of assessing capabilities include:

- Formal qualifications and CV
- References and past work experience
- Community service
- Trial periods
- Interview performance. Scenario-based or "tell us about a time when" questioning mentioned
- Personal interactions with candidate (sometimes akin to a gut feeling or "vibe" for a person). How will they fit with the existing team?
- Life experiences and personal intents

It is pointed out that a candidate being able to talk to previous experiences or supporting documentation is important. If a candidate cannot do this during an interview, then a CV, no matter how comprehensive, is only worth so much. Moreover, here again there are differences between industries. Those in the trades seem to place strong emphasis on seeing a candidate work (potentially through a trial period), whereas community service providers emphasise a candidate's volunteer work and relationships within a community.

Online Tool

As in preceding interview clusters, opinion was split regarding the value of an online tool. Most employers thought the tool could be useful to many employers, if not to themselves specifically. Those who liked the notion of an online tool saw it as an additional source of information for employers and an additional opportunity for graduates to demonstrate their capabilities. Moreover, the fact that the tool might incorporate evidence from areas other than formal qualifications was appreciated. Some also appreciated that it would be visual in nature.

> *…definitely there is, I think, really a need for something like that, so, do you need an investor? (laughs)… Yeah I think there is definitely a place for that type of app. And it would certainly help an employer, like again, I'll only talk about myself, I think it would be really good to help me identify and sort out if a person, a potential employee, by seeing something like that. It also would help me try and look at if he is, what's the word, can keep it up for a long period of time (Interview 12, Lines 117-120).*

> *I definitely think so* [it would be helpful]*, yeah, it shows, because it's a hands on kind of trade that we're in, if there's some sort of visual evidence of things that they've done, the building or the construction side of things and they have some sort of evidence to prove it well that's just a no-brainer (Interview 13, Lines 125-127).*

> *Yeah I think it would be* [useful]*, I think that would be really good, like when I was in the workforce before I studied at Otago what I found during my time at Otago, I'd have fellow students asking me about part time roles and that, at the place I was working at but I guess the hard thing is, is trying to take on these people when sometimes they can't display those skills but they actually do have them… (Interview 14, Lines 104-108).*

> *Oh, definitely. Oh, definitely, I think that would be great, I think that would really help… It would be really good to showcase that stuff especially for the individual… something like, you know, a video to say, "hi, my name is [name], I'm applying for the role as Whānau Ora navigator and here are my capabilities", and just a video of me working with my family, or working with a client (Interview 2, Lines 480-517).*

> *Yeah, it's much more than a written, you can actually see the person and you have a better idea of the capabilities of that person (Interview 16, Lines 172-173).*

> *…I mean definitely* [it would be valuable]*, it would be definitely another angle, perspective… (Interview 5, Lines 142).*

Some interviewees were concerned about the amount of work that may be required to assess people's capabilities via the tool. However, such commentary was raised as something to consider, not as an objection to the online tool.

> *…we would definitely look at it* [a CV on USB, rather than paper] *but we could take it two ways, "oh, this is different, so that shows entrepreneurialism and that, that's fantastic", or we could go, "oh, it would just be easier if they were like everybody else and sent in their paper copy", you know, so could be either-or… (Interview 1, Lines 425-429).*

> *Yeah, it'd be helpful. It would take me a bit of time to get through them all if there was more than, if I was interviewing three out of the 15, and I brought it down to three, if I could just look at three solid, to get to the interview stage that would be helpful (Interview 3, Lines 188-191).*

There were those who suggested that face-to-face interaction would always be necessary. Such comments typically cited limitations of an online tool but did not necessarily imply that there was no value in such a concept.

> *Um, useful, but that's all, just useful…I wouldn't rely on it. I like the face to face, how they cope in realistic situations (Interview 11, Lines 144-148).*

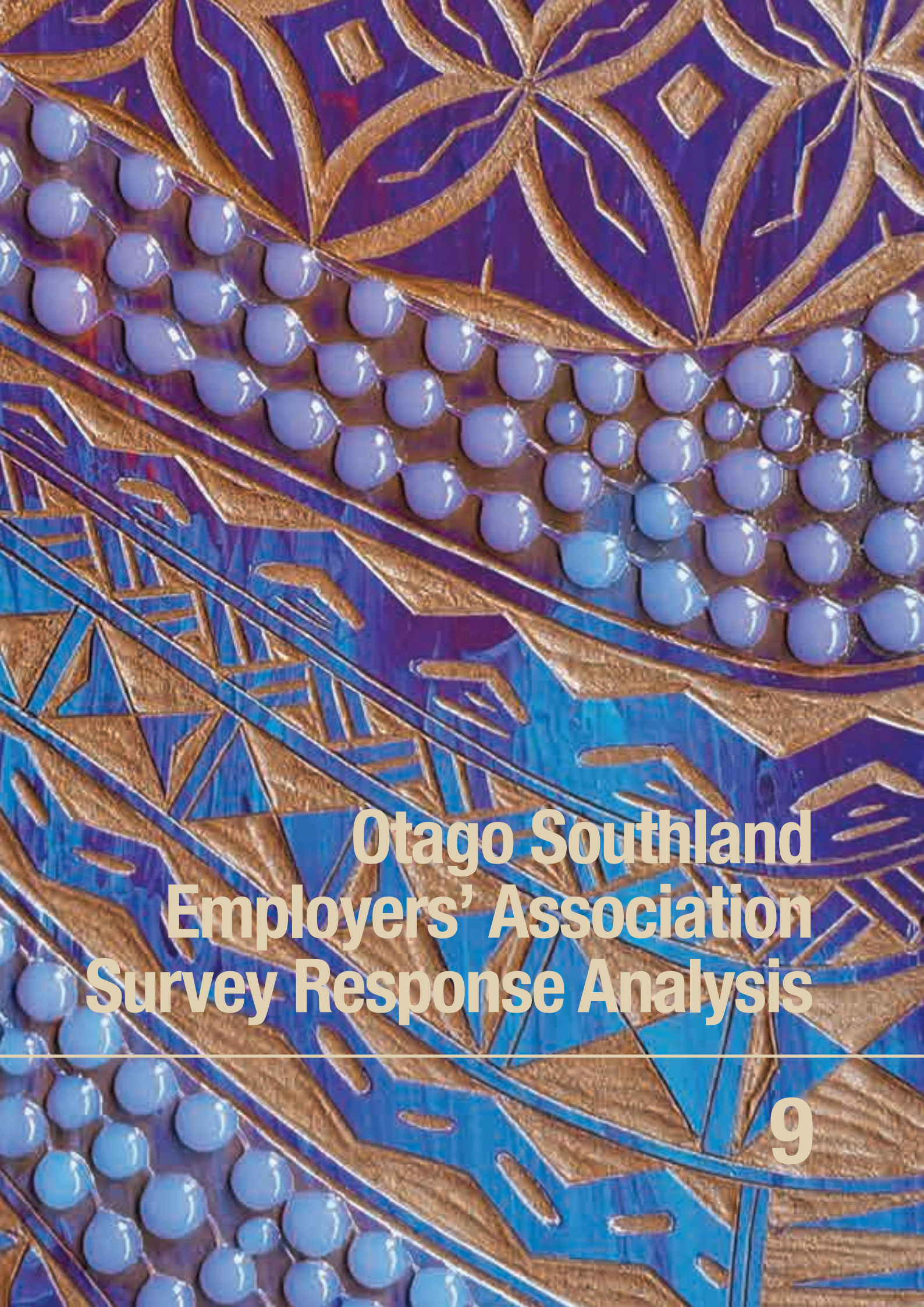
> *Um, yes to a certain extent, but I also think that online tools don't always have the narrative. I think online tools are great and they are a step in but I think it's also about people's story, so people have the right to, if they're not digitally savvy or they are not really good writers… I think people have the right to actually speak to their experience (Interview 7, Lines 145-150).*

> *…you can draw out a lot of really good skills that you may not necessarily get if someone was doing an online tool. There's so much value in that face to face conversations that you have with someone. And while you have people who inspire, might inspire you because they've walked the Kepler or done other things, actually I've worked with people over the years that have inspired their own whānau but they actually don't recognise that in themselves, and so when you draw that out of them and they start to acknowledge and realise that actually they are a leader in their own whānau they then gain a lot more confidence to be able to take that lead when they're working… (Interview 10, Lines 196-202).*

One interviewee touched on how recruitment processes being moved online may be problematic for Māori and young professionals in particular. Interview processes offer the chance for relationship-building in ways that digital tools do not. Given the emphasis on relationships within Te Ao Māori, Māori may be disadvantaged by the trend to move recruitment processes online. Moreover, this may disadvantage early-career workers as well, as it is harder to stand out among many CVs without much experience, etc. This is not only a problem for people within these groups, it is also a problem, the interviewee argues, for employers who miss the opportunity to support early-career people to grow in a role. Overall, this can lead to a stagnated workforce.

> *I think human resourcing processes need to be challenged and if the Learner Capability can think about interview processes, or the current trend to be shortlisted through a digital tool is actually quite dangerous for our people culturally, because people will read a digital tool and make an assumption about a people rather than what we continually say as a cultural people, that we are about relationships so if we continue to use too many online digital tools we miss the opportunity to give people a go and to actually understand the benefits of supporting someone to grow as opposed to, "you don't have it on your CV" (Interview 7, Lines 217-223).*

Analysis from the employer interviews conducted by the Kōkiri Training Centre in 2020 have highlighted both similarities and differences in employer understandings of how capability in the workplace is to be performed. Significances of culturally important capability as an extension of work-centred role specificity is identified and centred in a people and grounded view of capability in the workplace. These findings are of great significance in acknowledging the diversity of the New Zealand working environment and highlight the significance of capability beyond that of a work-centric nature.



Otago Southland Employers' Association Survey Response Analysis

9

Response Analysis of the OSEA Survey

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Mixed media on painted and carved board. 30 x 30.5cm.

Introduction

As part of the research programme carried out to inform Otago Polytechnic's (OP) Learner Capability Framework (LCF), members of the Otago Southland Employers' Association (OSEA) were surveyed as to their views of employee capabilities. Specifically, this survey was designed to elicit information about the most important capabilities for employers; what evidence of capabilities employers wanted to see when recruiting (as well as how they might map or manage the capabilities of their present staff), and whether the COVID-19 pandemic had changed any of the above.

This report provides a summary and analysis of responses to the online survey comprising 11 questions, including text-entry questions supplementing click-and-select options.

Fourteen respondents completed the survey, although not everyone answered every question. The data is discussed on a question by question basis.[1]

Q1 – Ranking of Capabilities

Question 1 asked respondents to identify the five most important capabilities for their respective workplaces.

Previous research on the part of the LCF team established a list of 25 capabilities that were likely to be important for employees to be effective members of the workforce in the 21st century. Information about how this was compiled and validated is presented in previous research reports and can be found at https://issuu.com/oplearnercapability. The list was extended to 26 capabilities after reflection from this research and is attached as an appendix.

Respondents to this survey were asked to select from the 26 the five capabilities they deemed most important in their workplace. Table 1 summarises respondents' top five capability selections.

Generally speaking, responses echo what was seen in previous employer interviews.

The "Works in Teams" and "Displays Effective Interpersonal Behaviour" capabilities that can be broadly categorised as interpersonal behaviours were the most selected. As with employers previously interviewed in this research, it appears that gelling with a team of colleagues and being able to appropriately interact with clientele is vitally important.

Next highly rated were "Communicates Effectively Verbally" and "Demonstrates Resilience". It is worth considering whether the value of this capability has become more apparent since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with 14 participants in this survey (of which 12 answered this question), this is speculative. "Solves Problems", "Thinks Creatively" and "Works Independently" were also highly rated, as in previous interviews.

Five capabilities were not selected by any participant (and are, thus, not included in Table 1). These were "Communicates Effectively Visually", "Acts Responsibly", "Communicates Bilingually", "Displays Work-Life Balance" and "Performs Community Service". Generally, this reflects findings from prior employer interviews. "Communicates Effectively Visually" was not selected, although previous interviews suggest that it is important in certain sectors, such as design.

[1]Note that the 11 questions in the survey are here condensed and discussed as five questions, as the 11 survey questions include click-and-select, and text-entry, questions that act as sub-questions of an overall question.

Capability	Number	Rank
Displays effective interpersonal behaviour	8	1
Works in teams	8	
Communicates effectively verbally	6	2
Demonstrates resilience	6	
Solves problems	5	3
Thinks creatively	5	
Works independently	5	
Organises effectively	4	4
Demonstrates digital competence	3	5
Enterprising	3	
Practices ethically	3	
Practices health and safety	3	
Communicates effectively in writing	2	6
Displays cultural competence	2	
Thinks critically	2	
Displays bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context	1	7
Displays leadership	1	
Inspires others	1	
Practices sustainability	1	
Reflects on performance and applies personal learning	1	

Table 1: Otago Southland Employers' Association Top 5 Capability Rankings.

Q2 – The Relevance of Capabilities

Question 2 invited respondents to comment on the extent to which they considered the Learner capabilities to be relevant in their workplace.

Respondents were asked to identify the extent to which the selected capabilities were relevant in their workplace using a five-point Likert scale. Options included “not at all relevant”, “not so relevant”, “somewhat relevant”, “very relevant” and “extremely relevant”. The 12 respondents who answered this question selected either “very relevant” or “extremely relevant” (33% and 67% respectively) making it clear that the selected capabilities were highly relevant within their workplaces.

This question was accompanied by a text-entry response option completed by three respondents. One person commented *I would have liked to have added another 3 or 4 [capabilities] as well* indicating that there were other capabilities that they would like to have selected. The other three respondents took the opportunity to explain why they found certain capabilities important/relevant.

> *There is no room for complacency or inattention on the building site, and following Health and Safety rules can be a matter of life and death.*
>
> *We are looking to employ on attitude and whether they are a fit for the team.*
>
> *Resilience is something that is required to enable a person to do hands on work with a family as you need resilience to work with someone who may not want to work with you. Bi Cultural practice is a necessity. Practises ethically is a pointer to knowing if an employee is aware of the responsibility [sic] of being ethical in your everyday and work decisions which means that there is a professional awareness of how you work and hold yourself in a work community. The ability to self-reflect gives the person an opportunity to look at themselves and work out how they can be better at what they want to achieve. Interpersonal communication skills gives confidence that a new worker can relate to others either in the field or in the office.*

Q3 – Learner Capability Portfolio

Question 3 invited respondents' opinions about a potential employee using a Learner Capability Portfolio in the application process instead (or as well as) a traditional Curriculum Vitae (CV).

This question was designed to help understand employer perceptions of how capabilities can best be identified in the recruitment process. Thus, respondents were asked to what extent job applicants providing a portfolio of evidence attesting to their capabilities would be helpful in hiring job applicants. As in Q2, a five-point Likert-scale of: "not at all helpful", "not so helpful", "somewhat helpful", "very helpful" and "extremely helpful" was used.

All respondents thought that a Learner Capability Portfolio would be of some help to them in their recruitment processes. The "somewhat helpful", "very helpful" and "extremely helpful" options were selected by 42%, 33% and 25% of respondents, respectively. Thus, 75% of respondents feel that such a portfolio would *at least* be very helpful during recruitment.

Four respondents used the text-entry response option to this question. Three comments highlight that much of the value of a Learner Capability Portfolio is in that it provides independent, verifiable, appropriately measured evidence.

> *As long as there are examples of how each competency has been achieved.*
>
> *This is dependent on how the capability portfolio is measured, if at all, and what is unique when viewed against a traditional CV.*
>
> *Independent evidence of capabilities would be great.*

The fourth respondent noted that the value of a learner capability portfolio may vary across sectors.

> *Perhaps more relevant in vocations such as IT, engineering, teaching or architecture, where technology is a big part of the worker's day.*

Q4 – Usefulness of a Learner Capability Profile

Question 4 invited respondents to consider using a Learner Capability Profile for current staff or to manage or map staff capability.

In addition to recruitment purposes, this question asked respondents if they saw value in using a Learner Capability Portfolio to map or manage capability within and between current employees. The first part of this question was a "yes" or "no" click-and-select question. Opinions were split equally, with both "yes" and "no" being selected by half of the 12 respondents to this question.

Four respondents used the additional text-entry response to this question. The reasons that participants would not (or were hesitant to) develop capability profiles of their employees varied. Some felt that any portfolio or profile would need to be specified to their work environment or even to specific employees who were underperforming. Others felt that an additional online process in their workplace was impractical or superfluous given existing professional development efforts.

> *The capability profile would need to be job specific for our organisation to ascertain whether or not the information is directly translatable to our work environment.*
>
> *It would be appropriate for new or under-performing staff, or anyone whose role was changing, but it would be difficult to justify to a current employee who is performing well.*
>
> *Waterproofing is a hands-on field, requiring a lot of expertise and experience in the correct handling and application of materials. Online inductions and compliance through the use of H & S apps are all well and good, and are becoming the norm rather than the exception, but if the tablet falls in a cement bucket, it's a very bad day.*
>
> *We do performance appraisals, self-reflection and supervision to understand, support and develop employees. They are also given a training budget to attend whatever training they believe would be beneficial to their practice.*

Q5a – Workplace changes due to COVID-19

Question 5a explored changes experienced in workplaces due to COVID-19.

Given the large-scale impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is, perhaps, surprising that slightly over half (58%) of respondents reported that their workplace had changed during the pandemic. This information was collected via a click-and-select question in which "yes" and "no" were the possible selections. Five respondents (42% of the 12 respondents to this question) report that the pandemic has not led to changes in their workplace. However, some text-entry responses by those who stated that COVID-19 had not led to changes in their workplace suggest that, in fact, there have been some changes.

Take the following quote as an example. The respondent suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has not changed general trends within their industry, but has changed some daily practices.

> *The construction industry has continued to work very hard, trying to produce enough houses for New Zealanders to live in. Covid-19 has made us think about the proximity of workers to other contractors, and on sites we've been working on, only 1 group at a time has been onsite, making everything easier for us in terms of parking, noise and accessing materials. But it slows down the entire building process, which is not good for the client in the end. We still need to attract more employees, and struggle to find young people who are interested in Waterproofing.*

Thus, the prevalence of change is possibly higher than the responses to this question suggest.

Q5b – Impact of COVID-19

Question 5b explored participants' views about the impact of COVID-19 on their workplace.

Of the 12 respondents who answered this question, five considered that their views about the impact of COVID-19 on their workplace had changed, while seven stated that their views had not changed (42% and 58% respectively). Data was selected via a click-and-select question in which "yes" and "no" were the possible responses.

Similar to responses to Q5a (previous section), responses suggested that the level of change, with regards to employer perceptions of the importance of capabilities allowing employees to adapt to new and unexpected working environments, has not been as extensive as might have been suspected.

Seven respondents used the text-entry option to this question. Those stating that their views on this matter had not changed, explained that their industry (or workplace) already recognised and prioritised the capabilities (such as resilience, and health and safety) that the COVID-19 pandemic had required of staff.

> *Already knew value of resilience in the team.*
>
> *Our work environment is in the social services sector and this area is known for having unexpected things occurring with and for clients, which we have to respond to.*
>
> *The required changes are common sense changes.*
>
> *We have always had very stringent controls over Hazardous materials, and Healthy and Safety procedures. Compliance has always been huge for us, (eg a 30 page Site Specific Safety Plan for each job,) on account of the very real dangers found on building sites. Signing in at suppliers' outlets, having hand washing stations in each vehicle, thinking about keeping themselves and those around them safe from the virus, not a big stretch from where we were before. It has added a layer to compliance.*

Those whose views had changed, believed that the pandemic had required capabilities such as creativity and resilience on the part of employees, and also highlighted instances in which there would be value in extending these capabilities.

> *We have needed to pivot, so problem solving and creativity are very important.*
>
> *Staff resilience is paramount now, being able to self-manage, and be flexible in work hours and delivery of services, creative in approaches.*
>
> *We had a practice work-from-home day before alert levels were even announced. This put us a step ahead in preparations for lockdown, and the changes went smoothly. What did surprise us somewhat is that most had times that they struggled with mental health - whether for days or weeks. They would have shown up with high capability on your app, but I don't think it would have foreseen the struggles.*

Conclusion

This survey was designed to understand OSEA members' perceptions of the importance of specific capabilities within their workplace, the potential value of capability portfolios/profiles as a means of recruitment and staff development, and the effect of changes that may have stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings are summarised below.

1. Respondents believe that the 26 Learner Capabilities are important and relevant to their workplaces. Not all capabilities are valued equally, however. Interpersonal capabilities, such as 'working in a team', and appropriate 'interpersonal behaviour' and 'communicative skills' were of central importance.
2. The notion of a Learner Capability Portfolio/profile provided by job applicants was well received. All respondents believed such a portfolio/profile would hold benefits beyond that of a traditional CV. However, opinions were divided as to whether developing such a portfolio/profile for current employees would be practicable or valuable.
3. COVID-19 does not appear to have had the degree of impact on workplace practices that one might have expected. More than half (58%) of these employers reported that COVID-19 led to minor changes in their workplace.

Appendices

Appendix

Framework capabilities & behavioural indicators

01. Communicates effectively in writing

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS (I AM ABLE TO...)

1. Use different styles and types of written language appropriately to convey information.
2. Apply appropriate tone, and writing style to meet audience needs.
3. Read and understand written text and figures.

02. Communicates effectively verbally

1. Use verbal language appropriately for a range of purposes and audience needs.
2. Convey thoughts and ideas effectively using oral communication skills. Use different styles and types of verbal language to convey information and apply appropriate language and tone to meet diverse audiences.
3. Discuss current issues, service and ideas. Respond to questions about my work applying appropriate language and tone.

03. Communicate effectively visually

1. Use different methods and styles of visual language to communicate effectively to an audience.
2. Convey culturally appropriate ideas and information in visual forms.

04. Displays effective interpersonal behaviour

1. Listen actively and observe different points of view before making decisions.
2. Interact with other people using appropriate facial expressions, body language and hand gestures.
3. Discuss difficult issues with colleagues. Work collaboratively to reach a suitable agreement. Adjust thinking and overcome conflict.

05. Displays cultural competence

1. Treat people with respect. Include and value different cultural perspectives in various contexts.
2. Understand the difference in customs, practices and beliefs across other cultures and engage appropriately.
3. Take responsibility and manage my own behaviours using a range of personal and interpersonal skills in diverse cultural contexts.

06. Displays Bi-cultural proficiency in a NZ context

1. Demonstrate a range of tikanga Māori (i.e. protocols, customs and values).
2. Incorporate Māori perspectives environmental, social and legislative decision-making processes in the workplace.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of individual and collective responsibilities in relation to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, particularly with regard to mana whenua.

07. Works independently

1. Self-start and organise to meet agreed deadlines. Initiate and prioritise tasks without supervision.
2. Adapt to new and changing situations. Operate outside my 'comfort zone'.
3. Receive and act on instructions and advice from workplace supervisors, instructors and mentors.

08. Work in teams

1. Build, trust and collaboration, and defining measures of success.
2. Work collaboratively to plan and complete projects and tasks by agreed deadlines.

09. Reflects on performance and applies personal learning

1. Examine my personality, values, beliefs, needs and emotions. Consider how my personality impacts on my performance and how others perceive me.
2. Evaluate performance and reflect on performance feedback from several sources. Explore how to improve performance and implement changes.
3. Identify and pursue learning opportunities to change and increase skills, knowledge and performance.

10. Acts responsibly

1. Anticipate and respond proactively to customer, client and colleague needs.
2. Keep promises and honour commitments to customers, clients and colleagues.
3. Accept the consequences for what I do and say. Avoid making excuses for actions and blaming others when things go wrong.
4. Accept responsibility for projects and the impact on communities, including biodiversity.

11. Practises health and safety

1. Follow prescribed checklists to ensure workplace safety is maintained. Identify potential safety risks and alert appropriate supervisors.
2. Comply with all current health and safety procedures. Take preventive measures to avoid mistakes and alleviate risk.
3. Reduce risk to personal health and safety through demonstrating awareness of different situations and contexts.

12. Demonstrates digital competence

1. Choose and apply digital technology, tools and software to complete work-based tasks.
2. Access, produce, edit and upload information using digital technologies.
3. Apply social media technologies to appropriately present your business and professional capability.
4. Apply measurement and calculation to provide accurate information and analysis.

13. Organises effectively

1. Achieve outcomes through working with appropriate authority and decision-making channels. Evaluate results to check intended outcomes are achieved.
2. Improve and manage workplace physical environments.
3. Achieve work requirements and tasks through planning, prioritising, structuring time and attending to details.

14. Demonstrates resilience

1. Maintain wellness and apply personal strategies to respond to pressure of time, workload, conflict and work-life balance.
2. Persevere and learn constructively through challenges and mistakes. Constantly re-evaluate and establish the best course of action.
3. Maintain optimism, perseverance and flexibility in uncertain, risky or complex situations. Reduce personal and team stress, conflict, and negative impacts.

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15. Thinks creatively

1. Embrace new ideas to advance, shape and support progress within my profession and industry.
2. Use curiosity and initiative to anticipate future needs. Develop resourceful solutions to issues, problems and new opportunities.
3. Test and evaluate solutions to work through problems, products, or new methods for delivering service. Build, transform and re-construct new models or examples.

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16. Displays leadership

1. Communicate a vision for a project or business. Make collaborative decisions on challenging issues and explain decisions to guide change, and delegate the course of action.
2. Coach and support emerging leaders and recognise different styles of leadership.
3. Motivate, influence and co-create through listening, communicating and establishing expectations. Value other people's efforts.
4. Challenge and resolve inappropriate or unproductive behaviour in a polite, respectful manner. Use formal systems and processes when appropriate.

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17. Inspires others

1. Encourage and motivate others through communicating purpose, meaning and passion. Inspire others to seek opportunities, invest effort and take calculated risks.

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18. Enterprising

1. Visualise a new opportunity that makes a significant difference to something or someone. Identify what is required to start this initiative.
2. Bring energy, tenacity, initiative and desire to succeed in a project or task with other people.
3. Achieve bold new outcomes with others. Contribute towards dynamic and adventurous behaviour.
4. Focus on meeting the needs of specific groups by undertaking important projects. Work collaboratively with stakeholders to achieve bold and creative outcomes.

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19. Practise sustainably

1. Identify initiatives to achieve better environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes in the workplace so they reduce our impacts on the environment and people.
2. Advocate for positive change at either a community, industry, professional, national or global level. Provide supporting evidence for change by showing how specific impacts could affect the environment and people.
3. Implement and improve sustainable practice in the workplace, my profession and community by collaborating and acting with others.

20. Practises ethically

1. Make honest, effective and fair decisions through applying ethical principles and shared values.
2. Identify and adopt appropriate codes of practice to maintain high professional standards in the workplace. Show fairness when working with others to do the right thing.
3. Maintain the confidentiality of formal and informal communication between yourself, clients and colleagues.

21. Thinks critically

1. Identify and take up opportunities. Expose and overcome obstacles.
2. Analyse and evaluate information drawn from research and professional best practice and act on conclusions.

22. Solves problems

1. Identify the difference between problems, symptoms and underlying causes of a problem.
2. Collaborate to apply new ways of thinking about problems. Identify different solutions, interventions or actions to address problems.
3. Reframe problems as opportunities and learn from them.

23. Communicates bilingually

1. Speak and comprehend an alternative language.
2. Write, read, speak and comprehend an alternative language.

24. Displays work life balance

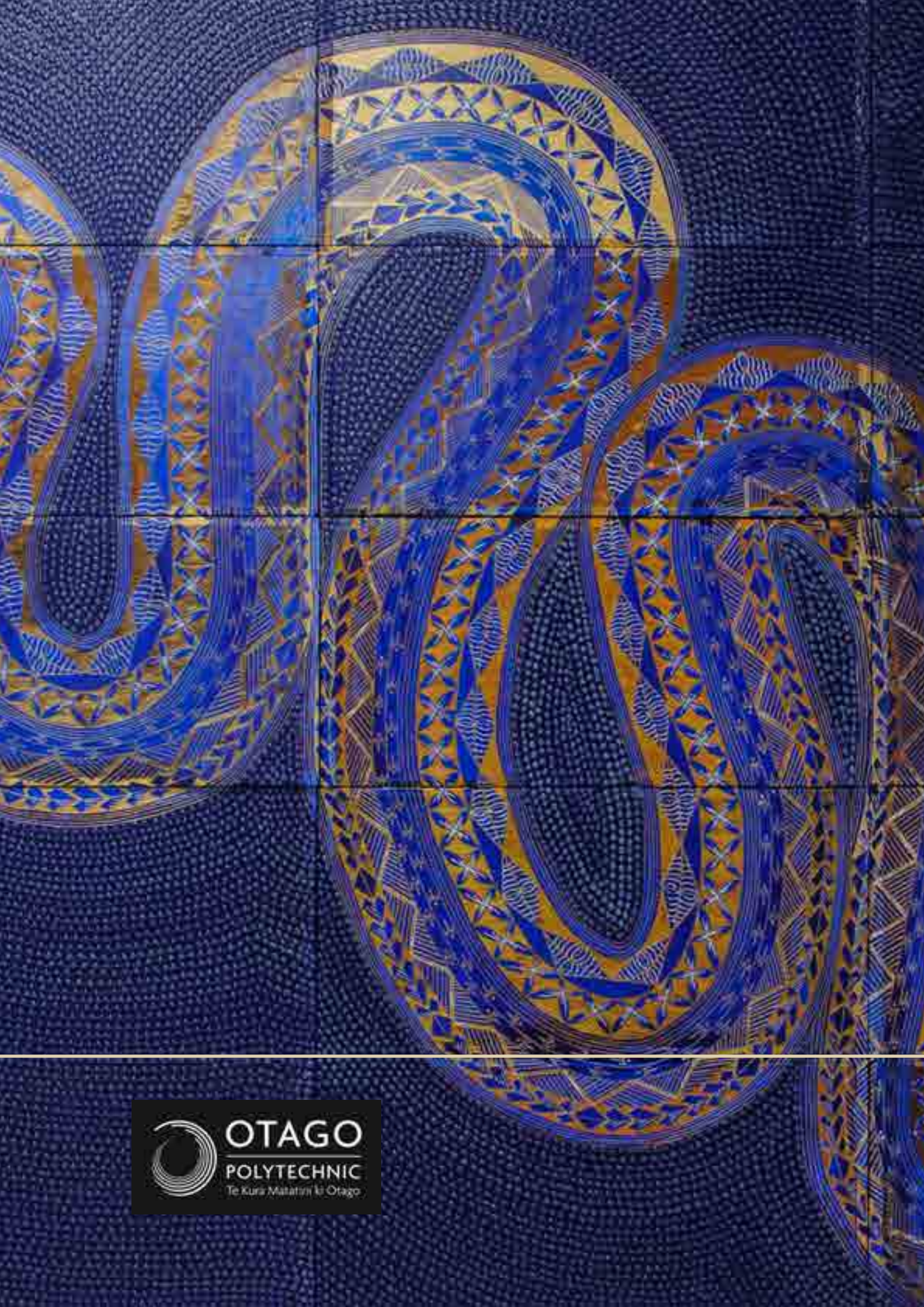
1. Enjoy a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Manage work activities according to priorities. Engage in personal recreation or leisure activity.
2. Keep work in perspective. Demonstrate a sense of humour that is appropriate for the workplace.

25. Performs community service

1. Build and develop ties with communities through supporting people, volunteering, coaching, service learning and participation.

26. Participates in behaviour change

1. Map issues and behaviour to clarify and diagnose real problems instead of the symptoms of problems.
2. Identify possible interventions that could be implemented to create change.
3. Advocate and present a case for change that aligns to specific values and desired behaviours.
4. Implement strategies that model the changes your community, business or organisation would like to see.



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