Professional and Practice-Based Education: The CSU Model
Understanding Professional and Practice-Based Education

At Charles Sturt University most undergraduate and graduate entry courses prepare graduates for entry to a profession, occupation or discipline. These courses prepare our students for work, and are called Professional Education courses.

In keeping with CSU’s vision, as expressed in the CSU Strategy, these CSU courses also aim to promote our students’ capacity and willingness to contribute to their local and global worlds as Global Citizens. Our students are Learning for Life and Work. This core goal in CSU’s Curriculum Learning and Teaching Framework is underpinned by two broad pedagogical models: Practice-Based Education and Online Learning. These models are applicable to both on-campus and off-campus courses.

Practice-Based Education (PBE) is a curriculum model or approach that educates people for the practice of a profession or occupation. PBE encompasses many different pedagogies or teaching & learning strategies (such as workplace learning). Courses that adopt a PBE approach deliberately and coherently place education for practice as the focus of the curriculum: goals, content, processes (teaching and learning strategies), assessment and evaluation.

Professional Socialisation, or learning to become a member of professional communities is a critical dimension of PBE. This involves students learning the standards, languages, practices, behaviours, ethics and cultures of the various communities of practice in their professions and workplaces and gaining a professional identity.

CSU Degrees and Graduate Capabilities

CSU Degrees aim to prepare graduates with the commitments and capabilities required to be citizens and members of professions or disciplines, in local and global contexts. These commitments and capabilities include: support for inclusiveness and social justice, lifelong and life-wide learning, cultural competence, professional identity and the discipline-specific capacities required to enact the roles and expectations of their chosen profession or discipline. These capabilities enable graduates to pursue yindyamarra winhanga-nha - translated from the Wiradjuri language as "the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in".

Professional and Practice-Based Education Pedagogies

In educating students for practice and for global citizenship PBE courses adopt a range of pedagogies or teaching and learning strategies within an overall journey of professional socialisation.

Pedagogies are strategies: they contain dimensions of purpose and action.

- **PURPOSE**
  PBE provides learning experiences and activities that prepare students for the practice roles and identity of their intended profession or occupation.

- **ACTION**
  PBE learning and teaching activities ideally mirror and reinforce the practices and purposes of professional and occupational practice.

**Professional Practice:**

refers to the activities, norms, standards and cultural practices of a profession. Professional practice is both a general social phenomenon, being the shared practices across professions that are socio-culturally, historically constructed by the societies in which professions practise, and the particular activities, expected behaviours and capabilities of members of given professions (Higgs, in press).
Practice-Based Education Pedagogies

**Imagining, exploring and understanding practice**
This includes having a vision and understanding of the values and ethics of the occupation or profession, the moral, cultural and relational aspects of practice, the contexts of practice, and practice standards.

**Experiencing actual workplace and simulated practice**
This includes experiencing and learning about ways of being in and embodying practice, developing resilience and coping strategies and trialling practice strategies in real and protected settings. Such learning can be located in actual, virtual, hypothetical and simulated practice contexts and includes participating in actual practice roles with full practice responsibilities and consequences, practising under supervision and engaging in simulations of practice.

**Developing practice knowledge**
This includes learning to understand and value different forms of knowledge for practice and how to use them in practice, as well as developing the capacity to create knowledge through research, theorisation and practice.

**Developing critical and decision-making capabilities**
This includes developing professional decision-making abilities, critical, creative and reflective thinking skills, the capacity for critical self-appraisal and development, and agency to change/improve practice.

**Integrating learning (about and into practice)**
This includes the capacity to integrate learning from multiple sources and experiences in order to appreciate the holistic complexity of practice, integrating theory and practice-based knowledge into practice and using this understanding to perform practice critically, competently and professionally.

**Developing and owning a practice approach and identity**
This includes making decisions about preferred models and approaches for personal practice encompassing elements such as empathy, inclusiveness, social justice, cultural competencies, literacies, ethical courage, and practice identity.

**Learning in communities of practice**
This refers to learning to work within the culture and standards that are inherent in teamwork, communities and systems, and developing capabilities of leadership, collaboration, communication, and negotiation as well as professional dispositions of empathy, respect, integrity.

**Self-directed and transformative learning for practice**
This refers to learners independently pursuing learning goals and transforming their capabilities in a range of practice, academic and personal learning spaces.

*Examples of learning and teaching activities that can be used in PBE include:*
- peer learning, role plays, small group learning, case studies, distance learning using mobile devices, practical classes, laboratories, residential, simulated activities, lectures, tutorials, assignments, volunteering, community engagement, teaching and mentoring others, action learning, service learning, workplace visits, workplace learning, online learning, self-directed learning, self-reflection, open education resources, YouTube, flipped classrooms, professional conferences, assessment and feedback.*
Practice-Based Education

Graduate Learning Outcomes:

Professional/Discipline Knowledge
Possess the knowledge and understanding of the discipline and the nature of professionalism required for the given profession or discipline in contemporary societies.

P1.1 Possess discipline-specific knowledge required for a beginning practitioner or professional
P1.2 Understand the nature of professionalism in contemporary societies
P1.3 Understand the ethical and legal framework for assessing professional conduct

Professional/Discipline Skills
Demonstrate discipline-specific technical capabilities and self-appraisal required for a beginning practitioner or professional.

P2.1 Demonstrate discipline-specific technical capabilities required for a beginning practitioner or professional
P2.2 Report and articulate the basis for professional decisions and actions
P2.3 Effectively plan and manage workloads
P2.4 Critically appraise the discipline and its practice
P2.5 Critically analyse self in relation to others and established norms (for example professional codes of conduct, workplace expectations) to inform their practice in teams and in partnership with other people

Application of Professional/Discipline Knowledge & Skills
Exercise professionalism, initiative and judgement in decision making, actions and evaluation in professional practice at the level of a beginning practitioner or professional.

P3.1 Practise effectively as an emerging professional through teamwork, collegial practice, conflict management and the adoption of appropriate professional conventions
P3.2 Understand and appropriately respond to professional, ethical, cultural and personal boundaries in work
P3.3 Use reflection, self-evaluation and self-improvement to demonstrate commitment, and ability to undertake life-long learning and judgement
P3.4 Pursue quality conduct in professional practice, research and scholarship in consideration of practice ethics and standards
P3.5 Demonstrate professionalism in implementing professional/ discipline role

PBE Learning Environments
PBE courses promote students’ professional development by generating a respectful and collaborative culture that values agency in learning and teaching. PBE occurs in many different spaces that are personal and social, virtual and physical, formal and informal learning spaces. Students in professional education courses develop their abilities to become local/global citizens, future-focused scholars and members of disciplines or professions. This involves them learning in the university community but also in professional, workplace and community of practice contexts with practitioners and members of local and global communities. Students’ engagement with local, global and cross-cultural communities is encouraged in keeping with CSU’s commitment to working For the Public Good and the development of holistic, far-sighted people who help their communities grow and flourish.

Workplace Learning
Workplace learning (WPL) refers to a set of teaching and learning strategies that allow students to experience their professional roles and responsibilities in actual or created professional workplaces. WPL is a key pedagogy in professional education courses. Key features of WPL include each of the following:

- students experience their professional roles with clear links to authentic work contexts
- students engage with client issues
- students develop capabilities to work in their professional roles after graduation
- students experience and review the impact and consequences of their roles and activities in relation to clients
- students participate in the evaluation of their professional work roles
- learning activities are relevant to the content, requirements and purpose of the course in preparing students for their professional practice
- opportunities for preparation and debriefing of the WPL experiences are incorporated in the learning and teaching strategies of the course
- WPL is a dynamic collaborative partnership involving staff, students and industry partners of the University.

WPL engages students in experiencing the roles and practices of their future professions in actual and created workplaces. WPL strategies can include:

- Direct engagement in work roles in workplaces via placements, practicums, internships, professional practice and university practice clinics. This work may or may not be under the supervision of a member of the profession, industry or discipline
- Learning activities that engage students in work roles and experiences including: work on university farms and wineries, radio stations, acting in theatres, advertising services to clients
- Courses or subjects in which students work in a simulated “university company or entity” that provides professional services to clients (e.g. engineering courses)
- Paid employment in the work role as a required part of the course and allowing for learning of the role (e.g. policing)
- Voluntary/optimal workplace learning experiences that are encouraged as part of the course
- Community-based learning experiences and project work that help students prepare for their graduate roles
- Learning experiences where students participate in practice (e.g. school teaching) with actual clients by bringing the workplace into physical or virtual classrooms.

References and Bibliography


Referencing this document: