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Embedding academic literacies at the undergraduate program level in CAP: A proposal for implementation in 2021

ANU Academic Skills

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Embedded Academic Skills teaching in CAP

One of the key ways Academic Skills support students' learning development is through embedded discipline teaching in cooperation with College academics. Embedded teaching provides us with the opportunity to tailor our core curriculum to the particular disciplinary context and assessment task. This teaching is highly collaborative – the Learning Adviser develops the workshop or tutorial in consultation with the course convener/lecturer, and where possible, draws on samples of past students' work. Working with conveners helps ensure that we are providing students with advice consistent with the course teaching and materials. In addition, we often produce handouts and resources, including videos, on other topics we are unable to cover in the session for students to review in their own time and at their own pace.

Over the years, Academic Skills has been working with individual course conveners in the College of Asia and the Pacific (CAP) to deliver one-off workshops on a range of topics – from time management, referencing, researching and reading effectively, to essay writing and writing critical reviews. Often, we are invited back to deliver a similar, though usually revised and improved workshop the following year if the same convener delivers the course. If not, we rely on that lecturer to recommend that the new course convener contact us.

In recent years, a number of course conveners in CAP (as well as CASS and CBE) have worked more closely with us to embed academic literacy support within their courses. In doing so, they participated in a Teaching Enhancement Grant (TEG) supported project to analyse the effectiveness of our academic literacies framework (see Appendix A), as well as students' attitudes towards our teaching and learning activities (TLAs). This deeper level of embedding has yielded positive responses from staff and students alike. Indeed, key findings from the embedded teaching project report include:

- Staff new to Academic Skills services particularly valued the academic literacies framework. The framework helped academics and tutors to identify the skills development needs of their students.
- Both staff and students highly valued the embedded teaching and the TLAs.
- Areas for improvement include sustained support and contact with academics throughout the semester.

While the project confirmed the value of working with our academic colleagues to embed study and writing skills within their courses, it also highlighted the limitation of not having a systematic approach to embedding at the program level. Some students, for example, reported feeling disengaged when they had to sit through another Academic Skills essay writing workshop. In a time of reduced resources and increasing teaching loads, it is important that we minimise duplication whilst ensuring that students continue to get the support they need, and access to excellent learning experiences.

At the CAP Education Committee meeting in September, Academic Skills and Committee members agreed to explore how we could work together to fully integrate our services to support CAP students and to ensure a more consistent and holistic approach to embedding. This report, the first of two, outlines a proposal to do this at the CAP Undergraduate program level. A second report in early 2021 will explore how embedding could be implemented at the Masters program level.

As the first step in this exploration, we examined our level of embedding within compulsory (as well as non-compulsory) CAP UG programs, and then mapped assessments across all of the compulsory courses only. This report thus reveals the varied nature of our teaching into these

courses. It identifies the range of writing genres students are required to produce and proposes workshops that could be delivered in specific courses, and resources to embed in course Wattle sites. The report also makes recommendations for improving the visibility of Academic Skills resources and services including individual appointments in the course Wattle sites.

Academic Skills teaching in CAP UG courses – a varied history

Our level of embedding within CAP undergraduate compulsory and non-compulsory courses has varied over the past seven years. Table 1 shows that in 2020, Academic Skills taught into five out of the ten compulsory undergraduate courses in CAP. Three of these courses are in the Bachelor of International Studies (STST1001, STST2001 and STST3002), and two in the Bachelor of Asian Studies (ASIA1025 and ASIA1030). Of the five workshops, four were on essay writing. For one of the courses, ASIA1030, Academic Skills delivered a total of nine workshops. In that course, we covered topics including essay writing, developing a research question and presentations. In one out of the five core courses (a third year course) we provided a general introduction to Academic Skills services. There was one compulsory course that we taught into in recent years that we did not teach into this year (STST1003). In terms of the non-compulsory CAP undergraduate courses, we taught into four in 2020 (ASIA2026, ASIA2040, DIPL2000 and INTRO2010). Three of these workshops we taught into for the first time.

The reason for this variation in our teaching into these courses is mostly that teaching events are either the result of direct requests from new course conveners, or the outcome of an established relationship between the academic staff and Academic Skills. This means that even if we teach into a course in one year, we may not be back to teach the next cohort of students the following year if the course convener changes. Given the varied nature of our teaching into these courses, it would be useful to consider developing a more systematic approach to supporting CAP UG students. Integration, we argue, would better serve lecturers and students.

Table 1: CAP undergraduate embedding

CAP UG embedding				
Mapping status	Course	No. of AS workshops in 2020	No. of AS workshops 2014-2019	Workshop topics
Core	STST1001 Introduction to International Security Studies	1	4	Essay writing
Core	STST1003 Coping with Crisis: The Practice of International Security	0	2	Time mgmt and critical reviews
Core	STST2001 Concepts of Security in the Asia-Pacific	1	1	Essay writing
Core	STST3002 Australia's Security in the Asian Century	1	0	AS Services
Core	ASIA1025 Asia and the Pacific: Power, diversity and change	1	1	Essay writing
Core	ASIA1030 Asia and the Pacific in Motion	9	14	Essay writing, developing a research question, presentations
Core	PASI1011 - Pacific Encounters: An introduction to Pacific Studies	0	0	
Core	PASI1012 - Pacific Worlds: critical inquiry in Oceania	0	0	
Core	PASI2001/PASI6001 - Pacific Studies in a Globalising World	0	2	Essay writing
Core	PASI3001 - The Contemporary Pacific: Society, Politics and Development	0	0	
Other	ASIA1021	0	1	Essay writing
Other	ASIA2016	0	2	Academic integrity and essay writing
Other	ASIA2026	1	0	Essay writing
Other	ASIA2040	2	5	Essay writing
Other	ASIA2110	0	6	Research proposals, reflective writing, presentations
Other	ASIA2307	0	3	Academic integrity and essay writing
Other	ASIA3014	0	4	Academic integrity and essay writing
Other	ASIA3029	0	4	Academic integrity, referencing and essay writing
Other	DIPL2000	1	0	AS Services
Other	INTR2010	1	0	AS Services

Towards a more systematic and integrated approach

In order to propose a more systematic and integrated approach to embedding, we also mapped out the different types of assessments that CAP undergraduate students are required to produce in the compulsory courses, the instructions provided, and how course conveners and lecturers provided links to Academic Skills resources and services. We were able to do this mapping as we were granted administrative access to all CAP Wattle sites in October.

Diversity of assessments (Appendix B)

All of the 2020 assessments for the compulsory CAP undergraduate courses require students to develop a complex set of academic and information literacies – from foundational research and critical analysis skills to developing writing skills in a number of different genres. Of the 17 different assessments, essays, take-home exams and tutorial presentations (individual and group) are the

most common types of assessments in the first to third year level compulsory courses. Some assessments are similar, for example, analysis task, journal article analysis, critical summaries and reading responses. In addition, a number of courses require students to learn a new writing genre not asked of in other compulsory courses such as op eds, short video/art presentation, in-class test, research reports and policy briefs. And finally, seven courses also allocate between 10-15 marks for tutorial participation and chief discussions. This wide range of written and communication task assessments means there is ample opportunity to embed academic literacies to help prepare students succeed in these tasks.

As students progress from their first year compulsory course to second and third year level courses in two of the Bachelor programs (International Security Studies, and Pacific Studies), they are required to develop more advanced 'research' essays and are introduced to reflective learning and writing and other writing genres like the policy brief (Bachelor of Pacific Studies). Such progression can allow Academic Skills to provide guidance on how to achieve these higher level skills.

Referencing requirements

Another point to note is that a number of compulsory courses allow students to choose their own referencing style, only requiring students to be 'consistent' – even as early as first year courses. Other courses specify Chicago or allow a choice between Harvard and Chicago. Referencing is therefore one area where CAP could consider reducing choice down to two styles, particularly for first years. This would reduce confusion among students new to particular styles and enable Academic Skills to better support students in learning how to reference for their courses.

Links to Academic Skills resources and support

Links to Academic Skills resources and services varied due to how course conveners chose to present their course information. Two courses in Asian Studies used coursebooks to provide information on weekly topics, course assessments and Academic Skills linked resources. In contrast, other compulsory courses in other undergraduate programs broke their course Wattle sites up into sections. These sections comprise of a general section, followed by a section on assessments and separate sections for each week's topic. Under the general or assessment sections, these course conveners provided their students with assessment guidelines in CAP. It is within this document that students are encouraged to contact AS for assistance with essay writing.

Many course conveners go beyond the CAP general guidelines to provide more task specific writing instructions, and it is sometimes within these documents that further links are made to Academic Skills' resources (such as on referencing) and website. One course convener, for example, adapted Academic Skills' report writing resource.

A number of course conveners promote Academic Skills resources and services on their course Wattle pages. For example, one course convener provided a clear link to our PDF essay writing booklet. In another course, the course convener advised students in week one: 'Do check it out: Academic Skills and Learning Centre @ ANU'. The same lecturer provided a link to the AS referencing website, and posted the presentation slides to a tailored essay writing workshop we delivered in a previous year.

Variation in the way Academic Skills resources and services are prominently and not so prominently promoted provides opportunities to consider how best to improve visibility of some of our key resources and services for students. These resources and services include: our online study skills, writing and assessment resources and handouts; Peer Writer drop-in services; booked individual appointments with a Writing Coach (PhD trained students) or Learning Adviser; other Academic Skills self-enrolled learning sites (Turnitin Practice and Academic Integrity sites), and

programs such as our English conversation groups. Developing a more consistent approach across the courses to promoting Academic Skills resources and services would greatly benefit students and academic staff.

Recommendations

While Academic Skills has built a strong relationship with a number of academic staff in CAP to embed academic literacies support in courses, we recommend strengthening the relationship in the following ways to ensure a more consistent, holistic approach at the program level:

1. Academic Skills could participate in College and or School induction programs during O Week.
 - We could provide a 5-minute overview of our services or deliver a one-hour session on 'adjusting and transitioning successfully to your studies' – a mixture of understanding academic culture and expectations at ANU, time management and top tips for preparing for studies and learning online.
2. Work with CAP and the different Schools to promote key Academic Skills O Week workshops.
 - Given the rollout of the Epigeum Academic Integrity modules (to be compulsory in Semester 2), and the new Academic Integrity Rule coming into force in Semester 2, it is important to encourage students to attend the following workshops:
 - i. Academic Integrity (co-developed with Academic Standards & Quality Office)
 - ii. Referencing (co-taught with ANU Library)
 - iii. Using sources.
 - Working with CAP will ensure that key workshops do not clash with College/School inductions and major events.
3. Provide in-class workshops on essay writing basics and advanced essay writing.
 - Given that essays continue to be the most common form of assessment across the compulsory courses at the different levels, Academic Skills should continue to provide targeted in-class workshops, but with a key difference. For example, if AS continues to teach 'essay writing' in Semester 1 in ASIA1025, in Semester 2, we will focus on developing on these skills in ASIA1030 – notably writing better introductions, topic sentences and stronger paragraph developments. We could discuss requirements of a 'research' essay as opposed to an 'essay' in their first semester of study, and provide tips for designing focused research questions.
 - We could collaborate with CAP academic staff to develop a more 'advanced essay writing' workshop (distinguishing it from 'essay writing basics') for second level compulsory courses such as STST2001.
4. Deliver optional editing workshop outside of class time.
 - We could pilot running an editing workshop for students wishing to develop skills to improve the overall quality of their work, drawing on samples of HD student essays in the three programs. These workshops would target self-motivated students who feel frustrated that they haven't been able to shift their grades to the next level – for example, credit to distinction and distinction to high distinction.
5. Provide workshops on unfamiliar genres
 - In-class time could be spent covering a major piece of assessment not so familiar to students such as reflective essays and reports, research reports and briefs. Academic Skills would be happy to work with academic staff to develop and deliver a tailored workshop to assist students successfully complete the assessment.
6. Develop and embed additional resources in course Wattle sites

- Videos and handouts on a range of skills topics could be created/adapted for CAP students on reading, taking notes, writing annotations and critical reviews, and reflective writing.
 - Courses could also embed engaging library videos on a range of topics such as evaluating sources.
7. Instead of allowing students to use any referencing style, offer students the choice of Harvard (in-text) or Chicago (footnotes).
- Academic Skills could create resources focusing on helping students to reference appropriately and accurately using these two referencing styles.
8. Courses that don't use coursebooks could choose to have a Wattle course section devoted to Academic Skills resources and services
- Under this section, a brief description of our service could be provided, emphasising:
 - Our 1-1 appointments for advice on assessments and other study issues such as time management. It is best to encourage students to use the 15 minute drop-in face-to-face service and 30-minute booked Zoom appointments to get feedback on their essay plan/outline. Students with drafts they wish us to review and provide written or Zoom feedback on can book an online appointment with a Learning Adviser.
 - Our online resources. Here we could provide links to resources including videos on writing and assessments, and referencing.
 - The Turnitin Practice site and the Academic Integrity site (where the Epigeum AI modules and quizzes are available)
 - Any handouts and presentation slides produced specifically for the course could also be housed under the AS section, or if deemed more appropriate, under the 'assessment' section or relevant week.

Appendix A: Academic literacies framework



A. Develop academic cultural competency

- **A1. Recognise differences:**
Understand what is different from previous educational experiences and what are the expectations at ANU
- **A2. Adapt to new contexts:**
Adapt from previous experiences to new expectations
- **A3. Collaborate with others:**
Work in groups, participate in tutorials/seminars
- **A4. Develop fluency in English:**
Develop confidence in English by practicing speaking, listening, reading and writing



B. Develop strategic self management

- **B1. Identify motivations:**
Recognise what motivates you to study
- **B2. Set goals:**
Look at the big picture and identify and map out your goals
- **B3. Break down tasks:**
Take a task and break it down into smaller achievable parts
- **B4. Prioritise tasks:**
Identify priorities and work out what order to complete tasks.
- **B5. Develop a routine:**
Identify a weekly routine/pattern and develop good study habits



C. Engage in academic activities with integrity

- **C1. Learn and understand the principles:**
Know and understand what the academic integrity principles and rules are at ANU
- **C2. Acknowledge others' ideas:**
Cite correctly according to the style and ensure that others' ideas are always acknowledged
- **C3. Distinguish ideas from others:**
Use summarising, paraphrasing and quoting correctly to incorporate evidence into work



D. Engage critically with information

- **D1. Find appropriate sources:**
Know how to use search engines and library resources to find sources
- **D2. Evaluate sources:**
Critically analyse sources to identify whether they are appropriate for the purpose
- **D3. Read strategically:**
Use strategies to manage the reading and read critically and with a purpose
- **D4. Manage information:**
Take active notes and organise information systematically
- **D5. Synthesise information:**
Understand how information fits together



E. Communicate as a scholar

- **E1. Use genre-appropriate argumentation:**
Argumentation that is appropriate for the discipline and the context - be it oral or written
- **E2. Develop a suitable structure:**
Structure of the piece is logical, clear and supports central idea
- **E3. Develop authorial voice:**
Communication is clear and stylistically appropriate

Appendix B: Types of assessments

Bachelor program	Courses	Assessment type																		
		Essay	Reflective papers/report	Journal article analysis	Conceptual framework analysis	Analysis task	Reading responses	Critical summary	Policy brief	Research proposal	Research report	Op ed	Tutorial presentation	Tutorial participation	Online discussion forum	In-class test	Short video, art presentation	Take-home exam		
Bachelor International Security Studies	STST1001 Introduction to International Security Studies			1000 words 20%	1000 words 20%							5 minutes 10%	10%					2500 words 50%		
	STST1003 Coping with Crisis: The Practice of International Security	Essay 1) 1500 words 20% Essay 2) 2500 words 40%																2000 words 30%		
	STST2001 Concepts of Security in the Asia-Pacific	Research essay 40%				20%												10%	30%	
	STST3002 Australia's Security in the Asian Century	Research essay 30%					3 (300-500 words each) 10%					800 words 20%						10%	30%	
Bachelor of Asian Studies	ASIA1025 Asia and the Pacific: Power, diversity and change	Essay stage 1: a proposal 5% and essay stage 2: 1500-2000 word essay 20% based on stage 1																tutorial assessment 15%	35%	
	ASIA1030 Asia and the Pacific in Motion	Essay 1) 1200 words 20%, question given essay 2) 2000 word research essay on topic of student's choice 30%																Group presentation in tutorial 10%	10%	30%
Bachelor of Pacific Studies	PASI1011 - Pacific Encounters: An introduction to Pacific Studies	2000 word research essay 30%	1000 words 10% on knowledge and experience of the Pacific															15%	10%	30%
	PASI1012 - Pacific Worlds: critical inquiry in Oceania	Essay 1) 800-1000 words 25%, essay 2) 800-1000 words																15% and topic outline 15%	10%	10%
	PASI2001/PASI6001 - Pacific Studies in a Globalising World	Key papers analytical essay 1500 words 25%	Final reflective report 1500 words 30%															Group research and presentation 15%	leading tutorial discussions 10%	10 submission s 20%
	PASI3001 - The Contemporary Pacific: Society, Politics and Development									1200 words 25%	1000 words 15%	Builds on proposal 3000 words 40%		Mock Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting 10%				10%		