



**Building career awareness and skills throughout the health sciences degree.**

*Louise A. Lexis<sup>1</sup> Jason Brown<sup>2</sup>, Caroline Taylor, Jarrod Church, Jency Thomas, Chris van der Poel, and Brianna L. Julien<sup>1</sup>,*

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Microbiology, Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology, School of Agriculture, Biomedicine and Environment, La Trobe University, VIC 3086, Australia.*

<sup>2</sup>*Career Ahead, Suite 120, 3 Male Street, Brighton, VIC 3186, Australia.*

Governments and communities expect higher education institutions to produce career ready graduates that are equipped for the challenges of the 21st century [1]. The non-vocational Bachelor of Health Sciences (BHS) course at La Trobe University prepares graduates for a wide range of careers in science, health, and other fields however, students are often unaware of the breadth of career opportunities and how to achieve their career goals. To address this gap, we developed and implemented a program that was embedded into the first year of the BHS and the human biosciences major in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year.

The program is thematically structured and developmentally scaffolded across the BHS curricula and includes learner centered modules, support resources, and learning portfolios, all designed and created by our team. First year comprises a foundational *Introduction to careers and employability*; 2<sup>nd</sup> Year extends to *Researching your future career* and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year focuses on the critical area of *Building your professional connectedness and articulation of employability strengths*. Six My Career modules sit within core/major subjects (Fig 1) and are integrated with our La Trobe University’s Career Ready Advantage

Award. Each module is worth 10% of the subject grade. Learner-centered assessment tasks provide experiential learning and reflective practice is incorporated through learning portfolios. All BHS students experience the 1<sup>st</sup> Year modules (300-400/year) and students in the human biosciences major experience the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year modules (500-600/year). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

subjects that house the My Career modules are also taken by students studying human nutrition, dietetics, and biomedicine. From 2017-21 we have taught 32 modules to over 1700 students. We systematically evaluated the student experience and student performance, and collectively, findings indicate that students developed their career awareness and career management skills. We share an example of an innovative career development learning program that successfully integrated curricula into the BHS, supporting student learning regarding how to proactively navigate the world of work and self-manage the career building process.

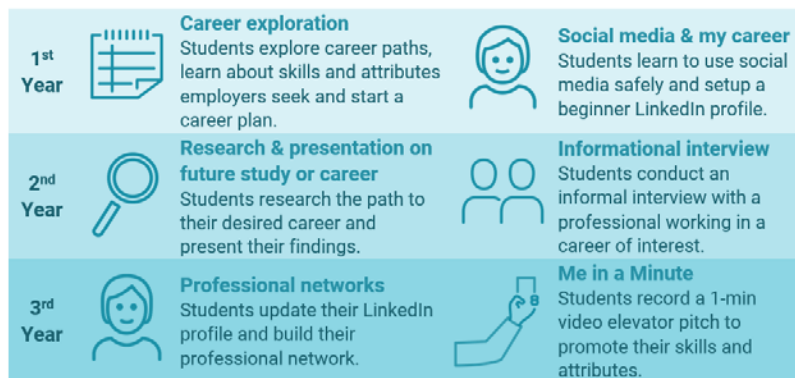


Fig 1. Overview of the My Career curriculum  
Modules comprise: Learning Management Site topic with forum; student guide including weekly schedule and marking rubric; ePortfolio; LinkedIn Learning courses; and reflections.

1. Oliver, B., *Redefining graduate employability and work-integrated learning: Proposals for effective higher education in disrupted economies*. J Teach Learn Grad Employab, 2015. 6(1): p. 56.

