



STUDENT LIFE

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

WHITE PAPER
a strategy for undergraduate student life

August 2019

Prepared by Chancellery Academic



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To realise the University's ambitions to be a connected community of scholarship, we are making a series of strong commitments to our undergraduate students.

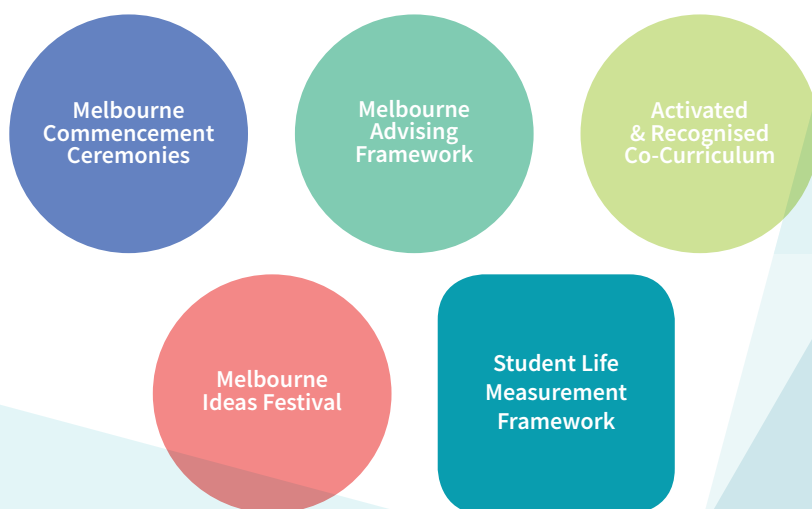
These are that students will:

- Be assisted and guided through their transition to University, setting them up for academic and personal success
- Develop a sense of connection to their peers and the University, finding a community to which they can belong
- Have access to a network of advisors and mentors to support them with personalised advice that ensures they make the best possible use of their study and engagement opportunities
- Have excellent and challenging teaching and learning experiences that lead to intellectual development and personal growth
- Connect with fellow students and staff in responding to the needs of the wider local and global community through volunteering, service, and social entrepreneurship
- Recognise and value their individual and group achievements over the course of their degree.

Six Signature Initiatives will create the platform for delivering these commitments in the first phase, and will be central to the University's new program of work on Student Life. Significant new investment will underpin the Signature Initiatives, which will deliver:

- New **Melbourne Commencement Ceremonies** that recognise first-year student achievement, celebrate their admission to our community and establish mutual expectations and commitments (page 12)
- First-year **Discovery subjects** that capture student excitement about their degree to explore their discipline(s) and build skills that will help them succeed at University (page 13)
- A new **Melbourne Ideas Festival** to assist students in transitioning to the University and understanding what the University offers (page 13)
- A program of **academic advice and peer mentoring** that students can draw on to receive personalised advice and help them access all the opportunities and services available (page 14)
- A rich, **activated and recognised co-curriculum** or 'social c.v.' that builds skills and experience recognised by the community and by employers and provides a platform for students to engage with a range of opportunities to give back to the community and to shape the world they will enter as graduates (page 19)
- **Next Generation Capstone** subjects within students' majors that establish their mastery of their discipline and help equip them for further study, research or the workforce (page 19).

Implementation in 2020



Implementation in 2021

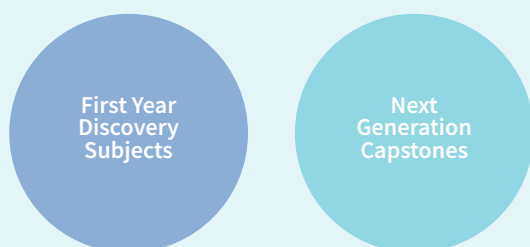


Figure 1. Six Signature Initiatives and one key enabling project (the student life measurement framework)

These signature undergraduate initiatives are an integrated suite designed to: improve transition to the University and establish the foundations for effective study; assist and guide students in making curricular and co-curricular choices for their future; improve their sense of belonging and affiliation with the University community; and boost students' sense of accomplishment.

The initiatives represent varying scopes, scales of change and volumes of investment. Most will be available to incoming undergraduate students in 2020. Two initiatives – the Discovery subjects and Next Generation Capstones – will require significant consultation with curriculum leaders across the University to design and implement, and are therefore not likely to launch to students until 2021.

Underpinning this work will be a set of enabling projects, including development of the new Student Life measurement framework, that will provide, for the first time, leading indicators of student experience. These will allow us to evaluate progress towards our goal of leading the sector in measures of the student experience, as well as the success of the Signature Initiatives. First among these indicators will be measures of participation that tell us how well we are engaging the new generation of students in a wide range of key opportunities. The new student engagement framework will also support the achievement of the initiatives, as will development of the Student Life App and other digital tools.

The Student Life program within the Provost portfolio will coordinate Signature Initiative implementation and undertake additional strategic work, including: reviewing our approach to student wellbeing services, delivering an uplift in the transactional and administrative service experience, and providing ongoing management of the overall strategic direction for Student Life at the University. We will also be reviewing the graduate student experience and shaping a strategic direction.

Achieving this ambitious agenda will require a whole-of-University effort to reshape the relationship between the University and our students, drawing us closer to meeting our ambition to be a well-connected community of scholarship.

NEW MELBOURNE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The University of Melbourne aspires to be a place where both students and staff are connected in a community of scholarship dedicated to understanding, challenging and sharing knowledge through open inquiry. Students who join the University will have excellent teaching and learning experiences, including opportunities to contribute to the wider society in addressing pressing problems and seizing new opportunities. Our rich learning environment aims to foster excitement about knowledge and discovery, creating an intellectual community to which students will belong for a lifetime.

In line with this aspiration, we are making a series of commitments to deepen the relationship of the University with its undergraduate students.

These are that students of the University will:

- Be assisted and guided through their transition to University, setting them up for academic and personal success
- Develop a sense of connection to their peers and the University, finding a community to which they can belong
- Have access to a network of advisors and mentors to support them with personalised advice that ensures they make the best possible use of their study and engagement opportunities
- Have excellent and challenging teaching and learning experiences that lead to intellectual development and personal growth

- Connect with fellow students and staff in responding to the needs of the wider local and global community through volunteering, service, and social entrepreneurship
- Recognise and value their individual and group achievements over the course of their degree.

To deliver on these commitments will mean changes in how the University operates, requiring us to:

- Become more student-centric, by expanding our student engagement work and embracing student co-creation
- Establish new governance arrangements that enable a sustained focus on enhanced student life
- Develop new roles with key responsibilities for aspects of both student life and the commitments described above
- Create a new measurement and indicators framework to track key drivers of the student experience and to measure success
- Deploy additional academic and professional staff resources to meet these commitments.

During 2019 the University is also having a broader conversation about its vision, purpose, and values to develop Strategy2030. Part of that strategy discussion is consideration of what it means to place students at the heart of the University. Strategy2030 will frame the work presented in this paper and also consider important broader questions.





A FOCUS ON STUDENT LIFE

In March 2019, the University released the *Belonging to Melbourne Green Paper* (Green Paper) identifying several emerging issues with the current student experience. Uniformly, staff and students have welcomed attention to the issues affecting students and acknowledged the ways in which the expectations and experiences of our students have changed in recent years. This enthusiasm is a strong endorsement of the issues identified and demonstrates the willingness of the University community to work towards a new vision for the student experience.

The Green Paper focused on a set of issues that were connected to themes of belonging and were underpinned by some perennial and emerging concerns for students. Feedback on the Green Paper endorsed the focus described above, but also drew attention to other areas or issues. Common suggestions in written feedback from staff and students, reaching beyond the ideas explored in the Green Paper, were the need to:

- Find new ways for undergraduate students to be connected with the University's academic community
- Consider the ways in which the structure of the Melbourne curriculum affects the student experience of the University
- Shift the perception of some students that attendance is 'optional', an orientation which significantly limits their ability to connect with student life and get the most from their studies
- Develop new ways to blend digital and other innovative tools to enhance the engagement of students
- Identify and implement new forms of support for at-risk students and student groups with specific needs.

When invited at faculty and school forums to propose ideas for improving the student experience, staff suggested (in addition to the ideas in the Green Paper) that we provide more social spaces and opportunities for students to meet each other in and around the academic workplace, significantly improve administrative support, and collaborate more with students to understand what they need and allow them to lead.

This feedback supports work already underway, such as the creation of the New Student Precinct, a project that has included many students in its co-creation; the delivery of significantly increased capacity in student accommodation; and efforts to increase study spaces for students on campus. It also recognises the numerous factors that constitute the student experience, and urges the University to consider an ongoing, comprehensive response that will take sustained effort and resource allocation in a number of areas requiring high-level strategic leadership.

This comprehensive response will begin with the Signature Initiatives set out in this paper, as well as our existing projects, and include those delivering a significant uplift in the transactional and administrative experiences of our students. From September 2019, we will also begin a project to identify areas for improvement in the graduate student experience and start planning a second phase of work, part of which will address new issues raised through the consultation process.

A number of staff and students raised concerns about student wellbeing, aware that this is a growing issue. This echoed the Green Paper's acknowledgement that one in four of our students experience psychological distress.

The current Signature Initiatives do not include a direct intervention for student wellbeing, however as a suite they seek to increase students' sense of belonging and participation with the University community, which we believe will have positive effects on wellbeing (Baik et al., 2016). Further work will be undertaken to review the University's approach to student wellbeing and to develop an explicit framework for policy and practice. The new mentoring and advising approach will provide a valuable platform from which this next set of wellbeing initiatives can be built.

The new Deputy Vice-Chancellor Student Life role has been established specifically to support strategic leadership and oversight of our continuing and expanding efforts to improve Student Life across these many domains. This position, within the Provost's group, will be responsible for undertaking ongoing strategy development for Student Life, along with managing the implementation of the Signature Initiatives and coordinating these ongoing programs as appropriate. The role will be supported by a University-wide governance structure that supports faculty and school priorities.

This establishment of roles and governance structures for Student Life will naturally require close ties with, and representation from, faculties and schools. Academic Divisions will be asked to consider their management structures at the divisional level. Leaders from each division will be represented on a new Student Life Steering Committee, chaired by the DVC (Student Life) and supported by the key portfolio leaders in student affairs, along with student representatives drawn from both the elected representatives of UMSU and GSA and the broader student community through the proposed student engagement framework. This committee will have oversight and coordination responsibilities for Student Life at Melbourne, responsibility for delivering on the University's commitments, and for ensuring that a 'whole-of-experience' approach drives the University's work.

Underlying design principle: 'student-centricity'

Transforming the University's relationship with students requires that we embrace the principle of student-centricity for our key systems, processes, and virtual and physical spaces that significantly contribute to the student experience of the University. Doing so means seeking student input in design, creation, decision making and evaluation.

There are good examples of where this principle has already been employed. One example is the increasing use of human-centred design when reviewing or establishing new student services. Another is the new buildings on campus that have incorporated significant informal space for students and have subsequently seen strong uptake of these spaces – at Parkville, students crowd the Glyn Davis Building and the WEBS 1 building, and at Werribee, the foyer of the new learning and teaching building is similarly heavily populated.

These buildings are at the forefront of replacing spaces that many staff felt had been lost, and which were crucial for community-building, particularly where they allowed students in the same degree to meet and mingle. Staff feedback also identified the issue of the recent unintended creation of physical barriers between academic staff and students, sometimes through a lack of proximity between student spaces and staff spaces, and sometimes through the increased creation of swipe-card restricted, staff-only spaces. A University that is truly student-centric must make a commitment to reshaping physical spaces to become more welcoming, student-friendly, and allow both study and community uses.

Virtual spaces have also contributed to a lack of belonging often being fractured, inconsistent in style and difficult to navigate. This can reinforce the feeling that a student's relationship with the University is transactional. While there is no simple solution to this, the implementation of a single University customer relationship management (OneCRM) platform will provide important new infrastructure to create an increasingly seamless experience through personalised and timely communications and access to information, resources and systems. Governance arrangements should ensure that the student digital experience is central in the assessment, adoption, and deployment of any new system, giving priority to seamless, personalised and flexible delivery while also capturing and storing appropriate evaluation data.

To deliver this, the University must continue to invest in upgrading the key systems that underpin the student experience while also considering the delivery of that experience. Current projects in addition to the OneCRM implementation, including replacing the Learning Management System, and developing an upgraded student portal with improved mobile functionality, are an important part of this.

A new Student Life App is also in development, built to integrate with OneCRM. This App will support the Signature Initiatives proposed here as well as a range of other features designed to enhance students' sense of belonging. Students will be encouraged to download the App when they receive their offer of a place, and will find a personalised onboarding checklist to help them take their first steps in joining the University. The App will also provide a platform to discover and register for University events, including building their own orientation calendar, and to interact with their peer mentoring and advising groups (among other features).

Evidence-driven decisions: using better data

We know that a student's own conception of their experience exists within an 'educational interface' at the intersection between the student and the University and its practices (Kahu and Nelson, 2018). Beyond the virtual and physical classroom, a student's experiences of the University will be shaped by interactions with staff and other students, our facilities, the services provided, co-curricular activities, the systems and processes students must navigate, their perceptions of value, and many others. This makes it challenging to measure the student experience and assess our efforts at improving it.

At the national level, the focus is on large-scale, and regular but infrequent, quantitative surveys, including the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), a federal government initiative that all students are invited to participate in. The challenge with these surveys is that they are inherently lagging in nature, and lack specificity.

To address this issue and measure our success at improving the student experience, we will implement a new Student Life Measurement framework. This will be underpinned by an investment in data infrastructure, analysis, capacity and capability. With oversight from a new Student Data and Surveys Committee chaired by the DVC (Student Life), we will develop a set of data-driven leading indicators and a reporting framework based on a realtime Student Life Dashboard. In its initial phase, the dashboard will use a range of currently available data sets, incorporating more as they become available in various views, including at the division, degree and student segment levels.

To achieve this functionality, the Business Intelligence and Reporting (BIR) team will establish, as part of their broader 'data foundations program', the necessary technical infrastructure. The Student Life program will provide capacity within BIR to develop and implement the Student Life Dashboard.

The investment will also include a renewed program of quantitative and qualitative internal data collection instruments and instances. This renewed internal program will be underpinned by a sophisticated, multi-instrument, audience-segmented approach and provide important internal baselines for calibrating our leading indicator measures.

While global benchmarking in this area is difficult, through the Student Data and Surveys Committee we will seek to identify a small group of international peer institutions with whom we can share and compare data. This will enable us to establish a set of comparisons for benchmarking and to develop a sector leading approach.

Engaging students in design of their university experience

The challenge in the large and complex modern Australian university is to find ways to incorporate the views and experiences of our diverse student body in the multiple processes, systems and administration that create their everyday experience. We will devise a centrally-owned and supported framework for engaging students in the design of their experience. This will make it easier for students to be consulted and included.

The new student engagement framework will operate on the principle that as many of our students as possible should be partners in creation of the student experience, involved in decision making, taking responsibility for actions, and assisting with delivery. While the University has examples of projects or processes that have successfully embraced and delivered on this principle, these are more the exception than the rule.

We will build on these examples to develop a framework that encompasses multiple channels for student engagement. These will include ensuring all divisions convene a student divisional advisory group, increasing student representation in governance groups throughout the University's operating model (including appropriate training, support and recognition for participating students), and training students to participate as course reviewers, and as facilitators of student workshops. The student engagement framework will be part of the Student Life program, responsible for managing and advising different parts of the University on when to use, and how to best approach student co-creation and co-design work.





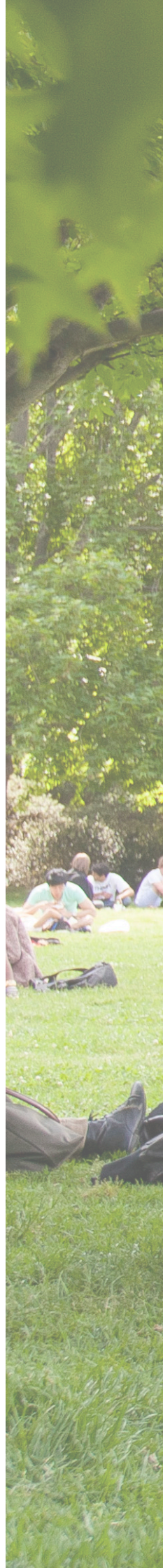
SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

Six Signature Initiatives are proposed for implementation and will form the foundation to realise the commitments listed on page 2. These initiatives have emerged from the Green Paper and subsequent consultation with around 1000 students and staff. Eighty-eight individuals or groups provided direct written submissions and 144 written feedback forms were completed in University Services, school and faculty forums attended by nearly 800 people. More than 200 students participated via initial and follow-up focus groups, co-creation workshops, discussions with student representatives and via written submissions from UMSU and GSA. A session with the Alumni Council was also held to seek alumni input.

Based on feedback from the consultation process, working groups, which comprised representatives from professional and academic staff from all divisions of the University, developed the strongly supported options proposed in the Green Paper. Student feedback through focus groups, student representatives and co-creation workshops was focused on these options and their development, and the results of this work informed selection and design of the Signature Initiatives.

Selection of the initiatives was also informed by contemporary research on the student experience which identified the importance of transition into university in ensuring a positive student experience (Gale and Parker, 2011; Taylor, Millwater and Nash, 2007). While the teaching and learning experience is central to the overall student experience (Thomas, 2012), the research also makes clear that a sense of belonging and wellbeing is an important predictor of student success, with several studies affirming that peer relationships are key to student retention (Naylor, Baik and Arkoudis, 2016). The delivery of personalised guidance and advice underpins this, with students preferring face-to-face settings over digital delivery for such advice (Kalamkarian and Karp, 2015).

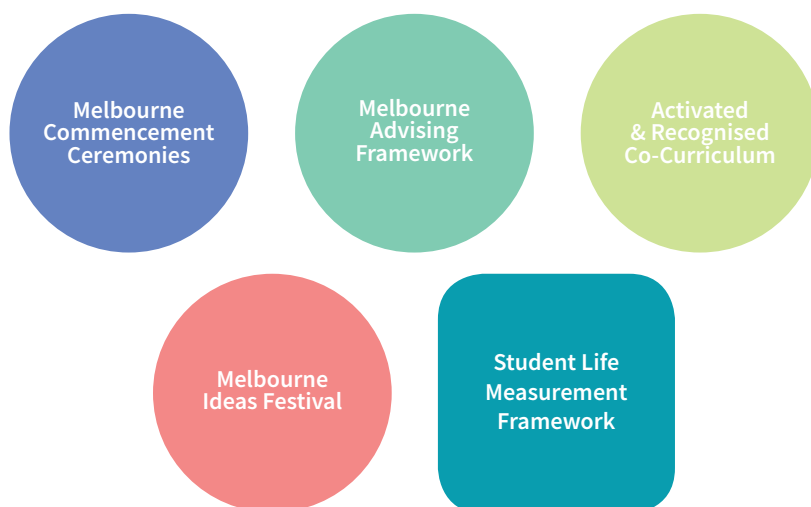
The intention is that the Signature Initiatives will create a strong foundation on which Academic Divisions can build experiences that are informed by local context and tailored as necessary to the needs of specific student cohorts. These initiatives begin to deliver the University's commitments, and must be seen in the wider context of the Student Life program. They will work together to provide an integrated strategy to address key issues identified in the Green Paper, focused on forging a new sense of belonging to the University for our students.





SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

Implementation in 2020



Implementation in 2021

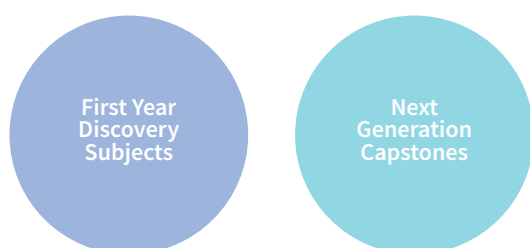


Figure 1. Six Signature Initiatives and one key enabling project (the student life measurement framework)

Joining the University

The first of our commitments is to assist and guide students during their transition to university, and setting them up for success both in class and in connecting with others on campus. Including our students in our scholarly community will begin at the very first opportunity – when they first receive an invitation to come to an Open Day or their offer of a place. We will reach out to new students and invite them to share the value of being part of a connected world of great researchers, inspiring teachers, and motivated fellow students. These invitations will spell out the value of being involved, both in the classroom and in the broader University community.

Several options were explored in the Green Paper to better support our students during their transition to university and enhance the role of first year in setting students up for a successful and meaningful university experience. Consultation indicated broad support for several of these which, once fully implemented, will work together to deliver on our commitment to provide a better transition for our commencing students.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE 1: Melbourne Commencement Ceremonies (2020)

Beginning in 2020, the University will hold commencement ceremonies for each incoming cohort of undergraduate students. Commencement ceremonies will welcome students, celebrate their achievement in being invited to join our community, and harness their excitement about the new opportunities available to them. The ceremonies will assist to establish cultural expectations and norms for both study and engagement, and create a shared sense of identity and connection for students with each other, their degree program, the University, and the traditional ownership and stories of the lands our campuses occupy.

Introducing commencement ceremonies was strongly supported by students who ranked this as one of their top three options. There was also strong support among staff within faculties with experience of conducting similar events, such as the 'Science Day 1' event and the Fine Arts and Music ceremony held during orientation.

While each commencement ceremony should have its own character, unique to the identity of the Academic Division to which students are being welcomed, some shared features of these ceremonies will create a consistent experience for all students. These features have emerged from work undertaken by the working group, the Green Paper consultation process, and a co-creation workshop held with students.

Each commencement ceremony will be held during the orientation period, preferably during the first week, and should contain:

- A formal welcome by University leadership, including a statement of our commitment to community building
- Inspirational speakers drawn from the University's staff, alumni or notable people. These TED-style talks will seek to engage students in the research life and culture of the University and excite them about the possible study pathways
- Activities featuring current or recently graduated students that articulate a sense of what student life is and why active participation is important to their academic success and personal wellbeing, along with hints and tips for success in their studies
- Welcome to Country and a discussion of place, tailored to each campus. Students might hear from local civic and Indigenous leaders, precinct partners and others from their degree program
- Opportunities to mingle with academic staff and other new students through an informal festival-style atmosphere including activities to help students connect with each other.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE 2: First Year Discovery Subjects (2021)

Students join the University to learn and explore intellectual options, anticipating years of exploring contemporary knowledge in one or several fields of study. We will meet their interest and enthusiasm with new flagship subjects in every New Generation degree that explore big ideas, cutting-edge research, and solve interdisciplinary, real-world problems. Designed as an introduction to the excitement of our degrees, these subjects will foreground our finest teaching and learning, use innovative pedagogical approaches, and explore the disciplinary knowledge within each division.

As students move through their Discovery subjects, they will be challenged with new ideas, new teaching and learning settings, and start to establish the foundations for their success at University. These subjects will, through their learning design, introduce students to the key skills necessary to succeed in their degree and establish the standards and expectations of their discipline. Centrally designed, high-quality learning resources will be available for divisions to deploy to support students in the development of some of these skills, and coordinators will be supported to ensure these design ambitions can be realised.

Discovery subjects will ideally be delivered intensively during or just after the orientation period. This mode of delivery will allow the first few weeks of University to be an immersive experience for new students, from which they emerge with an understanding of the norms and expectations of their new community and with strong

connections to other students and to their discipline. Where this intensive delivery mode is not possible, Discovery subjects will still aim to deliver early experiences that both integrate with other transition activities and support cohort formation.

Considerable consultation will be needed with Chancellery, Academic Divisions, pedagogical experts and learning designers to design and develop Discovery subjects of outstanding quality. In some cases, existing subjects may be suitable for modification into Discovery subjects. In other cases, Discovery subjects might be best built from scratch. Whether Discovery subjects might be accommodated in the curriculum by a reduction in the breadth component, or whether they are best positioned as a disciplinary component, is a matter for thorough analysis. As well, consideration will need to be given to how best to integrate Discovery subjects with transition activities. This detailed design work will commence in 2019 for delivery of new flagship Discovery subjects in 2021.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE 3: Melbourne Ideas Festival (2020): New approach to Orientation

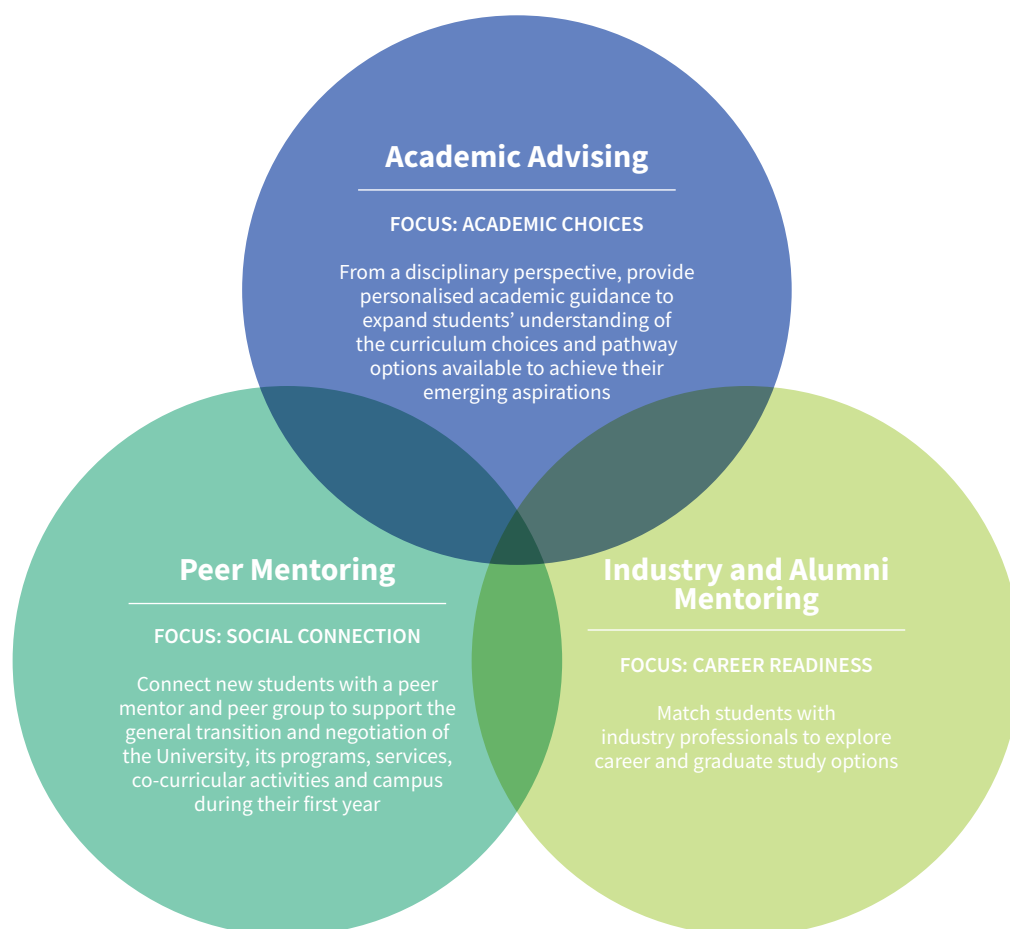
Recognising the importance of the orientation period in inducting new students into our community, we will create a new Melbourne Ideas Festival utilising existing components from orientation. The core feature of the program will be to enable students to sample and explore different intellectual offerings and see some of the University's major researchers in action. The experience and needs of students will be central to the design of the festival with a focus on minimising clashes between activities and events offered by Academic Divisions, Colleges, and student organisations. The importance of all new students being on campus ready to attend and engage in activities will be communicated from the time of offer and in the lead up to the Melbourne Ideas Festival.

A fully coordinated menu of events will be offered to students, with new student co-created activities aimed at increasing the likelihood of meeting and befriending other students during orientation, and establishing key social networks to support their university experience. This will require the establishment of new governance and oversight for the Melbourne Ideas Festival.

Once the Discovery subjects (page 13) are delivered, incoming students will ideally be combining their social and co-curricular festival program with required academic study from day one. This will allow students to move with their cohort from study to social activities, building connections and understanding their new environment, program and discipline together.

Underpinning delivery of the Melbourne Ideas Festival will be a modern digital interface that provides students with a way to explore and build a personalised program of events, record attendance, and provide feedback, delivered through the new Student Life App (page 7).

Figure 3.
Key advising and mentoring components
(this framework works in partnership with
existing specialist support programs)



Personalised advice and support

We are committed to providing students with a network of advisors and mentors to support them with personalised advice, ensuring they can make the best possible use of the study and engagement opportunities available.

Students have consistently asked for more access to mentoring and advising, particularly seeking out interactions with later-year students and with academics. In feedback from staff on the Green Paper, many acknowledged that connections between students and staff have been eroded over the years, and sought ways to reconnect. Students particularly express the desire to meet with and get to know academic staff in non-classroom settings. While there are some wonderful innovations that currently connect students with peers and with academic staff for support, including programs run by Academic Divisions and Student Success, it is clear we are not yet providing all students with the support and advice they are seeking.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE 4: Advising and Mentoring (2020)

New offerings will be implemented for advising and mentoring that ensure all students participate at least during their first and second years of study. During these years they will have structured, scheduled, and matched opportunities to connect with later-year students and with academic staff. These appointments will focus on issues relevant to a student's study, facilitating and referring to other services if necessary. This new commitment will enhance existing support services and be an addition to those already in place for specific cohorts of students at the University.

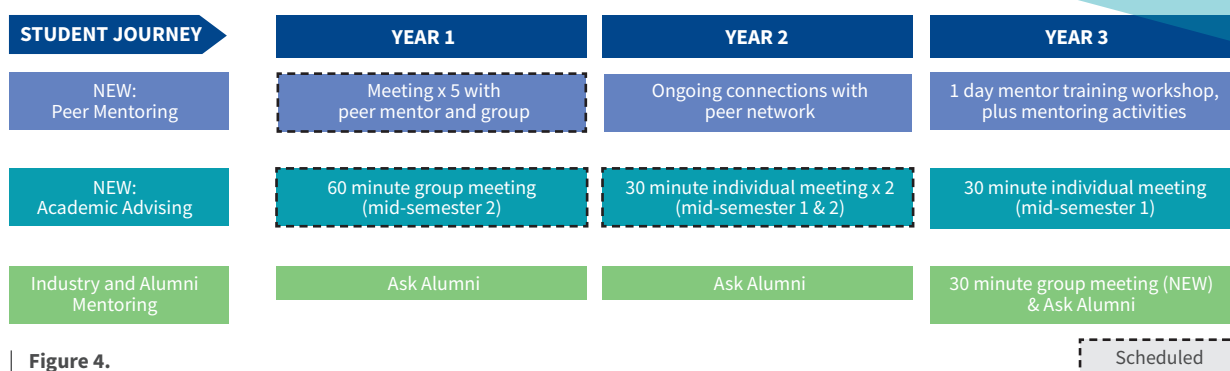
From 2020, mentors and advisors will be an integrated part of the University experience for all new undergraduates. The offer of a place at the University will come with assurance that each student will be matched with a small group of peers and a final-year undergraduate or a graduate student in their degree or discipline. The new Student Life App (page 7), provided as part of the offer and acceptance process, will have a mentoring landing

page where students can see and communicate with their group and mentor, even prior to coming to campus. When building their personal Melbourne Ideas Festival timetable (page 13), students will find themselves already scheduled for a meeting with a peer group, the first of several that will appear in their timetable during first semester. Mentors will be trained and encouraged to create and nurture formal and informal networks as well as events to encourage this group to continue to connect and support each other.

In second semester, the Student Life App will introduce students to their academic advisor, faculty advising specialists and their fellow advisees. Another timetabled appointment will appear in their calendar, in which they meet with their academic advisor in groups of up to 15. This discussion will prepare them for two more appointments that take place during their second year of study, in which they meet with their advisor one-on-one to discuss their aspirations, strengths, interests, and career goals. In third year, students may choose whether to book an appointment with their advisor, and whether to pursue industry or alumni mentoring opportunities offered within their discipline. At the same time, many will become peer mentors to incoming first-year students, providing them with an opportunity to develop their leadership and interpersonal skills.

Throughout their study, students have access to the Ask Alumni mentoring program, which connects students and alumni for one-off mentoring conversations throughout the year utilising an online platform. For undergraduate students commencing in 2020, we will aim to provide every one who wants it, an alumni mentor in 2022, when they are in their third year of study.

An outline of the student journey is in Figure 4.



The new advising and mentoring support will be an addition to existing specialist programs and supplementary support services that support critical needs of our student cohort. Peer mentors and academic advisors will be supported through resources and training to refer students to the appropriate specialist services such as course planning and enrolment; health and wellbeing; careers and employability as-needed. In doing so, mentors and advisors will provide an invaluable 'check-in' service for many of our students, potentially identifying those who are at-risk and ensuring they are referred to the appropriate intervention.

Both peer mentoring and academic advising will need to be delivered with some common elements across the University to ensure continuity of the student experience across divisions and disciplines, but will also need to be sensitive to local conditions. Furthermore, activities and conversations that occur within this framework must be shaped by the character of each division if they are to help build a sense of belonging for students. The elements outlined on the following pages are therefore intended to be the minimum guaranteed to all students, with room for local adaptation and character to shape the final product. These elements will be supported by the Student Life program through resourcing, training, and the creation of University-wide forums for sharing best practice and challenges as the models evolve.

Peer Mentoring

Peer-to-peer mentoring will be provided to all undergraduate students with a model to be developed from the following initial principles.

1. Matching of every first-year undergraduate with a peer mentor drawn from senior students in their own degree or graduate students in related fields.
2. Students will be matched in groups of 10 to every peer mentor.
3. Scheduled meetings for each group with their mentor will occur four times during semester 1 and at least once during semester 2.
4. Mentor groups will be encouraged to create their own activities outside of these formal meetings, including using the Student Life App to connect and discuss issues as they arise.
5. Senior student mentors will be provided with training on how to assist students to navigate their studies, about the university experience more generally, and how to encourage their mentees to form their own support networks.
6. Mentors will be recognised for their voluntary work through the new co-curricular transcript (page 19) and through additional incentives.

This model is focused on ensuring that students new to the University are given an opportunity to meet other students in their degree, connect with later year students, and feel welcomed to the community. Various ways of matching groups could be explored that would increase the likelihood that those brought together in this manner will connect. Divisions could consider other activities they might include for mentoring groups to undertake – a model of mentoring in Science co-designed the focus of each meeting with students to develop a schedule that considered: managing university administration, settling into Melbourne and university life, handling those first pieces of assessment, using the library effectively, making the most of opportunities (exchange, internships), and dealing with the stresses associated with mid-semester assessment and end of semester exams.

Divisions may also want to encourage informal meetings by providing vouchers for coffees, offering opportunities for mentors to take new students to iconic Melbourne sporting and cultural experiences, organising an end-of-year get-together, etc. Links could be considered between the mentoring groups and other divisional student-focused activities, and mentors could introduce students to the University's student engagement framework, encouraging those interested to participate.





Academic Advising

Academic Advising will be provided to all undergraduate students through a model developed around these characteristics:

1. Matching every undergraduate student to an academic advisor from a discipline which a student is currently studying or intends to study.
2. Students will have a scheduled group meeting (of up to 15 students) with their academic advisor in the second semester of their first year of study.
3. Students will have a minimum of two 30-minute individual meetings scheduled with their academic advisor during their second year of study.
4. Students can arrange one 30-minute individual meeting with their academic advisor during their third year of study.
5. Students will ideally have the same advisor for all three years of their undergraduate degree.
6. Advisors will have no more than 45 student advisees at any one time and will have only one group of students in each year of study.
7. Advisors will be Level B or above, continuing or fixed term academic staff. Advisors might be drawn from the student's home division, or from a relevant graduate school
8. Advisors will be supported through ongoing training and professional development opportunities. Participation in advising will be recognised and rewarded in workloads as well as in confirmation and promotion criteria.
9. There will be senior academic advisors in each division, assigned to oversee the advising program in their department, school or discipline. Senior advisors will not have their own advisees, but will instead support academic advisors.
10. Specialist teams of professional staff will be located in each Academic Division to support academic advisors by triaging student enquiries, managing, matching and re-matching students to advisors, and arranging appointments.

This model provides for the majority of an academic advisor's time to be spent with students during their second year of study, exploring study options and consolidating pathways. In degrees where students cannot choose their major until after second year, some flexibility to shift the individual meetings until later in the degree could be explored.

During first year, the single group meeting an advisor holds with their students is likely to focus on discussions about how to identify areas of academic strength and personal interest, what that might mean for pathways through the degree, and when and how to participate in activities like Global Mobility and co-curricular opportunities. In second year, individual meetings will be a more personalised checking in on progress, aspirations and experiences, and discussing major selections, third year options such as internships, capstone selection, and peer mentoring roles, as well as looking beyond the end of the degree to careers or further study.

Divisions will be encouraged to give shape to the advising program at a local level, tailoring for department, school or disciplinary differences and needs. Additional meetings or school-wide events might be designed, and existing activities such as careers fairs or graduate school showcases could be incorporated.

Significant investment will be necessary to realise this model, which must be delivered at scale to reach all undergraduate students. Successful implementation requires the University to recognise and reward the work of academic staff who contribute to advising. This means ensuring that workload models make an allocation for academic time, and that this component of academic work is recognised in performance reviews, confirmation and promotion – in both volume and quality.

Supporting the implementation of this model of both academic advising and peer mentoring will require an investment in additional professional specialist staff to be embedded within divisions as well as within Students and Scholarly Services. New platforms for managing the matching of students to groups, mentors and advisors will be necessary to deliver the programs at scale, and digital tools will be needed to automate student attendance tracking, follow-up and evaluation.

Recognising achievement

We will ensure that our students, in addition to being talented, expert learners, are aware of their individual and group achievements over the course of their degree, and recognise and value their journey and the expertise they have built. Students will feel ready for their next step, whether they leave the University at the end of their undergraduate degree to start their careers, undertake other opportunities, or choose to pursue graduate coursework or research.

Helping our students to form a strong sense of connection to both their peers and to the University means creating many opportunities, both formal and informal, to meet and befriend other members of the community. Alternately, the opportunities should inspire students to participate in an activity that is edifying or meaningful for them in some way, including by becoming active in their communities.

Creating this sense of readiness and building these connections will be achieved in part through the new activated and recognised co-curriculum. This will provide, among other things, a foundational database from which students might use careers-focused self-reflective tools or build portfolios. Within the curriculum itself, a re-examination and revitalisation of the role of the capstone within the Melbourne Model will also help to build students' preparedness.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE 5: Activated and Recognised Co-curriculum (2020)

Co-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to build skills and experience in a range of different environments, become engaged and active citizens, give back to local, national and international communities, and explore their emerging ideas for careers and personal growth. We will provide a new framework to recognise these activities, offer a single searchable co-curricular database to students, and certify completion of endorsed activities. This is sometimes called the 'social c.v.' and sits alongside the academic transcript. The social c.v. will encourage student participation and help students identify and articulate the skills they have developed alongside their graduate attributes and degree-based expertise.

At the centre of the activated and recognised co-curriculum is a skills framework, including the '21st century skills' increasingly understood to be integral to fulfilling lives and rewarding work. Co-curricular opportunities that offer students opportunities to develop one or more of these skills, and that meet a set of eligibility criteria, will be included in the central database for students to review. Students will search this using filters such as paid or unpaid, location, number of hours of participation expected. Students may also propose activities to be added to the database.

Students who meet the participation requirements of these co-curricular activities will be provided with a University branded co-curricular transcript, outlining their co-curricular engagements and the skills they have developed. This transcript will be available to students throughout their enrolment, and beyond, so they may use it to support applications for employment, scholarships, graduate school or other ambitions.

Participation in activities that complement the curriculum, including community-engaged work whether in local, national, or international contexts, will also help to build connection for students with each other, with the University and with the broader community. Such activities can also bring added meaning to the curriculum, allowing students to create new understandings and connections between the classroom and the outside world.

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE 6: Next Generation Capstones (2021)

We will uplift capstone experiences and enhance their ability to function as a bridge between undergraduate study and what comes next. A set of guiding principles for capstones will be embedded in policy and subject approval processes. It will clearly set out the University's expectations for the student experience of this important curriculum element.

Academic Divisions will be supported to realise these principles through reforms to capstone curricula. These reforms will include substantial increases in the quantity and diversity of experiential learning opportunities embedded in the third-year curriculum, collaboration with graduate schools to embed graduate degree-related projects in capstone experiences, provision of access to research opportunities and inclusion of opportunities for students to design their own projects. These Next-Generation Capstones will ensure students have a truly culminating experience that transitions them from studying a discipline to being a practitioner of that discipline, prepared for what lies beyond graduation.

Student focus groups and desktop reviews have revealed that capstones are poorly understood by students and often difficult or impossible to identify in the Handbook. If students are to value the capstone as an integral component of their readiness for work or further study, they must first understand what capstones are, be able to identify their capstone in the Handbook and their study plan, and be supported to select a capstone that is well suited to their interests and ambitions. In light of this, the Next Generation Capstones Signature Initiative will also work to increase capstone visibility and students' preparedness for and awareness of capstones.

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$$Cont = P + \rho gh + \frac{1}{2} \rho v^2$$

$$Av =$$

P

$$A_{entr} v_{entr} = A_{capillary} v_{capillary}$$

$$P = Cont - \frac{1}{A}$$



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