INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Introduction

Over the next few years your identity will be strongly tied to your role as a university student. Graduation may seem like a long way off but, you need to start thinking now about your professional identity and familiarise yourself with your chosen industry. This module will help you get started with creating and managing your professional identity.

In this module you will:

- Gain an understanding of your professional identity
- Learn how professional identity is linked to your online presence
- Be introduced to professional associations in your industry and the benefits these can provide.
- Gain an awareness of support and networks available to you at Deakin.

What is your professional identity?

Your professional identity guides how your colleagues, employers and clients will perceive you at work. It can affect your job opportunities and success in your role.

Think of it as a brand for yourself. Your professional identity may include elements such as your knowledge of the industry, your personal values, your work ethic, your skillset and how you present yourself.

The importance of professional identity in the workplace

Employers want people who are professionals. While they understand new graduates may have limited work experience, displaying yourself in a professional manner is an expectation. The job market is highly competitive, and having a strong and visible professional identity may put you ahead of other candidates.

How can you build your professional identity?

- Make sure your contact information is professional – including your email address and voicemail message. No email addresses like cheekyangel@email.com!
- Join relevant professional associations and industry networks.
- Keep up to date with what is happening in the industry you want to work in.
- Build a positive online presence.

Managing your online presence

In today's digitally connected world, it's easier than ever to find information, and for others to find information about you. Up to now your online presence has likely focused on your social activities. In the not too distant future, when you graduate and enter the workforce, your online presence will become an important part of your professional identity. Now is the time to start thinking about the online presence you would feel comfortable with clients, colleagues and employers seeing.

When posting information online, think about:

- What information is publicly accessible.
- What an outsider might assume about you from what they find online.
- How you would feel if someone found this content in 10 years' time.

Risks of a negative online presence

What are the risks of having a negative social media presence?

- It could harm your reputation as a professional.
- It may jeopardise your future employment opportunities.
- It may have a negative impact on relationships with colleagues and clients.

It's easy to make comments 'anonymously' online, however, anonymity is not guaranteed. Even if your account is private, if you comment on a public post or get tagged by a friend, you could be exposed to a wider audience.

Many professionals add disclaimers to their accounts stating that their views do not reflect the organisation they work for. However, you still need to be careful about your comments because people could be offended and report them.

It is good practice to follow the same standards online, as you would communicate and display in person.

Strategies for improving your online presence

Try the following strategies to clean up your search results:

- Identify and remove undesirable content if you can, or contact the person who uploaded it and ask them to remove it.
- Delete old social media accounts so the content is no longer available.
- Regularly review your account privacy settings. These can change over time and may not be completely private.
- Create professional accounts that you would like others to find, such as a blog or LinkedIn profile.
- Consider having separate accounts for personal and professional purposes.

Social media tools

While negative online content can have a detrimental effect on your professional identity, social media can also be a powerful tool for self-promotion and professional networking.

Below are just some of the benefits of using social media:

- Personal branding: Become known as a knowledgeable and respected professional in your field.
- Networking: Connect with other professionals in your industry.
- Finding jobs: Discover available positions that aren't formally advertised.

What social media tools can you use professionally?

There are many different tools out there and their popularity can depend on the type of industry. For example, you might find that in your industry, Twitter is used a lot or that LinkedIn is the primary tool.

Find out about some of the common social media tools below:

LinkedIn

A common professional social media tool used in most industries. Through LinkedIn (http://linkedin.com/) you can create a professional profile, upload your work experience and qualifications, connect with other professionals, join groups and even find a job!

Twitter

Did you know Twitter (http://twitter.com/) can be used as a professional networking tool? Many professionals have Twitter profiles and use it to share industry news and communicate with their peers.

Research social networking tools

If you have career aspirations to continue studying and enter into academia or corporate research, you may want to look at ResearchGate (https://www.researchgate.net/) and Academia.edu (https://www.academia.edu/). These websites allow you to connect with other researchers and share research.

Tip: Your industry may have other tools they use regularly. Have a look online to see what you can find.

Professional Associations

What is a professional association?

Professional associations are groups where people involved in a specific industry can network and share knowledge. They also help to maintain standards and act as an advocate for that industry. Most industries will have professional associations. Some will be open to anyone to join whereas others might only be open to companies or organisations. Either way, they often have useful resources on their websites and are worth following.

Benefits and services differ between associations, but some common features include:

- Accreditation as a professional in your industry
- Access to professional development, conferences and training opportunities
- Access to job listings
- Access to industry news and/or mailing lists.

Tip: Sometimes discounted or free memberships are available for students, so see if you can join up while you're still studying.

List of Professional Associations by discipline

Accounting
- [CPA Australia](https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/): https://www.cpaaustralia.com.au/
- [Chartered Accountants Australia New Zealand](https://www.charteredaccountantsanz.com/): https://www.charteredaccountantsanz.com/
- [Institute of Public Accountants](https://www.publicaccountants.org.au): https://www.publicaccountants.org.au/
- [Tax Institute](https://www.taxinstitute.com.au/): https://www.taxinstitute.com.au/
- [Institute of Internal Auditors](https://www.iia.org.au/): https://www.iia.org.au/
- [Chartered Institute of Management Accountants](http://www.cimaglobal.com/): http://www.cimaglobal.com/
- [Association of Taxation and Management Accountants](http://www.atma.com.au/): http://www.atma.com.au/
- [Institute of Certified Management Accountants](https://www.cmawebline.org/): https://www.cmawebline.org/

Economics
- [Economic Society of Australia](http://esacentral.org.au/): http://esacentral.org.au/

Finance
- [Financial Services Institute of Australasia](http://www.finsia.com/): http://www.finsia.com/
- [Australian Bankers Association](http://www.bankers.asn.au/): http://www.bankers.asn.au/
- [Australian Financial Markets Association](http://www.afma.com.au/): http://www.afma.com.au/
- [Accounting and Finance Association of Australia and New Zealand](http://www.afaanz.org/): http://www.afaanz.org/
- [Australian Institute of Credit Management](http://www.aicm.com.au/): http://www.aicm.com.au/
- [Finance and Treasury Association](https://financetreasury.com.au/): https://financetreasury.com.au/
- [Australian Private Equity & Venture Capital Association](https://www.avcal.com.au/): https://www.avcal.com.au/
- [The Stockbrokers And Financial Advisers Association](http://www.stockbrokers.org.au/): http://www.stockbrokers.org.au/
- [Insurance Council of Australia](http://www.insurancecouncil.com.au/): http://www.insurancecouncil.com.au/
- [Australian and New Zealand Institute of Insurance and Finance](https://anziif.com/): https://anziif.com/

Financial Planning
- [Financial Planning Association](http://www.fpa.asn.au/): http://www.fpa.asn.au/
- [Association of Financial Advisors](http://www.afa.asn.au/): http://www.afa.asn.au/

Food and Agribusiness
- [Agribusiness Australia:](https://www.agribusiness.asn.au/) https://www.agribusiness.asn.au/
- [Victorian Farmers Federation](https://www.vff.org.au/): https://www.vff.org.au/
- [AG Institute Australia (AIA):](http://www.aginstitute.com.au/) http://www.aginstitute.com.au/
- [AARES - Australasian Agricultural & Resource Economics Society](https://www.aares.org.au/): https://www.aares.org.au/
- [RAID Network](https://raidnetwork.crawfordfund.org/): https://raidnetwork.crawfordfund.org/
- [Agriculture Victoria - Young Farmers](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/food-and-fibre-industries/young-farmers/get-in-touch-with-your-peers): http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/food-and-fibre-industries/young-farmers/get-in-touch-with-your-peers
- [Australian Industry and Skills Committee:](https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/industries/agriculture) https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/industries/agriculture
- [Australian Women in Agriculture](https://awia.org.au/): https://awia.org.au/

Human Resource Management
- [Australian Human Resources Institute](https://www.ahri.com.au/): https://www.ahri.com.au/
- [Recruitment & Consulting Services Association](http://www.rcsa.com.au/): http://www.rcsa.com.au/
- [National Safety Council of Australia](http://nsca.org.au/): http://nsca.org.au/
- [Safety Institute of Australia](https://sia.org.au/): https://sia.org.au/
- [Australian Institute of Training & Development](http://www.aitd.com.au/): http://www.aitd.com.au/

Management
- [Australian Institute of Management](http://www.aim.com.au/): http://www.aim.com.au/
- [Institute of Management Consultants](https://www.imc.org.au/): https://www.imc.org.au/
- [Australian Psychological Society - Organisational Psychology](http://www.psychology.org.au/public/organisational/): http://www.psychology.org.au/public/organisational/
- [Australian Institute of Project Management](https://www.aipm.com.au/): https://www.aipm.com.au/

Management Information Systems
- [Australian Computer Society](https://www.acs.org.au/): https://www.acs.org.au/
- [Australasian Association for Information Systems](http://www.aaisnet.org): http://www.aaisnet.org

Marketing
- [Australian Marketing Institute](http://www.ami.org.au/): http://www.ami.org.au/
- [Australian Market and Social Research Society](http://www.amsrs.com.au/): http://www.amsrs.com.au/
- [The Communications Council](http://www.communicationscouncil.org.au/): http://www.communicationscouncil.org.au/
- [Association for Data-driven Marketing and Advertising](https://www.adma.com.au/): https://www.adma.com.au/
- [The Digital Industry Association of Australia](http://www.aimia.com.au/): http://www.aimia.com.au/
- [Public Relations Institute of Australia](https://www.pria.com.au/): https://www.pria.com.au/

Property and Real Estate
- [Real Estate Institute of Victoria](https://reiv.com.au/): https://reiv.com.au/
- [RICS](https://www.rics.org/oceania/): https://www.rics.org/oceania/
- [Green Building Council Australia](https://new.gbca.org.au/): https://new.gbca.org.au/
- [Real Estate Institute of Australia](https://reia.asn.au/): https://reia.asn.au/
- [National real estate association](https://nrea.org.au/): https://nrea.org.au/
- [EAC Estate Agents Cooperative](https://eac.com.au/): https://eac.com.au/
- [Property investment professionals of Australia](https://www.pipa.asn.au/): https://www.pipa.asn.au/
- [Australian property institute](https://www.api.org.au/): https://www.api.org.au/
- [Australian valuers institute](http://www.valuersinstitute.com.au/): http://www.valuersinstitute.com.au/
- [Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)](https://www.udiavic.com.au/): https://www.udiavic.com.au/

Deakin networks and support

As a Deakin student there is more available to you than classes and seminars. There are many services and resources available to help you succeed in both with your studies and when you graduate. Help is available get you ready to graduate and enter the workforce and as a Deakin Alumnus. Making use of the unique support available to you a can put you ahead of other candidates in the job market.

Making use of Deakin careers assistance

You may have just started your university journey but it's not too early to start thinking about what you need get that competitive edge for the workplace. You will need to apply for jobs and enter the recruitment process and depending on the types of jobs you apply for, the process will differ. Some might involve assessment centres, psychometric testing or even video interviews. One thing's for sure, you need a well written resume, it needs to be kept up to date as you add skills and qualifications and you must know how to write a strong application. You can access support to develop those skills through Deakin University.

DeakinTALENT contains programs and services to help you develop the skills you need to find a job that's right for you. Through the DeakinTALENT website (http://deakin.edu.au/deakintalent) you can:

- Access tutorials on resumes, interview techniques and more via Career Success Resources (Current students only).
- Book an appointment with a Career Coach.
- Register to attend a Career Success Workshop.
- Submit a resume for review
- Search for jobs and internships.

DeakinTALENT connect is the perfect environment to build your first professional profile. Get started now, join some communities and engage with employers. When you are ready you can add others such as LinkedIn.

Deakin Alumni

Graduating from university does not end your affiliation with Deakin! While you'll always be a Deakin alumnus after you graduate, you can enjoy the full benefits by joining the Deakin University Alumni Community (https://engage.deakin.edu.au/). Students are eligible to join once they have completed their course at Deakin University. Don't forget to bookmark the page and join after your course ends!

Below are some of the benefits of becoming an alumni member:

- You can join the Library and have access to selected resources.
- Be alerted about events for alumni.
- Network with other alumni who may be able to connect you with industry contacts.

Conclusion

Remember that the development of your professional identity is an ongoing process that you will continue to build throughout your career. Every time you start a new job, experience a new culture or learn something new, it all becomes part of your professional identity.

Your professional identity is also what you make of it – so start taking the steps now to build the identity that aligns with your career aspirations.