

Connecting Higher Education with Industry

Greg Whateley

April 2026



Bridging the gap between higher education and industry is essential for preparing graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing workforce. This is particularly important in the Information Technology domain. By fostering collaboration, higher education providers can ensure that curricula remain relevant and aligned with the needs of employers. This approach not only enhances student employability - but one could argue also drives innovation and supports economic growth across Australia.

From the student perspective

Work-integrated learning experiences - such as internships, placements, and industry-led projects, offer students valuable real-world skills and insights. Gaining technical skills, enhancing lateral thinking, understanding system dynamics, being able to prepare project deliverables, and innovative thinking are products of industry collaboration.

My own school – with its current focus on Information Technology – has developed a strong partnership for students with the *Australian Computer Society (ACS)* which develops a range of opportunities for students to interface with industry.

Current foci include - *How to Market Yourself Beyond a Resume* (a practical guide to building your personal brand and showcasing your value beyond a traditional resume to stand out in today's job market); *Land your dream job* (focuses on positioning your skills, experiences, and personal brand to stand out to employers beyond just a resume); and *ACS Professional Year* (discover how the ACS Professional Year program provides guaranteed internship experience to help you build industry-ready skills and kickstart your IT career).

From the industry perspective

Engaging industry experts in teaching and curriculum design helps create courses that are responsive to current trends and future demands. This can be enhanced with industry supervision of projects, access to corporate training, support and financing of projects, resource sharing and industry liaison.

'Blurring' the distinction between industry and academia is an important step when it comes to engaging with industry. If academic staff are able to interface with industry – and industry staff are able to contribute to teaching and learning – the connection will be stronger and more relevant.

My own school – with its current focus on Information Technology – is developing stronger partnerships with industry – encouraging joint scholarship/research initiatives and encouraging industry personnel to contribute to teaching – a good way of further developing 'work integrated learning' (WIL) options.

From the academia perspective

Strong partnerships between educational institutions and businesses are vital for shaping a workforce that is agile, capable, and ready for new challenges. The benefits include – engagement with industry professionals, industry relevance in scholarship and research activity, student counselling opportunities, industry collaboration, creative/innovative thinking opportunities, and policy enhancement.

My own school – with its current focus on Information Technology – has developed a strong partnership for staff with the Australian Computer Society (ACS) which develops a range of opportunities for staff to interface with industry.

Current foci include - *Why Geometry Still Matters in the Age of AI* (exploring the limits of modern AI through the lens of geometry, uncovering how deeper system understanding remains essential in design, UX, and software engineering); *Beyond the Paper: Motion Capture Imputation Benchmark Study* (a member-led discussion connecting academia and industry professionals to explore real-world applications of motion capture research); *Women in Tech: The Power of Women in Innovation and Leadership* (an empowering session designed to connect, support, and elevate women in tech through shared experiences and meaningful networking); and *Women in Tech: Navigating career growth and progression without burnout* (practical insights on progressing your career with confidence while building sustainable habits, influence, and resilience along the way).

For more about –

Australian Computer Society (ACS) – [ACS - The Professional Association for Australia's ICT sector](#)

Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce - [Enjoy, Study & Succeed](#)

Also worth reading –

Key Elements of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education -
[6113ad_4ec9f8219c9d462d80deadfb3e84b2de.pdf](#)

WIL – Work Integrated Learning - at AGE -
https://www.musicum20.com/files/ugd/6113ad_7b8b8c5b1dc742d4a3b9fc03a7c0feb6.pdf

Understanding Scholarship - and customising it for your own institution -
[6113ad_d79ff452410c4a1ea824f4929a8e4584.pdf](#)

What is the difference between scholarship and research - [What-is-the-difference-between-scholarship-and-research.pdf](#)

Emeritus Professor Greg Whateley is currently Consulting Dean at the *Sydney International School of Technology and Commerce* (SISTC) Sydney, Parramatta and Dandenong.