

“I feel jealous of other people. They know how to get a job based on their experience, and I don’t.”

— U of T Student

The Big Idea . . .

Based on the needs identified by the Future Readiness Domain team, a Future Readiness course was proposed as a way to help students feel future ready.

The Need . . .

The opportunity for students to see how their curricular and co-curricular learning can prepare them for a changing world of work, and that they have the skills and toolkit to succeed.

Our Insights . . .

- **Students lack confidence, because they struggle articulating their experiences and skills. How might we help students better articulate their experiences and soft skills so that they can see their value and communicate that value to others?**

“[I was] never really sure how to build on and apply the skills I learned and transfer them into the job hunt/working world.” — U of T Student

“Students need to be supported to identify and articulate all of the skills they are developing that correlate with the job market.” — U of T Student

- **Much future-ready learning/education happens outside of the classroom and through conversations. We know that more than 500 students participated in job shadowing, and as a result, more than 92% were able to see how their studies could be applied to a range of career opportunities. How might we help students have more future-ready oriented conversations throughout their U of T careers?**

“It was really helpful to have someone say: here's what you're doing, I've been there. Here is what you need to be doing or need to do in the future, and here are a lot of things that you can do that will help you get a job. It was refreshing to have someone be so honest and realistic with me about my future. [...] I feel really encouraged about what I am already doing and have a really good understanding of what I still need to do” — U of T Student

- **U of T students are constantly internalizing narratives that promote excellence and competition. They feel discouraged and anxious when they don’t align with ‘norms’ such as taking four years to complete their undergraduate degree, knowing their career path after graduation, or having a 4.0 GPA. How might we help students be more resilient in the face of such narratives?**

“Understanding that others are also going through similar experiences makes me feel that I am not alone and that this is a common struggle for people in university, and it reminds me to keep going and working hard.” — U of T Student

“It’s so competitive. Sometimes I feel disappointed that these awesome opportunities have only fifteen spots. There are hundreds and thousands of students who also want to participate.” — U of T Student

Design Principles

These design principles suggests ways to help students feel future-ready.

- **Normalize Experiences:** U of T can be isolating and intimidating, especially when students are navigating a changing and uncertain world. To prepare students for the future, we must more openly share the reality of non-linear pathways and help students find community through their shared (career) questions.

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- **Inspire Curiosity:** We must help students notice and capitalize on the ideas and experiences that make them feel curious. By safely and meaningfully exploring these emerging interests, students are able to learn and adapt to the changing world.

“The idea that many of the things that have the greatest impact on our lives are rarely planned. So I learned the importance of being open to opportunities that weren’t initially in plans or [that] I’ve never considered, because I can develop tunnel vision and block out good life-changing opportunities.” – U of T Student

- **Facilitate Reflection and Goal Setting:** Opportunities to learn about personal values, interests, skills, and strengths are central to developing direction, including long and short-term career and life goals. As the Work Study training program demonstrates, students who set learning goals and reflect on those learning goals during their experience are 33% more likely to be “future ready.”

“A lot of the learning goals I set allowed me to view my position as more than a job. It became a learning experience and one where I could take the skills that I learned and apply it to other areas of my life.” – U of T Student

- **Foster Hope:** Students need to feel confident in their skills and experiences and to feel that their U of T experience will prepare them to navigate career and life challenges. Sometimes, a simple conversation has the power to foster hope.

“We must have the courage to push ourselves. After all, even if you fail, you have nothing to lose. Instead, you will gain valuable experience.” – U of T Student