Masters of Social Work -
Case study of ePortfolio implementation

Drivers of implementation
The Masters of Social Work (MSW) is a professional qualifying degree that had its inaugural intake in 2013. The course, like similar programs at other institutions, is informed by principles of problem-based learning and reflective practice. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to see their learning as a social worker as a professional ethical commitment to the people and the communities they will be working with in the future. The MSW was well placed to be one of the courses piloting ePortfolios in 2013 as its program is scaffolded around ePortfolio tasks and assessment.

Course-wide decisions
In the MSW program, ePortfolios are the backbone of their whole-of-course approach. All content is delivered online, using PebblePad software for content delivery as well as for scaffolding ePortfolio activities in all but two of the units. PebblePad activities in theory units can be used in the development of ePortfolios, as they combine content and questions relating to case studies that are continuously accessed throughout the course, together with students’ reflections on their own experiences. In field education units, an ePortfolio workbook guides students through the process of setting up and designing their ePortfolio. The ePortfolio is collated and presented for assessment at three points in time during the course:
1. in draft form at the end of first placement (end of first year of study)
2. In draft form submitted to potential field educators at the beginning of second placement
3. in final form at the end of second placement (at the conclusion of the degree).

Introducing students to ePortfolios and PebblePad
Students are introduced early to the aims of their ePortfolio:
• to connect their learning experiences across the course
• to recognise, document and articulate their learning
• to present themselves and their own ‘framework for practice’ to potential field educators and future employers.

Students are introduced initially to PebblePad through immediate interaction with content through workbooks – a straightforward way to introduce students to the PebblePad environment and help them build assets for their ePortfolio. Using PebblePad for content makes the same material (such as case studies) available across different units, which allows student learning to be integrated and ‘horizontally mapped’ across the degree.

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<tr>
<th>Key enablers</th>
<th>Lessons learned</th>
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<td>Being introduced to PebblePad at a point when design decisions were being made for the new course</td>
<td>The importance of gradually introducing students to PebblePad</td>
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<td>Working with a small team committed to a whole-of-course approach</td>
<td>Integration across the whole course means the ePortfolio is not an ‘add-on’, but central to the curriculum design</td>
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<td>Working with Teaching and Learning staff on curriculum design decisions</td>
<td>The importance of the availability of design expertise and early training in the software</td>
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### Key enablers

- Introducing students to PebblePad through interactive activities as part of learning content
- Introducing students to the potential of PebblePad in developing their ePortfolios, which they recognise may help them be more competitive in the labour market

### Lessons learned

- The impact of demonstrating the impact an ePortfolio can have on employability of graduates
- Taking advantage of all the skill and expertise available through Teaching and Learning and IT when learning a new and sophisticated technology

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*A case study example in PebblePad*