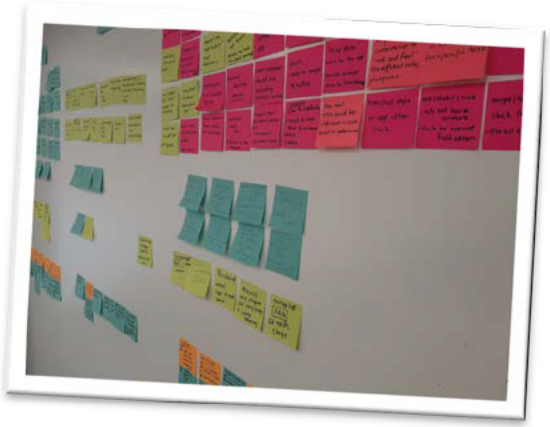
Student Portal

Design Sprint
February 2020


HOW MIGHT WE...?
How Might We Action What for Whom in order to Change Something?



Overview

In this sprint, we invited a diverse, cross-functional team of Victoria University of Wellington stakeholders, including [redacted] students, to rapidly design a student portal.

Together we designed, prototyped and tested solutions aimed at delivering accurate and timely information to students while providing a better experience for all.

With support, we will launch these prototypes into dedicated workstreams.

[redacted]

Contents

Executive Summary

The problem

The University is committed to delivering better student and staff experiences through a series of initiatives driven by the Student Success Programme. A new student portal has been proposed to provide a consistent digital point of entry to student services.

The design sprint will enable the identification of what a student portal is, how it would look, how best to deliver the relevant information required by students and help identify Minimal Viable Product (MVP) for the student portal.

The approach

Over three days we leveraged a team from a range of University stakeholders, including students, to co-design, prototype and test potential solutions to the key challenge:

How might we enhance the student experience by providing easily accessible, personalised and accurate information at the right time through a consistent point of entry?

We utilised lean UX sprint methodology to rapidly design responses to these challenges.

We engaged with over 30 people across The University (staff and students) to obtain feedback on the current process and experience.

We unpacked pain points and determined the following to be the key areas:

- Clarity and consistency of information
- Ability to access the right information at the right time
- Clear guidance
- Navigation

The solutions

Using co-design techniques we rapidly **designed and tested 4 prototypes**:

1. **User Interface**
2. **Current student content**
3. **Onboarding future student content**
4. **Student tools**

Through testing these prototypes we learnt:

- **What an ideal student portal should look like**
- **What information is of priority for current students to enhance their study experience**
- **What information is important and when it is needed for future students during onboarding journey**
- **What features have been identified as high value for students**

Next steps

It is recommended that a programme of work be set up with **Janet Fletcher** to further drive the development and implementation of the prototypes.

A number of **'quick wins'** can be implemented with low effort, but have high impact. Others will require dedicated time and effort to implement.

NOW

- Review wayfinding priority
- More user research (survey and quantitative testing)
- Identify and collate critical student information
- Review teaching tools utilisation
- Environmental scan to coordinate relevant current projects
- Create a reference group

NEXT

- Pilot a student portal with MVP
- Feasibility analysis of MVP
- On-going development and support
- Identify strategic priority

LATER

- Iterate MVP
- Transition from project to Business as Usual
- Create Feedback and Analytic loop

Background

What we did and why we did it

What we did / Sprint overview

We ran a three-day design sprint over two weeks, with a cross-functional team to design, prototype, test and iterate concepts relating to Student Portal.

Day 1 Kick off & Co-design

[redacted]

Introduction and purpose
Define outcomes
Verify key student process
Market scan
Initial ideation and design

[redacted]

Day 2 Prototype creation

photo

Select prototype ideas
Plan prototypes
Develop concepts into functional prototypes

Day 3 Testing & Next Steps

photo

Test prototypes
Prioritise and plan next steps

Defining the problem

Understanding the key pain points

Problem statement

The University currently is lacking a proper student portal. While most of the information required by students is available, it appears to be cluttered and inconsistent. Students find it difficult and time consuming to look for what they need i.e. accessing course timetable, lecture recordings, course information and tracking their own progress.

A new student portal has been proposed to allow students to engage in an online relationship with the University when they want by providing self-service tools and making information easily available when they need it

Therefore, our challenges for this d[redacted]print were:

Overarching challenge

How might we enhance the student experience by providing easily accessible, personalised and accurate information at the right time through a consistent point of entry?

Focused challenges

How might we create a single source of truth for students in order to provide consistent information?

How might we tailor the information for each type of student to make it easy to understand and do what is needed?

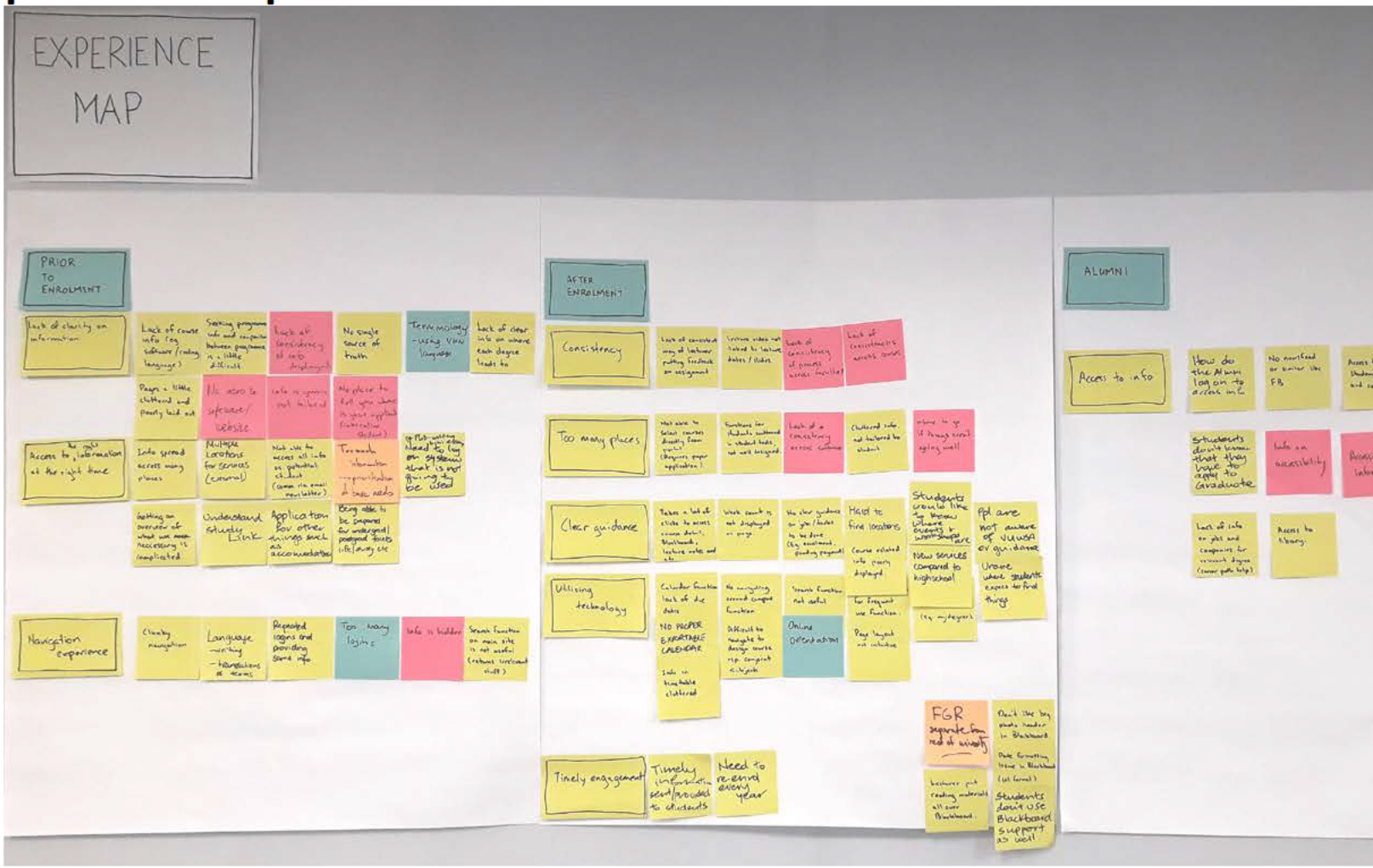
How might we provide the right information for students at each stage of their student journey to help improve their experience?

Target outcomes

By addressing these challenges, we expect to see the following outcomes:

- Digitalise information currently available elsewhere
- A single source of reference
- Personalised information and advise
- Clear guidance
- The right information at the right time

Student Experience Map

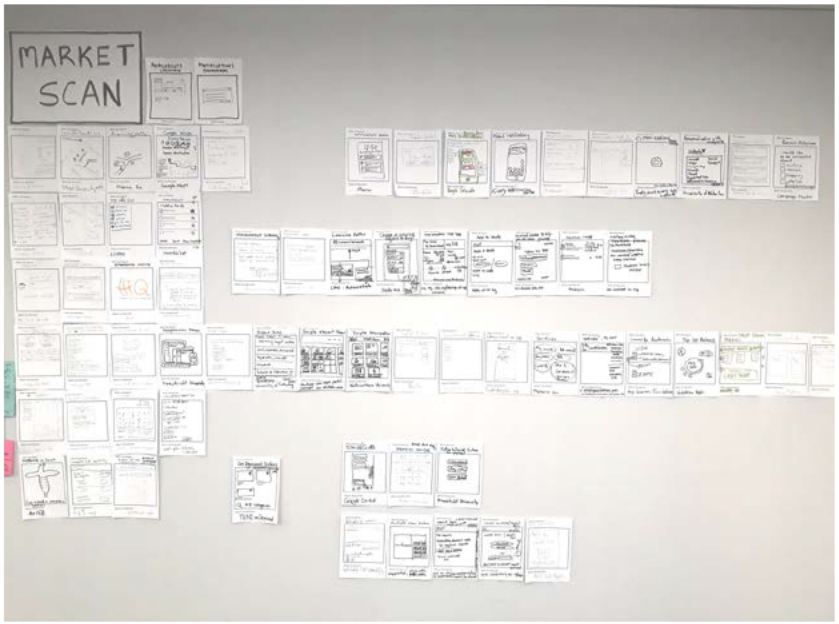


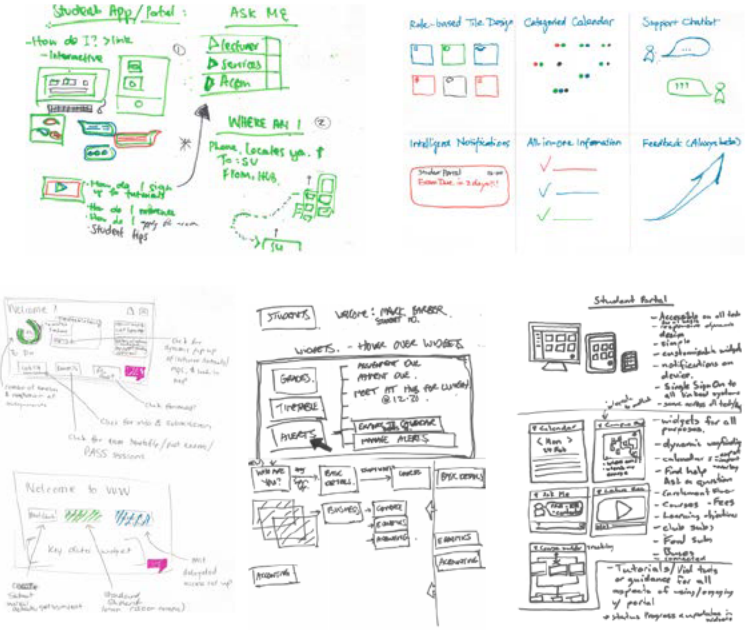
Co-designing concepts

Collaborating to develop over 60 potential solution variations

Co-design

We used collaborative design methods to generate a high volume of potential solutions, before refining concepts and focusing on the highest impact, most viable focus areas.





By rapidly researching features and ideating solutions, sprint team members developed solution sketches to address the challenges identified within the Experience Map. These sketches were grouped into user interface, current student contents, student tools and onboarding future student content.

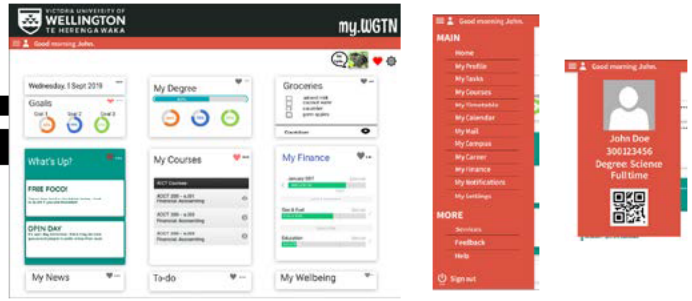
Creating and testing prototypes

We created 4 prototypes to test with students and staff representatives to gain feedback

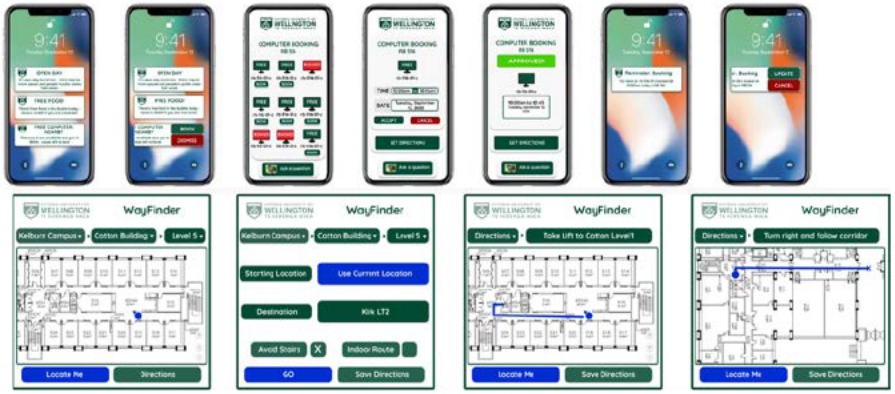
Prototype Overview

We took 4 key concepts from the co-design stage and developed them into lo-fi concepts to test with real users. Each of these prototypes will be explored in more detail on the following pages.

1 User Interface

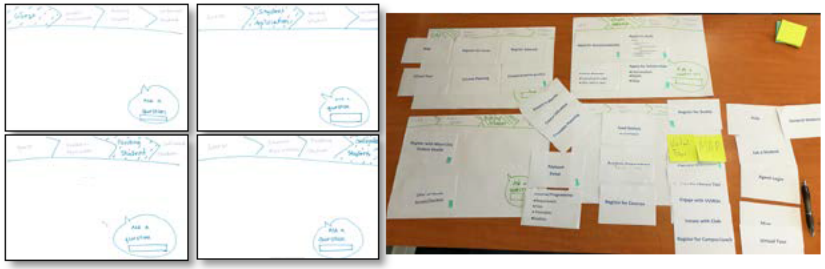


2 Student Tools



3 Current Student Contents

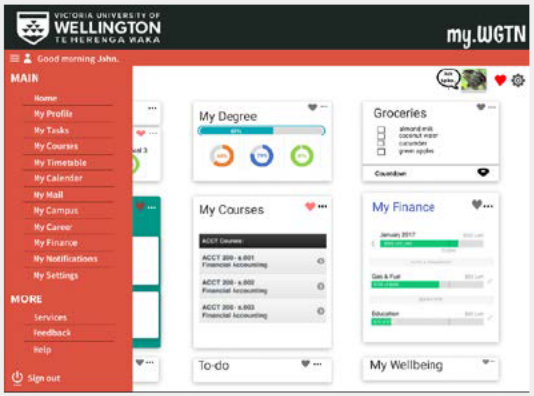
4 Onboarding Future Student Contents



1. User Interface

The concept

A dynamic webpage (accessible across multiple devices) that knows who you are with customisable widgets that display what you need based on information you have provided.



Current pain points

- Clunky interface
- Cluttered and fragmented information
- Old fashioned design
- Lack of personalisation
- Information are static
- Lack of guidance
- Lots of pagination

Features

- Single Sign-On
- Widgets (fully customisable and dark mode compatible)
    - Profile/Student ID
    - Course List with course finder
    - Timetable
    - Tutorials
    - Notifications
- Deletable "future student" account
- Progress bar for enrolment, course selection, assignment progress
- Dynamic menu

Target outcomes

- Simple design encompassing selectable action-based widgets
- A consistent point of entry for information required
- Customisable and personalisable
- Easily accessible and navigable
- Single sign-on
- Simple setup with guidance on how to use the portal

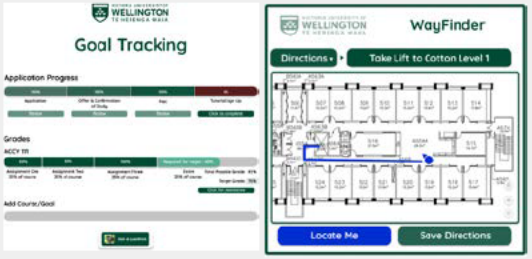
Considerations

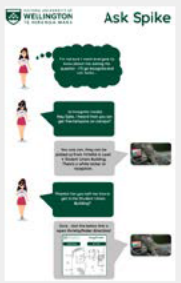
- MyVictoria review
- Access to other data sources
- Exposed API
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Communityforce interface

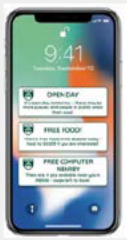
2. Student Tools

The concept

The creation of a set of tools to assist students in their university experience







Current pain points

- Students are unsure where to get information and are unaware of a lot of opportunities and services
- There is confusion from students about their current progress and grades
- Students experience difficulty planning their courses
- Facets of the student environment are in different places
- The University's physical layout is complex and can be confusing

Target outcomes

- Students can access information in a judgement free manner, 24/7 and presented in a way they understand
- Students are provided with relevant information regarding opportunities and services
- Students are provided with a clear indication of their current progress, grades and goals
- Students are able to self-plan courses with confidence
- Reduction in the multiple locations of required tools for students
- Transforming The University into an easily navigable location

Features

- Chat bot tool to answer basic queries and direct students to correct information and services
- A goal tracker tool to allow students to view their progress on various tasks, courses and goals.
- A course planning tool to empower students to plan their courses independently
- A digital Student ID connected to a mobile device
- A wayfinding tool for campus navigation

Considerations

- Ability to track students
- Comprehensive knowledge base
- Seamless integration
- Technological capability

3. Current Student Content

The Concept

A single, efficient landing place where current students access relevant, timely and personalised information to manage their study. The portal will enable simple, responsive and accessible two-way communication via pushing and pulling information as required.

Current pain points

- Lack of progress bar
- Static Information
- Duplication and too much information (too many clicks)
- Disparate information (multiple locations)
- Multiple sign-ons
- Information not personalised or tailored
- Lack of chat ability or easily accessible contact details
- Lack of task management capability
- Lack of ability to re-enrol
- Email communication perceived as spam

Target outcomes

- Single source of truth
- Personalised and tailored information
- Responsive and two-way communication focused
- Minimal clicks
- Customisable interface
- Relevant and timely information
- Simple language

Features

- Calendar (both auto-populated, customisable and exportable)
- Task list
- Progress bar
- Chat function
- Grade/Assessment tracker
- Customisable notification (medium and channel)
- Feature must reflect student lifecycle
- Events, Clubs, VUWSA calendar
- Frequently asked questions and feedback loop
- Wayfinding capability
- Quick links
- Course organiser
- Finance (payments)
- Auto re-enrol
- Relevant course content

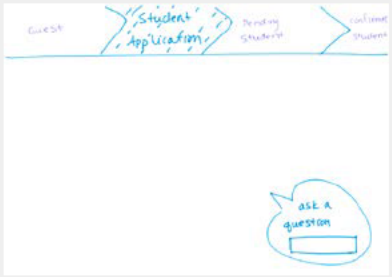
Considerations

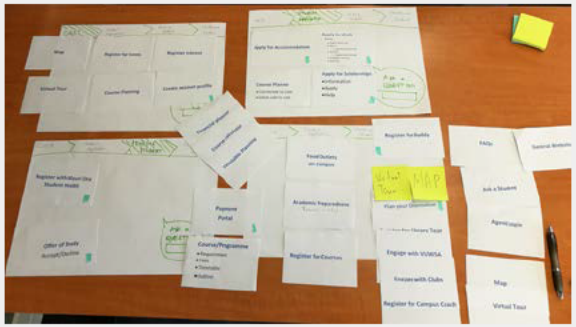
- Access to information required
- Integration with other systems
- Resources (time, budget and people)
- Engagement with all relevant stakeholders

4. Onboarding Future Student Content

The Concept

A personalised and secure digital space/hub through single point of entry. Serves only required information in a timely manner and in context with student lifecycle with question and answer capability. Provides clear calls to action and a course planning tool with career information.





Current pain points

- Too much information and not knowing what is relevant or crucial
- Too many disconnected systems and log-ins
- Difficult to find career information
- Lack of online course planning tool
- Lack of personalisation of context specific to student needs
- Not knowing where to start for new students
- Not knowing what services are available

Features

- Identifies a student upon log-on
- Single place for all applications (accommodation, study, scholarship etc.)
- Progress tracker with intuitive recommendations for next steps
- Budgeting and financial tools
- Course information
- "Ask a student" with frequently asked questions capability
- Information on what to expect for new students
- Career information
- Relevant information is surfaced at the right time depending on student journey.

Target outcomes

- Establishing a relationship between future student and university
- Personalised experience
- Student receives information they want when they need it (planning ahead)
- Seamless course planning and enrolment
- Consistent interface look and feel (future student to current student)
- Apply for enrolment, accommodation, scholarships and graduation seamlessly in one place

Considerations

- Data flows through from other systems
- Admission is separated from enrolment
- Rolling admission
- Consistent login experience for pre and post-enrolment
- Portal is for all applicants
- Self Service (pre-enrol) course planner access

User testing Insights

Gathering feedback from testing prototypes with users

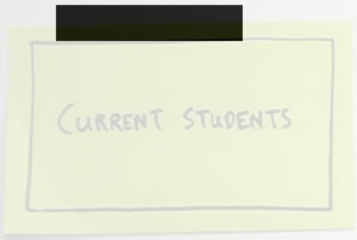
A) User interface prototype feedback

Liked

- Digital student ID (so many possibilities)
- Single Sign On
- The Course comparer will be very useful
- Loved the Course comparer concept
- App has an expected look, looks like phone home
- Login is simple and easy, info is clear
- Being able to pin & select favourites – works for mobile and web
- The app is simple and easy to use
- Widgets on the portal page are perfect
- 'Google keep' format
- Notifications in the app
- Mobile friendly website design
- Tile design
- Relevant tasks on top
- Mobile: News of the day
- Brochure style of current website
- Full menu option

Don't like

- Digital ID doesn't need student status, maybe replace with student level
- Don't display "Degree" or faculty bluntly in Digital ID
- Too much info in the app
- Portal page is too busy full screen
- No Tuatara – just use a speech bubble
- Not keen on Spike the Tuatara
- Order of the future student page
- Course comparer needs the timetable as a first option to highlight clashes
- "What's up?" – shouldn't have full info, just one line only
- Style of app – felt too old
- Login page is bland and blocky – old aesthetics
- Mobile version – unnecessary branding
- Naming consistency with 'MyTools'
- Future student page – info relevant to now, same as website – what does it offer?



A) User interface prototype feedback

Improvements

- Add additional data to course comparer. E.g. Work timetable
- Course comparer should pick up existing student timetable
- Course comparison more useful for 2nd year
- Portal: to have default widgets/degree, courses, finance widgets/ability to drag and drop
- Portal: ability to pin favourites to top
- Portal: sort by 'need to know now' vs 'know later' and 'need to know' vs 'might want to know'
- Consistency across portal and app
- Expect consistency in 'look and feel' for different roles/platforms
- Should look the same on all devices
- Order: Programs first>Student life>Things to know>Apply>Career>Ask student
- Order: Courses & Programs>Uni life & Accommodation>Apply>Course Requirements etc.
- Calendar should sit above Fees, StudyLink is required less
- Where's my next lecture? Map & timetable integration/linked
- Map option/Timetable
- Notifications not there – needs to tell you what you need

- Timetable, Prospective courses, Course outline, Assessments
- Icon search button in app
- Combine Chat & Search
- Having a Single app rather than multiple widgets
- Spike to link to real people/support desk
- Consistency in naming
- "Why doesn't it already know who I am?"
- Staff/agents have consistent styles
- Guided journey option
- Required great search function – like google search
- "deep dives" courses widget takes you to blackboard
- Expect 2 clicks for specific tasks
- Students don't use student email or career hub. Should still be presented but lower down
- Headers lead to new info
- Flow and aesthetics needs to look good to increase uptake
- Needs to be user friendly
- Tiles could differ in size based on relevance/importance
- Newsfeed style in app after click
- App/mobile/web: should be presented in lists rather than boxes/widgets – then click to expand to full screen

B) Current student contents prototype feedback

Liked

- Simplicity and plain English
- Grade tracker is important
- Both side bar and icons to accommodate different preferences

Don't like

- One tester went to courses for several functions
- Calendar, task, timetable connected (overlap?)
- Student learning and career workshops under "Get Involved" not necessary

Improvements

- Chatbot as a pop-up on main page rather than buried in help
- Notifications include settings (preferences) as well as actual notifications
- Change naming:
  - "My Record" to "My Progress" or "My Grades"
  - "My IT" to "My App"
  - "IT Help" to "Help"
  - "My Timetable" to "My Signups"
  - "My Services" to "Student Services"
- Social and class (ie. Student peers) capability. Interaction is crutial.
- Keep simple, may need to duplicate a little (information in more than one list)
- Click and hover to accommodate different preferences
- Short description of category when hover or in category name

- Layout of icons:
  - Top
    - Notifications
    - Calendar
    - Courses
  - Middle
    - Timetable
    - Tasks
    - Services
    - My Records
  - Bottom
    - Campus
    - Get Involved
    - Finance
    - MyIT
    - Help

C) Onboarding future student contents prototype feedback

Liked

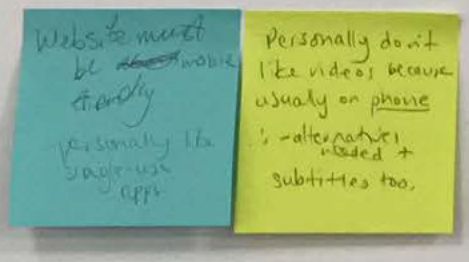
- Self-service (student don't panic and don't call)
- One place for notification
- Systems that talk to each other
- Personalised, targeted information at the right time
- Also able to be customised by the user

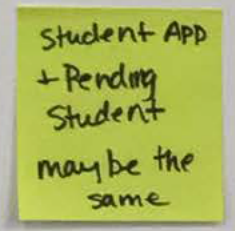
Don't like

- Website must be mobile friendly
- Personally like single use apps
- Personally don't like videos because usually on phone, alternatives needed and subtitles too

Improvements

- Student application and pending student may be the dame
- Personalised "Ask", should be responsive and intuitive
- Repository od "My Documents" (ie. Payment receipt, invoices, offer letter)
- Preview of what's next at each stage
- Access "My Degree" at any point (ie. Course planning)
- Targeted "FAQ" at each stage





D) Student tools prototype feedback

WayFinder

Liked
- Most liked tool
- Good for finding rooms
- Good for finding Faculty offices
- Useful if it just worked for buildings
- Current location feature
- Integration with chat

Don't like
- Design was cluttered

Improvements
- Show water fountains, microwaves, bookstores, pharmacy, food, bus stops, ATM, coffee
- Show wheelchair routes
- Have star ratings of services
- Provide room details/information for booking
- Show student services

Goal Tracker

Liked
- More motivating
- More accurate that guessing
- Good for setting own goals
- Able to monitor progress in a timely way
- Located in one place
- Organised
- Easier to understand the process and see where you are at

Don't like
- Grades aren't always available on time
- Could be too complex for students who don't reflect on goals
- A version exists on Blackboard but not used (potentially a staff challenge)

Improvements
- Could track progress towards a degree
- Provide in a user-friendly app
- Ability to add any type of goal

Digital Student ID

Liked
- No need to carry Student ID
- Less likely to lose ID
- Always know where your phone is
- Good for after-hours access

Don't like
- Privacy

Improvements
- Could make this the landing page for everything

D) Student tools prototype feedback

What's near me?

Liked
- Ability to find computers
- Events notification
- Free stuff
- Notifications in advance
- Food options/queues
- Seeing busy times

Don't Like
- Not how everyone works
- May clutter phone

Improvements
- Capability to see printers with A3 functionality
- Customise notifications/information about services

Course Planner

Liked
- Confident that advice is accurate
- Available when you need it
- Valuable
- Prompts
- Step by step
- Personalised

Don't like
- Drag and drop
- Overwhelming seeing full degree

Improvements
- Year by year rather than full degree
- Show fees
- Various scenarios

Next steps for implementation

Key steps for implementing a successful pilot

Recommendations

We recommend the below solutions be implemented to address current pain points:

- Research with more students (with iterated prototypes at correct times and demographics)
- Pilot of student portal (web/app)
- Environmental scan (internal and external), including review and consolidation of current projects
- Identify strategic priority
- [redacted]
- Conduct student surveys
- Feasibility analysis of prototype components
- Secure on-going development and support
- Identify and collate critical student information
- Commitment to deliver MVP in 2020
- Review teaching tools utilisation (e.g. Blackboard)
- [redacted]
- Create feedback and analytic loop
- Establish a reference group

Next steps

A summary of next steps and basic timelines.

NOW

Quick Wins:

- Review wayfinding project progress and priority
- More user research with students
    - Survey
    - Quantitative testing
- Identify and collate critical student information
- Review teaching tools utilisation
- Environment scan to coordinate current projects
- Establish a reference group

NEXT

- Develop/pilot and testing of student portal (MVP)
- Feasibility analysis of MVP
- Secure on-going development and support
- Identify strategic priority

LATER

- Iterate MVP based on student feedback
- Transition from project to BAU
- Create feedback and analytic loop

Contributors

We would like to thank the following collaborators for providing valuable insight and their time during this sprint.

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