

Recognition of the Big Picture Education School Graduation Portfolio for University Entrance

Overview

Currently, students in Big Picture Education schools and academies utilise existing scholarship programs, alternative university entrance schemes and other flexible options to access tertiary education after graduation. We seek a legitimate tertiary pathway for Big Picture Education graduates across Australia; one which does not just gain entry to university but one which has successfully prepared students for the rigours of university learning. Many universities already offer portfolio entry as one possibility for students. We believe that the Graduation Portfolios created by Big Picture Education graduates will authentically showcase their readiness for university, meet rigorous standards and processes and exist as evidence of the high order thinking and 21st Century skills required of students who engage in the Big Picture design.

The BPE Design

Big Picture schools educate one student at a time, within a community of learners. It happens by adhering to four basic principles:

1. Learning is based on each student's interests and needs.
2. Curriculum is relevant to the students.
3. Students are connected to, and work with, adult mentors outside the school who share the interests and support the learning of the students.
4. Students' development and their abilities are measured by the quality of their work and how this work changes them.

Delivery Timeline 2015/2016

Aug – Sep 2015

- Appoint project officer 0.4 a week
- Establish reference group - project officer, CEO, two principals (and Dusseldorp team member if appropriate)

- Develop plan of work with reference group
- Send invitations to the seven universities to seek formal agreement to participate and negotiate level of support for the graduating students
- Set up meeting with all schools and universities to establish arrangements
- Begin design of portfolio requirements including resources for schools and universities
- Report to Dusseldorp on progress
- Liaise with BPL USA Research Project on student graduation
- Report to the Big Picture Education Board

Sep-Nov 2015

- State visits to participating schools and universities to establish protocols and procedures for development of portfolios
- Write up procedures
- Begin to identify students who may be involved in university entry in 2016
- Set up 7 local student and teacher advisory groups to work on portfolio strategy
- Liaise with Boards of Studies and systems
- Report to Dusseldorp

Dec 2015

- CEO to work with university and school contacts to keep project moving
- Establish a research process with the universities to document the work
- Report to the BPEA Board

Feb 2016

- Finalise the formal agreements and promote the work
- Begin to seek support for ongoing work and research of the outcomes

National Policy Project Goals

1. Participating universities will accept students into degree programs where the student work in the Big Picture Education (BPE) School Graduation Portfolio meets the standards appropriate for entry to tertiary study in that program.
2. Accredited Big Picture schools and participating universities will develop Portfolio standards that are explicit, rigorous and verifiable.
3. BPEA will develop a detailed and coherent process for moderation and quality assurance of the Big Picture Graduation Portfolio.
4. Big Picture Education graduates will demonstrate advanced skills in literacy, numeracy, scientific inquiry and social reasoning. They will be well prepared to succeed at university, careers and life beyond school. They will also demonstrate 21st Century skills (innovation, creativity, problem solving, research, collaboration, community engagement and global digital citizenship.)
5. BPEA schools and academies will create a suite of best practice resources and training materials to assist students and teachers with the creation of exemplary portfolios.





The Big Picture Education Work Requirements

In Year 12, students in a Big Picture School/Academy/ Program are required to complete the following:

An In-depth Senior Project

The senior thesis project is the opportunity for students to take on a large scale independent project and produce a substantial product that makes an impact on the community. Through the senior project, the student will learn how to manage a large project, solve problems, work with outside adults, and delve deeper into the Big Picture Learning Goals. Each student will have a mentor (expert in the field), contact a resource person related to the Senior Project at least every other week and keep track of these contacts as well as the support of their Advisory Teacher.

An Autobiography

Students need to write a 75 – 100 page autobiography. This work commences in Year 11 and is completed in Year 12. Students have many experiences to draw on. They can cover family, childhood, friends, important moments, academic development, influential people, high school experience, their passions and how they have changed and developed, their future vision and their philosophy of life. For this work, they consider the main ideas, the literary style and the literary devices they use to tell the story.

A Post School Project

(a) Post School Portfolio – it would include the student's record of resume, transcripts, key essays, awards, certificates, best work and other relevant achievements. This would also include a record of all courses and certificates completed at school.

(b) Post school Learning Plan – The student keeps a record of having visited and interviewed with at least four universities and/or TAFE/CIT colleges with their application for at least one including a post – high school learning and work plan. This in turn includes a record of how they have met entry requirements.

Book Reviews

Students must read a range of books through the year including writing reviews on some of them.

Collaborative Service Learning Project

Students write Project Report on participation and outcomes of a collaborative service-learning project.

Graduation Exhibition

Students must present the work, learning and reflections on learning at a Graduation Exhibition attended by mentors, teachers, students, family and other interested participants.

The students will create their Big Picture School Graduation Portfolio from the products of the work listed above. This can be tailored to meet the demands of the desired university course. Students will also complete other courses where they have the interest and/or see the need. Transcripts, reports and Certificates of Attainment completed will be included in their portfolio.



Years 9-11

This work doesn't just begin in Year 12. Each and every year a student enrolled in a Big Picture Education School/ Academy needs to complete:

- An exhibition of their work, and reflections on their learning, at the end of every term.
- A narrative at the end of each term that describes their activity, their progress and their learning (their Advisory Teacher writes one about them too.)
- Participate in an Internship (LTI) with a mentor in a field of their interest for up to two days a week, and complete an Internship Project each time.
- Complete an Interest or Passion Project each year.
- Review and develop their Learning Plan with their Advisory Teacher and their family.
- Where appropriate (or necessary) the students complete existing courses or VET qualifications available in the school or the community.
- They play a leadership role in the community including mentoring younger students, or completing Community Service Learning Projects with others.

National research over the past three years has proven that the BPE design significantly improves student engagement. It is now time that we establish a pathway to tertiary education that recognises a Big Picture Portfolio as a legitimate, innovative and rigorous body of work that stands as significant a measure as an ATAR.