

---

From the Selected Works of Professor Shelley Kinash

---

Summer November 15, 2018

# IASK Assessment Employability Tool Kinash 2018.pdf

Prof Shelley Kinash, *University of Southern Queensland*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/shelley\\_kinash/259/](https://works.bepress.com/shelley_kinash/259/)

# IASK Employability Tool

By Professor Shelley Kinash

[www.GraduateEmployability.com](http://www.GraduateEmployability.com)

Why do university academics assign projects, papers, exams and other forms of assessment to students? Yes, partially to assess whether the students have learned and to what extent. Yes, partially to calculate a course (unit) grade. But, what students, graduates (and sometimes academics) do not realise is that assessment is a valuable opportunity to become, and prove, that students and graduates are employable, and thus career ready. We have all heard the paradox – *I need a job to gain experience, but I can't get hired because I have no experience*. University assessment is the prime route to gaining, and proving, this experience. A three year university degree can be treated like three years of work experience. When an online application form asks for specific examples to prove that the candidate meets the selection criteria, assessment can be used as these examples. In response to interview panel questions, assessment can be described as situational examples.

How does it work? How do students use assessment to help them get graduate jobs? How do university academics help students learn the skill of translating assessment into careers?

The IASK (*eye-ask*) employability tool is a simple worksheet that can be used throughout the students' degree. Each time assessment is assigned, the university students and academics can fill-out the worksheet together, or separately. Here are the steps.

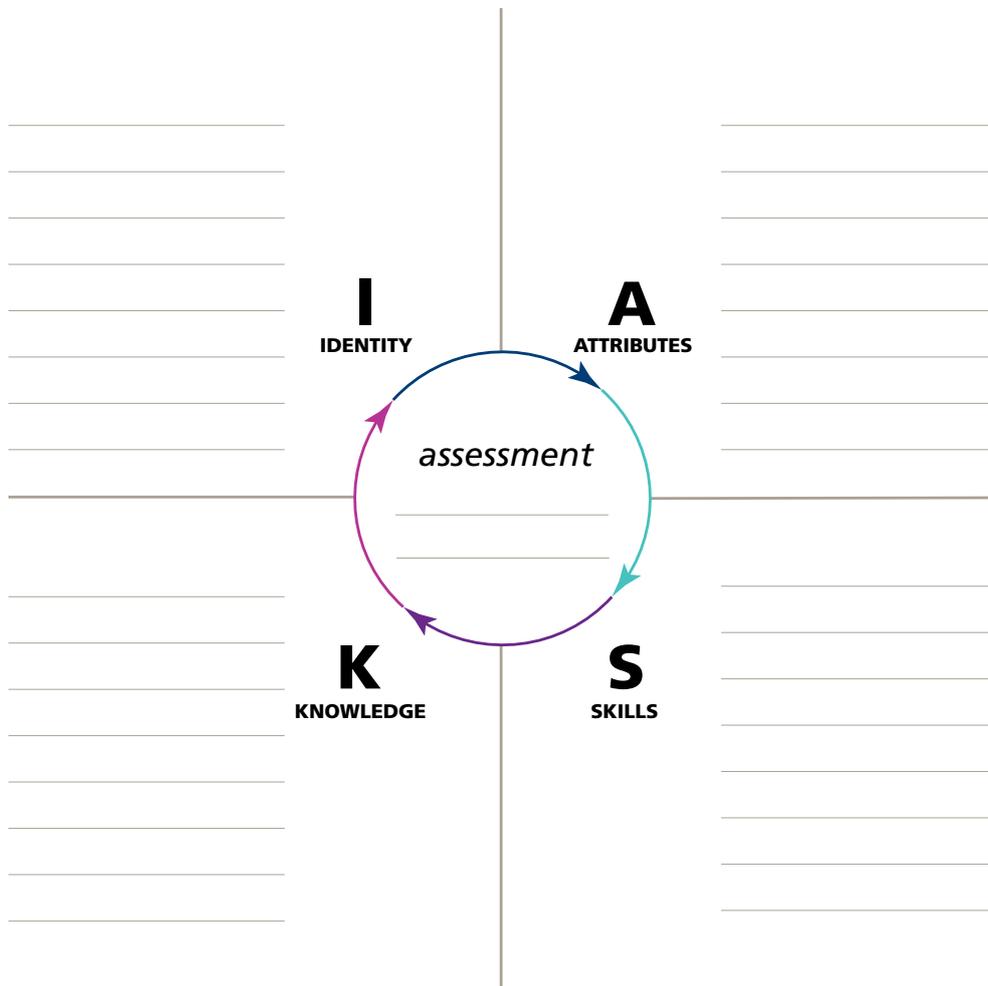
1. Write the type of assessment in the centre. e.g. lab report, essay, groupwork project
2. Then address the **I** – which stands for **Identity**. What did this assessment tell the students about themselves? e.g. I am a person who prefers to work collaboratively with others. OR I like to work to a deadline with clear expectations.
3. Next write in content for the **A** – which stands for **Attributes**. Attributes are like personality traits that you develop and grow through being a university student. What did this assessment tell the students about their developing attributes? e.g. I am persistent, dedicated and strive for excellence across my work, as demonstrated in that I write and self-edit multiple versions.
4. Next fill in the **S** – which stands for **Skills**. Two types of skills matter to employers. The first type are discipline-based technical skills. For example, future Accountants require spreadsheet skills and future Artists require skill with painting, sculpting or whatever medium/s they choose. The second type are super-skills, and the three top ones that employers expect from every university graduate are: (a) spoken and written communications; (b) leadership and showing motivation and enthusiasm; and (c) thinking-on-your-feet and problem solving. What technical and super skills did the students develop through this assessment? e.g. Writing this exam under time pressure developed my ability to recall and express key facts and figures quickly and succinctly.
5. Finally, complete the **K** – which stands for **Knowledge**. What do students now know that they did not know (or at least not to this level) before doing this assessment? e.g. This assessment required me to learn and apply mathematical formulas.

University academics can use the IASK Employability Tool to have rich, informed conversations with students about their learning and how the work they are doing as students, through assessment, helps prepare them for graduate success. Program Heads can use these questions to help them design quality assessment that nurtures students' and graduates' employability.

Students can use the IASK Employability Tool as a reflective tool to help them recognise and track their education and career journey. Some students use the completed pages as assessment coversheets, bringing the best examples (e.g. of full printed reports) along to interviews as a portfolio, or in other words, evidence of their experience to show to future employers. Many students open a folder of completed IASK worksheets when completing online employment applications, to give them examples and words to respond to selection criteria.

# IASK Tool

## Embedding employability in curriculum and assessment



© Professor Shelley Kinash, Office for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, University of Southern Queensland, 2018.