


Chapter 11

Incorporating a Sustainable ePortfolio Model Within the Curriculum for Enhanced Professional Development: Building Bridges in Pharmacy Technician Education

Tao Zhang

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1079-5364>

*Technological University Dublin,
Ireland*

Mary Therese McGrath

*Technological University Dublin,
Ireland*

Jill Barrett

*Technological University Dublin,
Ireland*


Seána Hogan

*Technological University Dublin,
Ireland*

Kathryn Young

*Technological University Dublin,
Ireland*

Julie Dunne

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5858-2694>

*Technological University Dublin,
Ireland*

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores a strategic approach to enhancing employability in the Higher Certificate in Science in Pharmacy Technician Studies at Technological University

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Dublin by integrating a sustainable ePortfolio model into the curriculum. The initiative began by identifying and prioritising seven key graduate attributes for Pharmacy Technician graduates through internal and external stakeholder surveys. Various teaching and assessment methods were introduced into the curriculum, such as ethical debates, cross-module integrated case-studies, community-learning projects, reflective blogs, and career-readiness workshops. Emphasis was placed on digital literacy, with students managing their own ePortfolios, culminating in an annual industry-sponsored competition. Additionally, adopting a collective ePortfolio for programme staff promoted a collaborative culture. By detailing the approach, the chapter demonstrates that integrating graduate attributes with ePortfolios enhances students' professional development, preparing them for successful careers and broader societal contributions.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving employment landscape, the concept of employability serves as a crucial cornerstone for individuals navigating the complexities of the job market. Employability encompasses a diverse array of essential abilities vital for successfully manoeuvring through the ever-shifting terrain of employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). It transcends mere job acquisition, permeating deeply into the fabric of career development and sustainability. At its core, employability embodies a multifaceted capacity not only to secure and sustain employment but also to adapt, flourish, and advance within diverse professional environments.

Historically, educational models have evolved significantly to address the changing demands of the workforce. In the early 20th century, education systems primarily focused on rote learning and specific vocational training aimed at preparing individuals for industrial jobs (National Research Council, 2012). However, as economies transitioned from industrial-based to knowledge-based, the emphasis shifted towards developing broader skill sets that include critical thinking, problem-solving, and resilience (Abulibdeh et al., 2024). This historical context highlights the dynamic nature of employability, which has expanded from a narrow focus on job-specific skills to a broader emphasis on lifelong learning and adaptability. A recent article highlights the experiences of an Irish pharmacist, during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising that traditional pharmacy education did not fully prepare professionals for the unprecedented challenges and public fears encountered (Irish Examiner, 2020). This highlights the importance of embedding professional development training to enhance employability in higher education to equip future professionals with the skills needed to navigate complex social environments and crises effectively.

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