The Neurodiversity Hub

Establishing Careers for Neurodivergent Adults
Why the Neurodiversity Hub (NDH)

- Talent pipeline
- Cost of recruitment
- Cost of support
- Lack of manager skills
- Matching tasks/roles to candidates
- Neurodiversity Hub (NDH) as a solution
## Objectives of the NDH

### For Students
- Support students in becoming career-ready
- Connect students with employers that value neurodiverse talent
- Assist students in obtaining work experience and internships with businesses supporting the Hub
- Increase employment opportunities

### For Universities/TAFEs
- Provide valuable opportunities and assistance for research in the area of neurodiversity
- Facilitate innovation among Hub partners and collaborators

### For Potential Employers
- Create a pipeline of work-ready neurodivergent talent
- Provide training in how to work more effectively with neurodiverse people – including employees, customers, and suppliers
- Enhance scalability and sustainability of neurodiverse employment
- Reduce costs of recruitment, assessment, on-boarding, and support
NDH Operational Framework
NDH Advisory Group

Representatives from Hub Partner Organisations

- Employers
- Universities and TAFEs
- Researchers & Service Providers

UNIVERSITY HUB

- Relevant parties cooperate on and deliver activities of each University Hub
- Develop and support student talent pipeline
- Operate to achieve objectives per NDH charter
- Collect KPIs/feedback to share at quarterly meetings
- Apply continuous improvement principles to improve programs and processes
- Implement new Hub features and offerings

NDH ADVISORY GROUP

- One representative from each partner organisation
- Attend quarterly meeting (hosted by one organisation on a rotational basis) to:
  - Consider and discuss KPIs and feedback around the operations of the Hub and alignment with its stated objectives
  - Host local participating students to provide feedback
  - Discuss operational modifications
  - Determine how to identify, sign-up and on-board new partners
- Once the NDH reaches critical mass, consider future governance function

KPIs / feedback
Combining a local and national network of support to create a step change in experience and increase students’ chances of obtaining and maintaining employment

**NDH Structure for Fulfilment**

### Industry (Employers)
- Employers provide **in-kind contributions** to NDH as a prerequisite for participation
- In-kind contributions may include life skills training (financial wellness, hygiene and nutrition, travel planning, etc.) and work readiness (job shadowing, mentorship via service providers, webinars, etc.)
- Examples include ANZ Money Minded and SAP Enterprise Readiness Academy

### Relevant Service Providers/Bodies
- Custom student profiles, comprehensive employability assessments, job matching
- Industry and peer mentorship
- Online autism awareness training for universities (tutors, lecturers, student services staff) and for employers
- In-person neurodiversity awareness and acceptance events/programming

### Universities
- Work with RSPs and employers to deliver NDH services via existing/new channels and cross-campus collaboration
  - Dedicated Hub coordinator role
- Upskill personnel via e-learning
- Measure and report student development and key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Enhance retention/employment outcomes
- Utilize NDH network to deliver services requested by students and collaborate for continuous improvement

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**Communication Channels**

**University and TAFE Students on the Autism Spectrum**
Communication Channels

The following ideas were developed in consultation with autistic university students as well as current Dandelion Program and ANZ Spectrum Program participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Autism Conferences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Social media</td>
<td>• Flyers for attendees</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Autism-specific Support Groups and publications</td>
<td>• Participate and present at conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• University outreach</td>
<td>• E.g., Autism@Work Summit</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Psychologists</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Email (direct to student)</td>
<td>• Australian Psychological Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support groups</td>
<td>• Engaging field experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• O-Week promotions</td>
<td>(e.g., Tony Atwood)</td>
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<td>• Hackathons</td>
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<td>• Lecture announcements</td>
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<tr>
<th>Secondary Schools</th>
<th>Employers</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect with school admissions counselors</td>
<td>• Internal communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect with guidance counselor/autism coach</td>
<td>• Social Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Autism peak bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case studies</td>
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Communication – Landing Page

• After communicating the Hub:
  – Emphasize ease of access and initial use.
  – Create accessible university landing page.
  – Walk through websites when discussing NDH.
  – Send to link students registered with disability services.
  – Include webpage with clear instructions around how to navigate resources within the NDH.
NDH Desired Outcomes by Phase

**Phase One: Assessment**

- Students register with the Hub via University
- Students take required initial employability assessments
- Students create online employment profiles

**Phase Two: On-boarding**

- Students’ environmental concerns are identified and addressed
- Students begins to develop adaptive skills
- Peer and/or industry mentorship introduced
- Students update profiles
  - Update background info to reflect any relevant changes

**Phase Three: Skill/Experience Building**

- Students complete CV, cover letter, and interview prep for recruitment
- Students build industry awareness/knowledge
  - Job shadowing
  - Industry-linked projects
  - Industry study tours
  - Work placements
  - Accreditation internships
  - Professional internships
  - Part time work/volunteering

**Phase Four: Job or Career Transition**

- Update CV and evaluate students’ technical and social readiness
- Opportunities for employment are sourced for and with the students
Example Student Experience Timeline

**University success modules (Uptimize)**
- Life skills modules (via cross-campus collaboration and employer contributions)
  - Public transportation
  - Sleep
  - Nutrition
  - Exercise
- Career readiness and employability assessment (Pymetrics, career services)

**Communication and social skills development**
- CV and cover letter guidance (career services)
- Personal Development Plan (DXC)
- Peer mentoring (I CAN or similar system)

**Life skills modules cont’d**
- Money Minded (ANZ)
- Dress for Success
- Partner employer webinars, field visits and job shadows
- Industry mentoring (PACE)

**Enterprise Readiness Academy (SAP)**
- Dandelion Work Experience Program (DXC)
- Other work experience programme opportunities
- Other business acumen skills as per university programs (e.g., Learning and Academic Skills Unit)

**CV and cover letter updated and critiqued (University)**
- Other business acumen skills as per university programs

**Postgraduate placement**
- Untapped and Hub Coordinator engaged
## KPIs/Success Metrics

### Per University Hub Data
- Student feedback surveys
- Per period registration with Hub
- Employment application rate
- Employment placement rate
- Employment return offer rate
- 1/3/5/10-Year Follow-up
  - Still with company? Why (not)?
  - Advancing in company?

### Per University Data
- Retention rate (neurodiverse)
- Dropout rate (neurodiverse)
- Per year enrolment (neurodiverse)

### Per Employer Data
- Number of employment opportunities provided
- Number of in-kind resources provided
- Success rate of employment programs (as defined by employer)
- Number of university employment forums attended (virtual and in-person)
- Number of students hired after they graduate
- Retention rate of neurodiverse hires
- Number of neurotypical employees trained in neurodiversity
# Risk and Mitigants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Mitigants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not enough students register for hub</td>
<td>• Robust communication strategy</td>
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</table>
| Hub has low placement rate                                         | • Consistent student feedback to address issues  
• Untapped assists with job matching  
• Require Uptimize training for students, employers, and universities                                     |
| Employers lose interest and leave hub                              | • Charter (as defined by the Advisory Group) requires minimum 1-year commitment from employers                                      |
| Lack of consistency across sub-hubs                                | • Advisory Group determines requirements for partner involvement and considers KPIs and feedback from participating Universities  
• Once critical mass is achieved for the NDH, the Advisory Group will also consider the establishment of an appropriate governing body |
| Students register to participate in the NDH late in their academic programs | • University to offer expedited plan for students who register late  
• Communication strategy encourages students to register ASAP                                                                 |
| More employers register for Hub than students (demand > supply)     | • Communication strategy to register maximum number of students  
• Charter requires employers to acknowledge no guarantee of student hires                                                              |
# Completion and Implementation

Complete actions from Sign-Off meeting (May 2018), including the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action Items</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Execute communications/promotion strategy to register as many students as possible</td>
<td>University Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer university hub resources as they become available (e.g. mentoring, workshops, etc.)</td>
<td>University Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-up in remaining states: ACT, SA, WA, TAS</td>
<td>DXC, Untapped</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organise Advisory Group workshop for partner organisations (recommended for July 2018)</td>
<td>Swinburne University</td>
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<td>Finalise and commit to NDH Advisory Group charter at July workshop</td>
<td>All Partner Organisations</td>
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<td>Establish formal process to capture commitment of partners and on-board new partners</td>
<td>All Partner Organisations</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ensure that university faculty/staff and partner employer staff complete autism awareness training</td>
<td>University &amp; Employer Partners, Uptimize</td>
</tr>
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<td>Commit to contractual arrangements between partner organisations, as required</td>
<td>Relevant Partner Organisations</td>
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**Timeline:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-Design Workshop</td>
<td>Jan 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign-Off</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>AG Workshop</td>
<td>Jul 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>First AG Quarterly Meetings</td>
<td>Sep 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec 2018</td>
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Thank You

Mitchell Butler and Christopher Rogers
Cornell University ILR School
Appendix
Comparable Programs in the U.S.

**College Internship Program**
- Founded 1984
- Academic support
- Life skills instruction
- Social skills development
- Internship & career support
- Health & wellness
- Creative arts
- Student advising
- Executive functioning
- Individualized approach
- $59,000 – $69,000 p. a.

**Autism Support Program**
- Founded 2008
- Academic success planning
- Life skills
- Social development
- Career interest planning
- Professional case management
- Psychoeducational strengths and needs assessment
- Peer mentoring & coaching
- Person-centered approach
- *AJ Drexel Autism Institute*

**Spectrum Support Program**
- Founded 2008
- Academic skills
- Self-care
- Social competence
- Self-advocacy
- Executive functioning
- Career preparation
- Communication skills
- Customized career courses
- Mentoring and coaching
- Training for faculty & staff
- $2500 per semester