



# PROJECT UPDATE

## Online Business Simulations

PEDAGOGY | ASSESSMENT | LEARNING

### About the Project

This project was funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) to evaluate and promote pedagogies that enhance the learning outcomes of online business simulations. The project demystifies the adoption of online simulations.

### Online Toolkit

The project website was launched in September 2014 and contains a range of resources (case studies, assessment ideas, marking rubrics, videos) for educators interested in using online business simulations. We will continue to add to the content throughout 2015. Visit us at:

[www.bizsims.edu.au](http://www.bizsims.edu.au)

### Workshops & Webinars

**Webinar:** Join us on 4 March for a webinar on 'Assessing Online Business Simulations' as part of the *Transforming Assessment* series.

**Adelaide Workshop:** Join us for a workshop on 'Transforming Learning with Online Business Simulations'

**Where:** UniSA City West

**When:** 9am-1pm, 26 March

For more event details visit:

[www.bizsims.edu.au/events](http://www.bizsims.edu.au/events)



## Educator Case Studies

The project has identified a large number of business simulations currently used by Australian tertiary education providers offering business courses. Case studies have been developed by interviewing educators who have adopted online business simulations.

The interviews uncovered the importance of interactive learning provided by business simulations. Although business simulations can be used in distance education settings, the majority of educators prefer to place students in teams and conduct the simulation with the educator present. This assists the students in collaborative decision-making often making the delivery of results engaging, fun and competitive.

**Key features** of the case studies include:

- Educator videos
- Unit/subject syllabus
- Learning outcomes
- Simulation-based pedagogy
- Assessment ideas and marking rubrics

Learning outcomes and assessment tasks vary but the common themes includes group work based on team participation, individual reflection and grounded business theory. The cases can be viewed on the project website.

### Project Partners

The University of Queensland | Griffith University | La Trobe University | University of South Australia | William Angliss Institute

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## Learning Barometer

The **Simulation Learning Barometer** has been developed as a benchmarking and monitoring device for measuring the impact of simulation-based pedagogies in business education. The barometer can also be used to monitor changes in learning outcomes following adjustments to pedagogy (e.g. assessment, learning resources).

The development of the Barometer included a number of steps, from the identification of key constructs and scales from the literature, conducting focus groups with students, reference panel feedback and a pilot and trial of pre- and post-simulation surveys in the first half of 2014.

The Simulation Learning Barometer was developed to capture cognitive, affective and behavioural learning outcomes based on Blooms taxonomy.

Initial findings from the trial have found that students have **high expectations of their learning outcomes** when using a simulation. There is also a **significant correlation between students' satisfaction with the simulation as a learning tool and perceived learning outcomes and learning activities associated with the course.**

The full barometer can be viewed and downloaded in several formats at [www.bizsims.edu.au](http://www.bizsims.edu.au)

## Business Graduate Capabilities

A number of forums were presented in late 2014 to showcase the use of online business simulations in higher education. Rather than focusing only on simulations the project team were keen to frame the forums around the broader topic of **innovative pedagogies for developing business graduate capabilities.**

Graduate business capabilities have taken on a new importance as a result of the **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)**, the development of **threshold learning outcomes** in several business fields as well as ongoing pressure from peak industry bodies to produce work ready graduates. The forum attracted over 110 participants in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and included the following showcase presentations:

- **Innovative Practices in Undergraduate Business Capstones**  
A/Prof Janis Bailey and Dr Liz van Acker, Griffith University
- **Integrated Business Consulting - Reality Driven Rigour**  
A/Prof Christine Burton, University of Technology, Sydney
- **Simulation-based Pedagogies in Business**  
A/Prof Pierre Benckendorff, The University of Queensland

Forum videos, slides and other resources are available at:

<http://www.bizsims.edu.au/business-graduate-capabilities-forum>

## Workshops and Presentations

The project team have been busy espousing the benefits of Online Business Simulations at a number of forums, workshops and conferences in late 2014 and early 2015.



**Photo:** Team members (L-R Pierre Benckendorff, Paul Whitelaw, Paul Reynolds, Marlene Pratt, Gui Lohmann) at the recent CAUTHE Conference

### The Student Voice

"The simulation provided a great challenge to push myself to deal with a complex environment, project task management, leadership, problem solving and team management."

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