

CAREER RESEARCHER

COURSE FACT SHEET

Career Researcher is an intensive pre-university programme for students preparing for competitive university applications and future academic success. It develops subject knowledge alongside the analytical, structured thinking expected at university level, using project-based work and guided inquiry as the primary vehicle for learning, and modelled on real organisational contexts.

The programme is built around projects incorporating real-world challenges shaped by real organisations. Students engage with authentic industry problems and the forms of reasoning typical of their chosen subject area, working through a clearly staged and supported process.

The course follows a practice-first approach: subject knowledge is not treated as abstract theory, but as the basis for purposeful investigation and evidence-based decision-making.

Course Aims

This course aims to:

- Develop readiness for university-level study by strengthening subject foundations in the chosen subject and by engaging students in enquiry-driven thinking characteristic of first-year university work.
- Build students' capacity to respond academically to complex, real-world tasks through project-based challenges. Projects are framed as real-world problems and are intended to stimulate university-style inquiry and help students identify what is required, gather relevant information, and construct and articulate coherent responses.
- Strengthen students' university application profile through tangible outputs. The programme includes outputs such as a Project Portfolio and a personal statement draft, allowing the work completed during the programme to translate into usable, application-ready evidence of achievement.
- Develop students' ability to operate through English in academically demanding contexts by applying a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach.
- Increase competence in understanding and producing authentic professional discourse. The programme is designed to expose students to real-world language, so students work with the kinds of language they may encounter in university and workplace contexts.

- Support students in communicating and defending ideas in formal settings through assessed project milestones, including guest-expert masterclasses, a mid-course live project review, and a final presentation and assessment session.

Content

Career Researcher is built around structured projects incorporating real-world challenges. Learning is framed as guided inquiry. Projects are designed to stimulate university-level analytical thinking and collaborative problem-solving, reflecting the programme's purpose: preparing students for academic success and competitive applications.

The programme is delivered through an integrated model in which subject learning and academic language development are embedded within project work.

Module 1: Guided Inquiry, Subject Foundations, and Academic Language

This strand supports students in building the conceptual and linguistic foundations required for effective project work.

Subject understanding develops through structured engagement with the kinds of problems encountered in the projects. Students learn what counts as evidence in their field, how arguments are constructed, and how decisions are justified in academically credible ways.

Language development is embedded throughout. Students engage with authentic professional discourse while receiving guided support from the tutor: breaking large briefs into manageable stages, clarifying key vocabulary and concepts, modelling of formal discussion language, and coaching rehearsal prior to presentations.

AI-supported learning is introduced as a literacy skill. Students are shown how to use AI to support learning (clarifying ideas and meaning, exploring vocabulary, and refining drafts) while evaluating outputs and adapting language into their own words. This promotes students' ability to draft, refine and improve their work – all fundamental in academic study – while reinforcing academic integrity and ownership of thinking.

Module 2: Project Work and Portfolio Production

This module strand is the practical core of the programme. Projects are designed as real-world challenges aiming to stimulate university-level inquiry, analytical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. The projects build on prior learning and apply the skills and knowledge introduced in Module 1.

Projects are shaped by real organisations, with our host-companies' input playing a defining role and each project being built around current live business issues. The project themes inform both the skills and knowledge students develop and practise and the outputs they produce. Students are assessed not only on subject knowledge, but on their ability to apply this knowledge within authentic problem contexts.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be better able to:

- Demonstrate increased subject understanding in one of the programme subjects by applying subject concepts to project tasks.
- Apply an inquiry-led approach to a real-world project brief by identifying the demands of the brief, engaging in research and discussion, and building a project response that is shaped by clear reasoning and sound justification.
- Use analytical thinking appropriate to the subject context, such as defining and justifying performance metrics in Business & Finance, evaluating constraints in Engineering, or comparing legal and commercial risk positions in Law.
- Engage more confidently with authentic professional language and demonstrate increased competence in interpreting and using it in context (e.g., discussions, research, and formal presentations).
- Communicate project reasoning formally in English with increased clarity.
- Draft a personal statement grounded in course experience, demonstrating improved ability to articulate interests, strengths, and direction.
- Use AI as a learning tool in a critically aware manner (e.g., clarifying ideas, exploring vocabulary, and refining drafts) while evaluating outputs and adapting language into their own words so that thinking and language development remain active and genuine.