

RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2025

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Title: AI Powered Networking Practice for the Regions

Abstract: The learning and teaching initiative addresses inequities in graduate employability by introducing an AI-powered networking simulation into a career planning course. Data from the National Graduate Outcomes Survey highlights the employment gap between students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds, particularly in regional areas.

Recognising that access to professional networks is a key barrier, the initiative leverages a custom GPT in ChatGPT to replicate an authentic networking experience. Students practice their elevator pitch, engage in a simulated conversation with a virtual professional, and receive immediate, constructive feedback.

The activity was highly engaging for on-campus students, as well as those online, with student feedback emphasising increased confidence, practical skill development, and appreciation for responsible AI integration. The outcomes demonstrate that embedding AI-based experiential learning can enhance employability, foster confidence, and reduce barriers to professional opportunities.