

# The Vertical City Campus - A course 'agnostic' approach

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The nature of the university campus is changing with increasing emphasis on asset performance and space utilisation. Vertical building typologies are becoming more prevalent to respond to higher density requirements. This trend, bolstered by tech-enabled pedagogy, presents opportunities for university life outside of the traditional campus boundaries, driving industry participation and cross-location collaborations. The need for flexible and adaptable space to allow for increased collaboration, presents new design challenges. This informs how tall buildings are used for tertiary learning spaces that can prepare students to be job ready and agile in their ability to think creatively in a competitive commercial environment.

This paper explores Western Sydney University's new CBD Campus known as 1PSQ in Parramatta, Sydney as a case study – designed by Woods Bagot.

## The New City Campus

Situated in the heart of the Parramatta CBD, Western Sydney University (WSU) is a pivotal campus connected to business and the community; a showpiece for a blended learning pedagogy in a future-focused, spatially diverse and student-centred environment.

## Adaptability – A new approach

The vision was to create a city campus, multidisciplinary in function, innovative in approach and entrepreneurial in spirit. With an 'agnostic' approach to the interior fit-out, the design allows for truly flexible and future-proofed learning environments.

The CBD campus includes substantial informal learning space and no lecture theatres, by providing flipped classrooms instead. The 'learning studio' concept emerged during the design process to create a unifying, central and flexible vertical campus environment for WSU Students encouraging 'peer to peer' engagement.

Responding to a flexible brief allowed the design team to test the blend between formal and informal learning spaces. The outcome is a flexible and adaptive environment that encourages learning through conversation.

## Technology

Blended learning and the use of virtual technologies are prominent features of WSU's engagement with learning. At 1PSQ, a variety of new technologies have been implemented to support blended and collaborative learning.

## Academic Workplace

For the academic workplace zones, an open plan office pod design enables a more fluent and cost efficient utilisation of space. There are no individual offices in this building. By embracing principles of open plan and moving away from the traditional cellular office model, WSU staff are invited to co-mingle with students, breaking down traditional campus hierarchies.