

### 1. What is Work Integrated Learning?

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is the intentional integration of theory and practice. It is the process whereby students learn through experience in practical settings. WIL is learning which is embedded in the experience of work, whether it is paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time. It may be embedded into a course or unit, or completed as an extra or co-curricular activity. Other terms used to describe WIL include practicum, internships, fieldwork, cooperative education, field education, sandwich course and service learning.

ECU is committed to embedding WIL in all undergraduate and postgraduate courses by ensuring that all aspects of teaching, learning, and research are inspired by industry and community partnerships. This is reflected in the University's mission, as identified in "Engaging Minds; Engaging Communities. Towards 2020." to "further develop valued citizens...through teaching and research inspired by engagement and partnerships". ECU's "Engagement through Learning and Teaching" publication highlights that engagement in learning and teaching enhances the quality of the student learning experience.

WIL at ECU aims to enhance the skills and attributes that have been identified as being critical to the success of our graduates – making significant contribution to our graduates' work and industry readiness. During WIL, students have the opportunity to learn by doing and being provided with valuable feedback – providing them with the opportunity to develop the skills and capabilities that employers and community expect.

### 2. The benefits of Work Integrated Learning

Your organisation can benefit from participating in this program in the following ways:

- Access to motivated, enthusiastic and willing students.
- The assistance of motivated students who bring the latest theory, techniques and ideas to the organisation.
- The opportunity to plan new ideas and establish new projects.
- The opportunity to complete existing projects.
- The advantage of having a dedicated person to work on special projects and tasks.
- Staff development through interaction and engagement with students and ECU staff.
- Developing links with the University and other organisations.
- The opportunity to identify prospective employees.
- The opportunity to provide feedback that shapes what future students are taught.
- A mutually-beneficial collaboration with ECU and its various Faculties and Schools.

### 3 Glossary of terms

- **Academics** are teachers and researchers in the higher education institution.
- **Assessment** is a set of processes that measure the outcomes of students' learning, in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed, and skills gained.
- **Course** is the program of study necessary to qualify for a University higher education award.
- **Unit** is a unit of study or unit of competency. A student must complete a group of units, or a unit set, to fulfil the requirements of a course.
- **Unit Coordinator** is the academic responsible for ensuring the integrity, relevance and currency of the unit in relation to both documentation and delivery.
- **Placement** or work placement is another term for work integrated learning experience.
- **Unit Outline** is the document issued by ECU to students which outlines how the unit will be taught.
- **Unit Plan** is a supplement to the unit outline which provides a clear statement on how the unit is being offered and run in a given offering period.

## ECU Work Integrated Learning General Guidelines

These Guidelines describe the respective responsibilities of the University (including those of relevant members of staff), students and Host Organisations (“Host”) engaged in Work Integrated Learning (“WIL”) placements generally. These Guidelines must be read in conjunction with, and subject to, any express written agreement between ECU and the Host concerning the relevant WIL activity.

### 1. Definitions

“Work Integrated Learning” (“WIL”) is a generic term used to describe organised strategies and practices that integrate theoretical learning with directly related workplace experience in credit-earning activities that contribute to final results in units. Structured assessment is an essential component of WIL.

Some of the most common forms of WIL are:

- professional practice;
- internship;
- field / clinical placements;
- industry-based learning;
- simulated workplace practice (for example, moot courts and in-house productions).

The Host is the organisation responsible for ensuring that appropriate provisions are made for a student on a WIL placement.

### 2. Principles

The principles that underpin ECU’s commitment to providing WIL opportunities for its students are:

- (a) opportunities for student to undertake WIL activities are expected to be provided in all undergraduate courses, but not all students are required or may be able to participate in WIL activities;
- (b) these opportunities are expected to act as the means for creating and sustaining partnerships with mutually beneficial outcomes for students, Hosts, the University and the wider community; and
- (c) these opportunities will be designed to comply with all applicable ECU policies, any professional accreditation requirements and with the provisions of relevant Commonwealth and State government legislation and regulations, in particular any applicable requirements pursuant to the *Higher Education Support Act (2003)(Cth)*.

### 3. WIL Curriculum

The curriculum for a WIL activity must:

- a) be primarily related to students’ academic study, with a secondary emphasis on the career aspirations of individuals;
- b) be a formal component of the overall course, either as a stand-alone unit or an element within a unit or units;
- c) focus on productive and meaningful workplace tasks that build on students’ theoretical knowledge base in a structured and appropriately supervised manner;
- d) have explicitly defined learning outcomes and an assessment methodology that relates academic theory to the workplace experience of students; and
- e) specify in detail the time commitment expected of students for the duration of the WIL activity.

#### **4. ECU and ECU Staff Responsibilities for WIL Activities**

##### **University Responsibilities**

The University will:

- a) manage risk in WIL activities by the appropriate identification of the roles of and allocation of responsibilities to staff, students and Hosts (including health and safety risk management measures such as medical clearances and criminal record checks).
- b) maintain adequate insurance cover for students engaged in unpaid WIL activities (Hosts are expected to provide appropriate insurance cover for students receiving payment for WIL activities).
- c) if Hosts require an assignment of intellectual property rights from students for intellectual property created by the students in the course of their WIL activities, ensure that students are aware of this requirement so that they can be in a position to provide informed consent to any such assignment on commencement of the WIL placement or activity (the assignment documentation will be the responsibility of the Host however); and
- d) provide appropriate training for its staff to facilitate their engagement in WIL.

##### **Unit Coordinators' Responsibilities**

The relevant Unit Coordinator is responsible for:

- a) liaising with students engaged in WIL activities and ensuring that assessment is conducted in accordance with ECU's Assessment Policy;
- b) in consultation with potential Hosts, identifying opportunities for WIL activities and allocating students to those activities;
- c) providing adequate and appropriate information for Hosts about ECU's expectations of all parties involved in WIL activities;
- d) regularly consulting with Hosts about the performance of students placed in those organisations and providing and recording details of timely feedback provided to students engaged in WIL activities.

##### **Student's Responsibilities**

An ECU Student undertaking a WIL placement is responsible for:

- a) complying with all applicable policies, procedures and requirements of the Host;
- b) complying with and, where relevant, providing evidence of meeting any pre-requisites for attendance at the workplace, including certification requirements and participation in induction programs;
- c) alerting the University and the Host to any medical condition or disability that might impact on the student's capacity to carry out their tasks and responsibilities on placement;
- d) committing themselves to full and active participation in the placement and its assessment;
- e) at the earliest opportunity, raising with the relevant Unit Coordinator any issues impacting adversely on their participation in the placement, including issues relating to their supervision, intellectual property rights, conflicts of interest or inter-personal conflicts; and
- f) acting in a professional manner consistent with the Student Charter and in accordance with the provisions of relevant ECU Statutes and Rules.

##### **Host's Responsibilities**

A Host is responsible for:

- a) committing itself to active and responsive participation in all aspects of a WIL placement, including:
  - o unless alternative supervision arrangements have been agreed upon, providing supportive supervision by staff members of the organisation;
  - o providing regular feedback on student's progress in placements; and
  - o responding in a constructive and timely manner to requests by the University or a student for changes in arrangements for a placement.
- b) providing a safe workplace and adequate training, including induction programs, in occupational health and safety policies, procedures and practices;
- c) ensuring that adequate and appropriate information is provided to students about its relevant policies and procedures; and

- d) unless alternative supervision arrangements have been agreed upon, appointing an individual workplace supervisor for each student placed in the organisation, with responsibility for:
  - o supporting and mentoring the student throughout the placement, including providing adequate induction and information about the organisation's policies and procedures;
  - o being aware of the expectations for the student which are inherent in the placement, including those relating to the range of experiences and learning opportunities to be provided to the student;
  - o providing regular feedback to the student and the University supervisor about the student's progress and maintaining records of such feedback;
  - o contributing to the assessment of the student by providing periodic evaluations of their performance and participating in the determination of their final result in the unit (as prescribed by the Unit Coordinator); and
  - o consulting the University supervisor at the earliest opportunity if concerns arise about the student's progress or conduct during the placement or if inter-personal disputes involving the student occur in the workplace.
- e) ensuring that the student is subject to the rules, regulations and workplace requirements as they apply to staff employed by the Host;
- f) informing all staff at the placement location that the student is engaged in a WIL placement or activity and describe the nature and purpose of the program;
- g) contacting the Unit Coordinator immediately if the student is absent from the placement, ill, injured, or asked to leave before the expiration of this agreement; and
- h) notifying and inducting the student into the appropriate Occupational Health & Safety systems within the Placement workplace including but without limitation:
  - o Health and safety policies
  - o Emergency and evacuation procedures (including emergency numbers)
  - o First aid arrangements (including names and phone numbers of first-aiders)
  - o Procedures for reporting accidents/incidents/risks
  - o Name and location of health and safety representative
  - o Details on the process for managing and resolving health and safety issues.

### **Confidentiality**

The Student and the University acknowledge the need to respect commercial-in-confidence and other material owned by the Host. ECU students may have access to privileged or confidential information in the course of their WIL placements or activities. In such cases, the Host may require the student to sign a confidentiality deed.

### **Insurance**

ECU has insurance policies in place that cover students participating in WIL. For an overview of the University's risk and insurance, please click on this link for further information and to access the latest Certificates of Currency: <http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/staff/centres/risk-and-assurance-services/insurance/certificate-of-currency>

The placements do not give rise to an employment relationship between the students and the Host or ECU. Unless the student and Host, on their own volition, enter into an employment contract or arrangement (which will be a private arrangement not involving ECU) students shall not be paid for their time on placement.

If students become employed or are paid in anyway, it will become necessary for the Host to maintain insurance cover (including workers compensation insurance) for that student.

## Workplace Supervisor Guidelines and Responsibilities

Workplace supervisors are critical in the success of placement programs and developing students through on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring. Students are very keen to observe and evaluate other professionals in the workplace and engage in feedback and self-reflection to further develop and refine their own skills for professional success.

### Guidelines for Hosts in WIL supervision:

#### 1. Project/program of work scope

Consider the scope of the proposed work the student will complete, outlining thoughts on the nature of the project/program of work and the required student skills. This clarifies, for all parties, the type of work the student will be completing during their placement.

#### 2. Placement preparation

- Ensure colleagues the work area are aware the student will be coming on placement and the purpose of their work. Workplace colleagues are very important to the value and enjoyment a student gains from the workplace experience.
- If required given the nature of the WIL placement or activity, ensure the student has a work station and the necessary equipment such as internet access.
- Agree on the start and finish dates and the day(s) they will be attending the workplace during this period.

#### 3. Project outcomes

If applicable, negotiate the project/program of work with the student at the beginning of their placement. This will include the student's roles and responsibilities during the placement and expected outcomes/deliverables upon completing the project.

#### 4. Workplace induction

Ensure students are given a warm welcome and are suitably inducted to matters relating to Occupational Health and Safety; confidentiality; ethical behaviour; organisational culture; dress code; professional conduct; organisational structure; reporting requirements; and organisational policies and procedures.

#### 5. Ongoing supervision

Unless alternative supervision arrangements are agreed upon with the University, supervise the student in a manner that enhances their learning experience. Practices may include:

- Setting realistic and measurable goals with the student at the beginning of the placement and evaluating completed tasks and achieved outcomes to enhance their future performance.
- Making time for informal and open discussions on the student's strengths and any areas requiring improvement.
- Conducting regular performance management meetings, drawing on the input and feedback of other supervisors, peers and/or mentors as appropriate.
- Encouraging student participation in team meetings to understand the bigger picture and to gain a better understanding of what is required of them and others within the workplace.
- Enabling participation, if appropriate, in professional development workshops, seminars or similar events in the workplace.
- Developing greater student awareness of organisational protocol and industry expectations of their role and responsibilities. Inadequate preparation in these areas can cause students to feel inferior and lack confidence during their placement.

- Adopting a mentoring role by encouraging students to reflect on their performance and ways they could improve in the future. Asking questions is critical to student learning as it encourages them to relate theory to practice and checks their disciplinary knowledge and understanding. It is also important to encourage students to reflect on their performance in employability skills such as team work, self-management and communication.
- Helping students gain a better understanding of what constitutes professional demeanour, ethical behaviour and efficient working practices through discussion, meetings, direct observation and feedback.
- Providing adequate support or advice regarding career choices and job requirements to enable students to gain an insight into what their profession entails on a day-to-day basis.
- Contacting the Unit Coordinator if any issues or concerns arise during the placement.

## 6. Evaluating performance

Evaluate student performance to assess whether the project outcomes and learning goals have been met. This should involve a de-briefing with the student at the end of the placement and completing a supervisor's evaluation which may form part of the student's assessments for the unit.

### Host paperwork to complete

Subject to any alternative agreements, forms or other arrangements that are agreed upon between the Host and ECU for a particular unit, Hosts are asked to assist with completing two documents:

1. *Student Placement Risk Management Form* (attached to this document)

This is to be completed by both the Host and student. The document outlines the risk management and other responsibilities arising from the placement. This form should be completed by the workplace supervisor (or other relevant party) and student together and submitted to the ECU Unit Coordinator before the commencement of the placement.

2. *Workplace supervisor evaluation form*

This forms part of the student's assessment for the academic unit associated with the placement. The completed form should align with the feedback given to students (and the Unit Coordinator) during the placement. The Unit Coordinator will provide you with an evaluation form for reporting back on the student's performance and achievement.

If you have any concerns or questions when completing the evaluation, please discuss these with the Unit Coordinator. This form needs to be completed and returned during the last week of the student's placement or by the last day of the academic semester (please liaise with your student on which day comes first).

An example of an evaluation form is provided at the end of this document.