“The only rule is that there are no rules”: Understanding the impact of WIL on staff workload

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Work integrated learning (WIL) courses can be more time consuming and resource intensive to design, teach, administer and support than traditional classroom based courses, as they generally require different approaches to curricula and pedagogy, as well as additional administrative and pastoral responsibilities. Workload and resourcing issues are reported as key challenges to the implementation of WIL, but to date most of the reported evidence on WIL workload is anecdotal. To address this gap in the literature and inform institutional practice, a two-year study was initiated to collect empirical data on the type and amount of work involved in the provision of WIL courses within an Australian university. This paper reports qualitative findings from the first year of the study. An analysis of interview responses from eight academic staff identified three key differences between WIL and classroom based courses: i) the continuous nature of staff workload in WIL; ii) the demands of individual case management of students and partners; and iii) increased administrative responsibilities. Implications for policy and practice are discussed.

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