There is now a belief that universities need to think about their role in relation to student satisfaction in order to survive (Finney & Finney, 2010). Universities are beginning to recognise that higher education is a service industry (DeShields, Kara & Kaynak, 2005). Accordingly, it is critical for universities to constantly improve the quality of educational programs and strive for high standards in course content. The student satisfaction approach is now said to be analogous to the development of a culture of continuous quality improvement (Harvey, 1995). We consider a number of variables that contribute to student satisfaction when undertaking a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) program in a marketing degree. The main objective of the study is to compare different formats of WIL to identify the preferred option for improving students’ satisfaction at university. Graduate capabilities, the impact of learning activities and knowledge of professional behaviour for their future careers are considered in this light. Students prefer an off-campus experience where they self-select the organisation and the project. The favourable elements including; established industry partnerships, professional engagement, diversity and equality, may be realised through a combination of both formats where industry partners come to campus to inform and students can then go off site to identify potential projects with companies in alignment with their interests and strengths. Students will not only benefit from this diversity but also have higher levels of satisfaction through the engagement of personally relevant material enhancing graduate capabilities increasing employability, the increased satisfaction aligned to the PACE learning activities and knowledge of professional behaviour that informs students for their future careers.

Keywords: Work integrated learning, higher education, student satisfaction and marketing education