Dipping your toe in the water to help students get their feet in the door – lessons learned in developing a successful Arts Internship Program

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Although there has been growing support for student internships and work placements in the past 10 years, questions relating to their academic merit, their sustainability and resourcing still remain. Management are understandably wary about committing to a program requiring considerable input from academic and administrative staff and academics have concerns about taking on additional workload in the context of demands to improve L&T and research outcomes. This is particularly the case for an internship program for students in generic degrees such as the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Sciences, where there has not been the drive from industry to provide internships and where there is no specific professional body to provide support in setting up such a program.

This presentation addresses the above concerns and puts forward a model which provides positive outcomes for each of the key stakeholders: students, host organisations and academic mentors.

It highlights several key ingredients for a successful Arts internship program:

- getting the structure right and keeping it simple
- maintaining integrity and balance in the ‘triangle of responsibility’
- adding value and capacity to the student experience
- maximising opportunities for the Faculty through engagement with industry