SHOWCASE

Something old, something new, something borrowed; what works for you?
Researching multi-disciplinary attitudes towards WIL to inform a strategic approach to policy implementation

HEATHER SMIGIEL
CERI MACLEOD
*Flinders University, Adelaide, SA, Australia*

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is becoming an increasingly fundamental component of higher education. As a result of growing demands from industry to produce work-ready graduates, many universities are aiming to ensure their students have the opportunity to link theory and practice at some point within their studies. Whilst WIL has been embedded into teaching for many years in some disciplines, it is a relatively new concept in others, requiring the development of alternative approaches to established teaching practices including curriculum design and assessment, with associated implications on workload allocations and resourcing.

This paper considers the implications of overseeing the implementation of WIL from a strategic, organisational perspective within a multi-disciplinary environment at a specific university. It focuses on difficulties being faced by academic areas where WIL is emerging as a new practice, and discusses these within a university-wide context.

The paper draws on information obtained from interviews with Deans of Schools at a specific university, on steps required within their schools in preparing work-ready graduates through WIL. It considers current practice and implications for the future, particularly from a university-wide policy context. It also considers some of the key factors which enable or, in turn, restrict the effective implementation of WIL.