Showcasing University-wide Initiatives of Non-Placement WIL

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The quest to provide WIL experiences to increasing numbers of students is the aspiration of most universities in recognition of demand by employers for work-ready graduates. Co-op years, internships, or other types of placements which have been the hallmark of traditional WIL experiences are increasingly difficult to secure. Therefore other types of WIL have come to the fore as alternative work-related experiential learning activities. At Deakin University, a major course renewal process has provided the impetus and resources to develop a course-wide range of such alternative, but equally rich, WIL learning activities and assessments. A case in point is a course in humanitarian assistance in which students begin their WIL activity by developing a response plan to an online simulated emergency humanitarian scenario. This is then followed by a live simulation of a different scenario in which students and sector representatives role-play operational and strategic functions. Students also interview personnel, conduct a press conference, facilitate funder and response team meetings and reflect on the development of their graduate and leadership capabilities. This example, among others at Deakin, offers students authentic, professionally-based, integrated and scaffolded WIL learning experiences that are an alternative and complement to placements. The sharing of these initiatives may serve as a stimulus for expanding WIL offerings.

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