### University/Institution: Macquarie University

### Name/title of example of inclusive WIL practice: Faculty Participation and Community Engagement in Science (PACE) unit

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### Web: [http://mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/professional_and_community_engagement/about_pace/](http://mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/professional_and_community_engagement/about_pace/)

### Key Words: equity of access; English as a second language

### Discipline: Science/Multidisciplinary

### Overview of example of inclusive WIL practice (i.e. describe model, method of delivery, student and staff numbers involved, optional/compulsory, credit bearing; who is responsible for arranging placements - student or university/institution; if students are placed singly or in teams)

A student completing a major or program in a science department, which at present does not provide an opportunity to engage in a professional or community based learning opportunity, has the option of completing an activity through enrolling in a faculty PACE shell unit (program requirements permitting). A faculty PACE unit (i.e., FoSC300) is an elective unit for credit that provides equity of access to PACE.

A PACE faculty shell unit offers activities to students to suit their interests and skills. A student can usually choose their own activity or the faculty staff can help them find one. A faculty PACE unit, such as FoSC300, supports the student throughout their chosen PACE activity, and puts the activity in an academic framework. Activities are either group-based or individual and are completed in a range of locations – locally, regionally or internationally as well as on or off campus.

### How are students from diverse backgrounds catered for in this example of inclusive WIL practice? (e.g. special consideration; adjustments; financial assistance; flexibility in assessment; etc)

Once a student enrolls in a faculty PACE unit it can be difficult for some students, such as international students or those whose first language is not English, to find their own activity or placement. The faculty PACE office can assist the student by focusing on their strengths and identifying opportunities with partners where there can be mutual benefits for both student and partner. In one particular situation, a student enrolled in a faculty unit (FOSC300) had difficulty finding an activity as her levels of communication in English were not strong. The student had Cantonese language skills so a partner was sought who would be able to use these language skills in the activity or within their organisation. The student also expressed a desire to work with older people. An organisation within a council was identified as a potential partner, they sought a student with Cantonese language skills to help their older citizens use electronic devices such as iPads and iPhones. This community group was a multicultural group which worked with older people in the community in many different languages and were open every day during the week. The student was able to attend and assist the Cantonese group members with using these devices. The student was given a full orientation into the organisation and provided with other volunteering opportunities. This was an ideal “marriage” between a
partner who needed the language and technology skills of this student and our student was able to provide these skills in an activity where her perceived language weakness could be her strength.

3 benefits of this practice?
1. The student becomes less concerned about their language skills in the placement, and in fact sees their multi-lingual skills as a bonus.
2. Builds partner relationships from increased communication between the PACE office and partner.
3. Builds student confidence in their ability to mix and work well in the professional environment.

3 challenges of this practice?
1. The student doesn’t get the chance to improve English language skills which will be needed when she goes into the workforce.
2. The student doesn’t get to practice job seeking in the ‘real world’ and therefore misses the opportunity to develop their job seeking skills and the realities of dealing with employers.
3. It can be labour intensive on the PACE office to recruit individual activities and “match” students according to individual needs.

How do you evaluate the effectiveness of this practice?
We evaluate the effectiveness of this practice by sending an evaluation form to the partner at the end of the activity so they can advise if it went well. The student also has to reflect on the experience and this is provided to the unit convenor.

What plans are there to improve/further develop and or extend this example of inclusive WIL practice?
Based on this experience the PACE office now reviews the class lists for elective and faculty PACE units and identify any students that may have issues with English language skills. We then meet with the unit convenor and offer our assistance and share our previous experience. This pre-empts any potential issues and makes the unit convenor aware that we are here to support them if necessary.