Introduction/Background

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is committed to a real world learning approach (QUT Blueprint 2014, p.6) that makes learning authentic and engaging, while building active and cooperative connections with industry, so that graduates are strong and successful competitors in today's rapidly changing workplaces. The university has a 2016 target of 60 per cent of new graduates to have experienced WIL (QUT Blueprint 2014, p.6). This case study focuses on how WIL is implemented in the urban development disciplines at QUT; factors that impact on the model of WIL adopted; challenges in responding to diversity; and how the model responds to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

Context

Urban Development Disciplines in the Faculty of Science and Engineering, QUT

Students in urban development can study one of four undergraduate degrees, each offering three or four year, full-time programs in urban development; construction management, property economics, urban and regional planning and quantity surveying. The Bachelor of Urban Development focuses on critical elements of the built environment including construction and project management; planning; and property matters and contemporary challenges of achieving sustainable design, climate change proofing and adaptation.

WIL is mandatory in these disciplines and usually a capstone experience. The WIL model combines a 12 credit-point unit in conjunction with a required number of work placement days for professional body recognition (see Table 1).

Table 1: Required number of work placement days by discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Prof accred</th>
<th>WIL duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Urban Development</td>
<td>4 years full time</td>
<td></td>
<td>*80 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>*80 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Economics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and Regional Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity Surveying</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Property Economics</td>
<td>3 years full time</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Australian Institute of Building (AIB) no longer has a specific number of days required for professional recognition*

The mandatory WIL unit (SEB701/BEB701) involves attendance, participation, observation, critical reflection and report writing linked to a discipline related workplace experience. Unit fees are used to provide specialised coordination, teaching, and administrative support.
Student profile in urban development

In the past five years, urban development students enrolled in the unit have been predominantly in their twenties (20 to 29 years) and predominantly male (more than 70 per cent). A slight increase in female student numbers in 2015 may be as a result of professional bodies actively promote gender balance in the professions including working groups to promote female participation and support groups for females in the different industries. Domestic students constitute approximately 90 per cent with few indigenous students represented despite a slight increase in 2015. For the same period students presenting as low SES have declined in number from 7.73 per cent in 2012 to 5.91 per cent in 2015. Table 2 provides an overview of the urban development student profile enrolled in SEB701/BEB701 from 2011 to 2015 according to demographic indicators.

Table 2: SEB701/BEB701 – Urban Development student profile trend data 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19</td>
<td>32.34%</td>
<td>37.18%</td>
<td>8.74%</td>
<td>8.61%</td>
<td>8.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24</td>
<td>45.96%</td>
<td>45.30%</td>
<td>66.99%</td>
<td>74.91%</td>
<td>68.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>15.74%</td>
<td>10.68%</td>
<td>16.99%</td>
<td>10.49%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
<th>25.11%</th>
<th>22.22%</th>
<th>26.21%</th>
<th>24.72%</th>
<th>32.02%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74.89%</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
<td>73.79%</td>
<td>75.28%</td>
<td>67.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indigenous

| Total     | 0.00%  | 0.85%  | 0.49%  | 1.12%  | 1.48%  |

Low SES

| Total     | 7.66%  | 7.73%  | 5.34%  | 4.87%  | 5.91%  |

Indicative Citizenship

| Australian| 94.89% | 92.31% | 92.23% | 92.13% | 89.66% |
| Overseas  | 5.11%  | 7.69%  | 7.77%  | 7.87%  | 10.34% |

Disability

| Total     | <6     | 0      | <6     | <6     | 6      |

First in Family

| No university for parents | 0.43% | 0.43% | 0.49% | 8.61%* | 0.49% |
| No post-secondary for parents (university or other) | 0.43% | 0.43% | 0.49% | 2.25% | 0.99% |

*First in Family data for 2014 is anomalous, but correct according to data extract from QCR dated 28 August 2015

Source: QUT Corporate Reporting Unit EFTSL trend 2011-2015 pivot table as at 22 August 2015 (Winter, A)

Responding to student diversity in WIL

The WIL model which combines the mandatory unit with a required number of work placement days is designed around three learning phases i.e. preparatory; placement; and retrospective phases (Boles & Peach 2013; Smigiel & MacLeod 2008).
Table 2: Three learning phases of WIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>Early in their degree students are briefed about WIL requirements. Support is provided via a Community Blackboard site; information sessions each semester in core second year classes; and voluntary lunchtime seminars in collaboration with careers and employment services. The Community Blackboard site provides tools and information on how to find a work placement; what to do during a placement and how to go about completing the WIL unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Work placement duration in urban development ranges from 14 - 90 days. It is usually a paid placement which students source and negotiate themselves. Students are able to use relevant, existing employment toward this requirement. Students also have the choice to complete the work placement in semester break or part-time during semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>The unit is delivered in blended mode. It combines intensive, face to face introductory lectures with webinars facilitated by staff throughout the semester. Assessment includes detailed analysis and reflection in the form of reports, field notes, work logs, and employer feedback. Students enrol in the unit in the semester in which they are able to demonstrate completion (or near completion) of the required number of work days.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are strategies in place to support student participation and progression in each phase. For example, staff in the disciplines teach the WIL unit and provide limited support to students as required while on placement. Students can use existing, relevant employment but if they have difficulty in finding a placement limited assistance is provided including preparation workshops and links to career services. Students are also referred to the university-wide Real World Placement Program (RWPP) for specific support in securing work experience. Targeted support is also provided for international students through the university-wide International Student Employment Preparation Program. For example, international students in quantity surveying have encountered difficulties finding work experience in Australia. In order to assist these students tailored workshops are offered on job seeking and ‘marketing yourself’. If students cannot find Australian work experience they can seek approval to use overseas work experience but must write a report comparing the profession in Australia to the profession overseas. It is also possible for work placements to be secured outside the course discipline such as in planning and quantity surveying where work placements can be difficult to find. These students may seek work experience in broader built environment related work experience such as property and construction management.

The university-wide online placement system (InPlace) is used to register work placement activities of individual students. In order to identify issues and/ or concerns, students are asked to fill out a questionnaire and identify potential work experience issues such as: personal issues that may impact on their participation; the work experience is not directly related to their discipline area; or they will not be able to complete minimum required number of days by the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in the unit.

The WIL model attempts to cater for diverse students by enabling students to decide when to undertake a work placement (e.g. during semester break or part-time during semester) and the option of utilising existing employment. The WIL unit also tries to accommodate diverse
student needs by affording flexibility i.e. it is available over three semesters and delivered in blended mode. Blended delivery is intended to reduce feelings of isolation in large classes; encourage peer learning and peer networks; improve communication processes (Peach, Gomez, Ruinard, 2013). To some extent this flexibility affords opportunities for increased access and participation for most students.

Students’ surveyed as part of this OLT project agreed that there were benefits of WIL such as:

- gave me focus on what I actually need to learn
- practical learning
- exposure to a professional environment
- hands on experience
- confirmed my interest in the field which made study easier
- exposure to larger scale projects
- being within the industry everyday
- I definitely learnt a lot about the industry and practices of construction management.

However, there are challenges as acknowledged in 2012 Faculty Review. The review found that academic and administrative leadership of the WIL model is a complex activity. Increasing student enrolments and reduced resources demand teaching approaches that are sustainable but that also respond to discipline specific requirements. In relation to students from diverse backgrounds the review found that:

- The extent to which work experience can be done overseas must be defined.
- To encourage and support SEF students to secure their own WIL placements, the WIL contacts database should be refined; development of faculty-wide academic and administrative support including discipline based mentoring and WIL oversight for all students but particularly those students experiencing difficulties in either securing or completing WIL; students should have more time to complete WIL requirements.
- Students are required to be proactive and well-organised in seeking placements is required but some students (especially international) require additional support to find placements.

Discipline and support staff interviewed as part of this OLT project also commented on the challenges of finding a placement, negotiating the conditions of the placement, and the financial issues that some students experience. For example,

...[it] means who to approach and what to do when they get a no. There is a high fear factor especially from international students. If they have not secured a work placement there is panic when it comes to the last moment and they can see their peers have finished their placements.”

Students have to accommodate different ways of working and communicating – which can be challenging. Another staff member observed:

“Industry does not respond well to email and that places students well out if their comfort zone. They have to apply face-to-face communication and physically approach their contact.”

Other challenges identified by staff included:
unpaid placements are often unaffordable for students
students working in non-related disciplines can lead to loss of income
some students struggle to find their own work placement and negotiate conditions particular to the placement
not all employers create a positive/valuable work experience
students come from different experiential backgrounds
students views on the mandatory WIL unit range from negative to highly supportive
some employers are reluctant to employ international students due to differences in language, culture, and concerns about visa conditions
some international students are reluctant to change their approach when contacting potential employers despite a reported 50-100 failed contacts
students, especially those international students, don’t know where to start looking for a placement, while personality and cultural differences can contribute to their isolation
course progression is delayed if the WIL component is not complete
some single parents have difficulties accessing sufficient child care time.
Individual or parents’ income levels often exclude access to welfare support, but prevent students taking on placements because of work commitments.

Students surveyed also identified challenges:

- unpaid so could not dedicate entire time to it
- no money for weeks due to unpaid work
- Time - Time - Time!
- different databases/systems then what was taught in uni
- lack of Responsibility
- its (the workplace) a pack of unorganised people
- conflicting set out between work placement and QUT e.g. Bill of Quantity set-out
- made me realise how redundant some subjects are
- lack of clear pathways for progression
- group assignments becomes an issue when meeting with students who do not work or do not work full time
- all ideas get buried first and after several month the (work) supervisor comes up with my glorious idea and gets a pat on the back!
- lack of mentorship
- frustration and no flexibility
- hard to find work place

Students suggested the experience could be improved through:

- better training structure
- careers evening at the start of the subject with representatives from companies willing to take on students (WIL - first lecture on Saturday)
- better understanding of academic requirements and how to meet the criteria i.e. number of days was unclear, how to lodge workplace being undertaken was unclear.
• there is nothing the University could except understand that full time employment and employer expectation and performance pressures affect students. Employer demands on time and location, travel, project timeframes and client deadlines is far more important than that of the university.

• mentor programs, job prospects as a result of working placements (where appropriate).

• ditch the reflection, assess yourself and then have the employer assess you as well. This is not about correct formatting. Organize debriefing sessions about the placement... this would be far more beneficial than writing another assignment.

Since 2014 a Faculty wide curriculum review process has been underway and changes will be made to the way WIL is delivered from 2017. A key focus is on student employability, and in bringing together all the experiences students need to better prepare for the workplace. Urban Development discipline leaders are engaging with a cross section of the discipline’s industry employers to explore ways to deliver a range of experience in WIL, and have identified some key areas in graduate workplace skills and knowledge that will either be embedded into the general curriculum, or incorporated into the designated WIL unit. The WIL unit will also comprise the work placement component of student’s coursework, necessary for professional accreditation for all Urban Development disciplines.
Curtin University Case Study

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Curtin values authentic learning and is committed to developing graduate capabilities through embedding WIL in all courses. Established partnerships and flexible arrangements with industry enable the development of professional practice to be embedded within industry, promoting reciprocal and mutually beneficial outcomes. This case study was compiled using a combination of University data pertaining to course enrolments; staff interviews; and findings from a student survey. Degree programs included in the case study are:

- Bachelor of Arts (Urban and Regional Development)
- Bachelor of Science (Surveying)
- Bachelor of Commerce (Property Development and Valuation)

Table 1 below provides an overview of each degree regarding duration, professional accreditation, student enrolments and Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>FACULTY</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>PROF ACCRED.</th>
<th>COMPULSORY WIL &amp; DURATION</th>
<th>STUDENT ENROLMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Arts (Urban and Regional Planning)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 years full time</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No compulsory WIL unit, other forms of WIL</td>
<td>801Headcount 645 EFTSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Science (Surveying)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 years full time</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes 14 DAYS</td>
<td>208 Headcount 165.3 EFTSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Commerce (Property Development and Valuation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 years full time</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes 120 days</td>
<td>59 Headcount 31.6 EFTSL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Urban and Regional Planning

1.1 About the degree

The Bachelor of Arts (Urban and Regional Planning) is a full time 4 year undergraduate degree. The degree incorporates interdisciplinary learning experiences to address contemporary environmental, social and design issues concerning the community. The course is recognised by the Planning Institute of Australia as fulfilling the educational requirements for membership of the Institute. Outcomes for graduates are focussed on the application of theories and concepts of urban and regional planning to the Western Australian context. Students are encouraged to think critically and challenge widely accepted theories and practices to generate creative solutions to planning issues.

1.2 Structure of WIL Program

The Urban and Regional planning undergraduate degree at Curtin does not include a formal WIL placement component. The course undergoes a rigorous professional accreditation process despite the absence of an industry placement. Over the last five years opportunities for graduates to source employment have diminished due to a more competitive job market. In the past, many students were employed in positions that encompassed a planning requirement during their studies so were able to apply the theoretical aspects of the course to the practical employment-based settings. Recently the job market has become ‘normalised’ where graduates need to compete for positions with a greater number taking longer to secure employment post-graduation. When the demand for employees in the planning profession was high, many universities responded to the needs of industry by developing undergraduate degrees, creating considerable competition for students in WA.

To compensate for the lack of a professional practice unit, the degree has other forms of WIL embedded across the degree. These take the form of industry-based projects, community activities, research undertakings, and real-life case studies. Practitioners in the field are frequent guests to the university. These guest lectures do not simply involve passive interaction with students, in contrast students are given the opportunity to engage and network with industry personnel. Industry representatives are highly engaged and very willing to participate in the student experience frequently allocating a significant proportion of their day to working with students. Staff suspect there is a vested interest as companies rival for quality candidates and frequently offer high-performing students jobs prior to course completion.

Through-out the degree staff engage with industry and community to varying degrees. In many circumstances Curtin offers a consultancy type service to industry (for no payment) to provide students with an authentic experience which requires work-based expertise and skill development. The course also encompasses a large amount of studio-based work which enables students to replicate workplace behaviours. Many of the sessional lecturers are practitioners who maintain employment in the planning profession.

1.3 Student profile in urban and regional planning

The student cohort is particularly homogenous. Two-thirds are male, one Indigenous student is currently studying the degree, a very small proportion of international students are enrolled, and no students with apparent physical disabilities are evident. Generally, employers consider the student cohort to be very confident with excellent oral skills although
report a lack of proficiency in written professional skills. Table 1 provides an overview of the Urban and Regional Planning student profile from 2010 to 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>EFTSL</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Indigenous Male</th>
<th>Indigenous Female</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Low SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>79.90%</td>
<td>20.10%</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>8.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>699.6</td>
<td>80.31%</td>
<td>19.69%</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
<td>8.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>689.9</td>
<td>79.14%</td>
<td>20.86%</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
<td>1.55%</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>622.5</td>
<td>78.31%</td>
<td>21.69%</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
<td>1.69%</td>
<td>6.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>603.3</td>
<td>78.16%</td>
<td>21.84%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>1.67%</td>
<td>5.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Student and graduate perceptions
Ten students responded to the student survey, the majority of which had a compulsory placement as a component of their degree. The students were required to source their own placements with little support from the University. All respondents agreed that the placement had a significant impact on the degree of satisfaction with their studies but a greater level of support and advice was required to gain maximum benefit.

Qualitative data from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) administered to 2013 graduates highlights the best aspects of the degree and those areas graduates deem to need improvement. Figure 1 below shows that graduates are positive about the quality of teaching staff, the fieldwork components and practical knowledge gained through exposure to industry. Areas needing improvement are content of units, practical work placements, real-life experience and assignments. While the course encompasses many WIL experiences for students, analysis of the CEQ comments suggests preference for a work placement experience.
1.5 Staff perceptions
Urban and Regional Planning staff deemed the demographics of the student cohort to be relatively homogenous. Due to the focus of the Australian planning context, only a small international cohort study the degree. Language and cultural diversity creates challenges for teaching staff with staff reporting that English Language Proficiency and the ability of international students to meet required standards were a constant problem. The major challenge staff encounter is that of students with a mental illness. All staff commented on the high frequency with which students cite depression as a reason for late submissions or inability to participate in activities. In response to these requests, the teaching area is lenient with timelines and generally feels the university has systems in place to support students who require additional support. However, there was a perception that institutional policies aimed at accommodating students’ diverse needs lacked resourcing and adequate implementation. Staff reported workload associated with enacting WIL components of the curriculum was a consistent dilemma for the teaching area. The consensus was that WIL generates significant workload and engagement with external stakeholders is poorly recognised or rewarded across the University. It was felt that designated time in the teaching staff workload model was required for industry engagement, supporting diverse students and enacting WIL curriculum. A common theme through the interview data is the need for information pertaining to the student cohort so staff can plan and deliver student experiences appropriately.
2. Bachelor of Science (Surveying)

2.1 About the degree
The Bachelor of Surveying is a 4 year full time (or equivalent part time) science-based course. The teaching area recognises that modern surveying requires a multi-disciplinary approach which incorporates computing, engineering, environmental science, geography, geology, management, mathematics and physics. Curtin University is the only institution in Western Australia to offer a comprehensive degree program in surveying. Graduates may become eligible for full membership to and certification by the Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI) and accreditation by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Accreditation requirements include a compulsory work based experience.

2.2 Structure of WIL Program
WIL in surveying at Curtin comprises a compulsory 200 hour placement in the final year of the degree. This is a requirement for accreditation and is driven by licencing requirements for graduate Surveyors. Students are often employed in the industry or are required to source their own placement. This is relatively easy when the economy is buoyant. Industry supports the course by offering substantial scholarships for 4-6 students annually. The placement is not embedded in a unit but an add-on course requirement. Students are provided minimal preparation activities prior to placement and currently there is no formal debriefing exercise undertaken. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities are scaffolded across the course in preparation for the placement. Activities such as an industry-driven project unit where students consult with employers and work on real-life industry-based case studies, orientate students to the workplace and prepare them for the industry placement. Students are provided with multiple opportunities to engage with industry throughout their degree. A new professional practice unit was introduced in semester two 2014. This is not a compulsory unit but if selected by students, will provide additional opportunities for engaging and networking with industry.

Assessments include:

- A work-based performance questionnaire completed by the host organisation
- Student Portfolio – student reflection
- Student presentation
2.3 Student profile in surveying

Table 3 below shows the enrolment trends over a 5 year period with a breakdown of percentages of various equity groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>EFTSL</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Low SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>165.3</td>
<td>94.23%</td>
<td>5.77%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>137.8</td>
<td>95.16%</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>128.3</td>
<td>95.21%</td>
<td>4.79%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>120.6</td>
<td>94.16%</td>
<td>5.84%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>119.1</td>
<td>96.08%</td>
<td>3.92%</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
<td>1.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the student cohort is male with a very small contingent registering as having a disability. There are currently no Indigenous students enrolled according to the data. In 2014, 12.5% of the students identified as low SES, representing twenty six students.

2.4 Student and graduate perceptions

All ten respondents to the student survey were required to undertake a placement at some stage during their degree in order to graduate. All respondents were required to source their own placements and opinions regarding the quality of support provided by the University were varied. Students valued the placement as a means of gaining practical skills and developing professional capabilities. Several of the comments were critical of the university – industry partnership and the lack of organisation. Some industry mentors were perceived as under-prepared to support students’ learning. The wordles in Figure 2 below demonstrate themes emerging from qualitative data in the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). Data from the 2013 CEQ (graduates from 2013) is presented in the visual representations of graduates’ perceived best aspects and areas needing improvement.

Figure 2: Best aspects and needs improvement surveying
The practical aspects of the course clearly emerge as both the best aspects and needing improvement. Students are also satisfied with the quality of staff and the quality of fieldwork and camps which involve work-based learning. Students perceived that some units were disconnected and not useful in preparing for the workforce.

2.5 Staff perceptions
Staff commented on the strong industry partnerships the School had nurtured to ensure optimal authentic learning experiences for students. On the topic of student diversity, the interviewees agreed that the student cohort was uniform with minimal representation of minority groups. The staff didn’t perceive any issues with catering to student diversity. The main challenges arose with international students who have difficulty sourcing placements and students experiencing mental illness. Staff agreed that some profiling information would assist in the preparation of course delivery.

3. Property Development and Valuation
3.1 About the degree
The Bachelor of Commerce (Property Development and Valuation) is a 3 year full time (or equivalent part time) course. Property Development and Valuation is a major within the Bachelor of Commerce. The major is designed for students seeking a career in the property industry including residential and commercial development, asset and fund management, sales and leasing, investment and valuation. This major provides a practical education covering broad disciplines such as economics, finance and investment, law and construction. Students studying this course have the opportunity to engage with industry through guest lectures and networking events. Accreditation requirements mandate a compulsory work-based experience with all students being eligible for membership of the Australian Property Institute (API) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) upon successful completion of the course.

3.2 Structure of WIL Program
Students in the Property and Valuation Major in the Bachelor of Commerce are exposed to industry operations from the first year of the degree. Practitioners from the field are frequent visitors to the campus enabling students to engage with industry. Students undertake 120 hours in the workplace in the final semester of the degree. The Vice president of the Australian Property Institute is a Curtin employee and has many years working in the professional environment. This enables inclusion of authentic examples from industry in the curriculum. Real-world assessments are a feature of the student experience with regular and constructive feedback for students in preparation for the workplace. Students attend three preparatory sessions prior to their work placement. The sessions cover risk, insurances, professional code of conduct, cultural issues and potential conflict. Valuation methodology is also revisited to ensure students are adequately prepared. During placements students complete a diary which is signed off by the employer on a weekly basis. Each student is allocated a workplace mentor for the duration of the placement who provides a final report on student performance. While there is no formal debrief session or opportunity to reflect, students are provided the opportunity to share experiences and collaborate on challenges confronted and strategies implemented while in the workplace.
3.3 Student profile
Table 4 below shows the enrolment trends over a 2 year period with a breakdown of percentages of various equity groups. Due to substantial course changes, the previous course cannot be compared to the current one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>EFTSL</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Low SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>83.05%</td>
<td>16.95%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>81.82%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that the majority of the students are male with about one-third female. Students with a disability account for approximately two students across the entire cohort of 59. A small percentage of the students have identified as low SES.

3.4 Student and graduate perceptions
The four respondents to the student survey viewed the compulsory placement as beneficial for performing real-word tasks, taking responsibility for work-based activities, and networking with industry. These students expressed a desire to have more quality time with workplace supervisors as they valued their feedback based on professional experience. Qualitative data from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) administered to 2013 graduates highlights the best aspects of the degree and those areas graduates deem to need improvement. Figure 1 below shows that graduates are positive about the quality of teaching staff, the learning opportunities and the frequent contact with industry personnel. The structure of the final year and the mandatory requirements emerge as strong themes in the areas needing improvement. While only twelve responses were recorded for each category, respondents appear to agree on the dominant themes.

Figure 3: Best aspects and needs improvement property and valuation major
3.4 Staff perceptions
Staff agreed that staff industry expertise was pivotal to quality learning experiences for students. Staff perceived that very few equity issues are apparent with a homogenous student cohort apart from a very small number of international students. Minor equity issues seem to occur during assessment submission time but these are easily resolved and largely the result of mental illness. The area has implemented a streamlined deferred assessment process to accommodate students experiencing mental illness. The University has well-developed systems for meeting the needs of these students and provides a range of support services. Time was considered the only barrier to responding to students’ specific needs. Staff felt ill-equipped to deal with student diversity and expressed a desire for greater awareness and understanding when catering to different students.

4. Conclusion
Catering for international students and students with mental health issues arose as the dominant challenges for staff. Staff expressed a need for more ‘intelligence’ about the student cohort to enable appropriate preparation and delivery of learning experiences. There was willingness to embrace diversity but a sense under-preparedness and a lack of experience to manage challenges associated with diverse student groups. The perception is that the University has good support systems for students but little resourcing to support the teaching and learning areas. The perception is that the University has good support systems for students but little resourcing to support the teaching and learning areas. Data exposed minimal diversity but may be due to students unwilling to self-disclose. Available data provides scant information, is time-consuming to access, and doesn’t provide relevant information to inform teaching strategies. Another possibility is that the disciplines included in this study do not attract students from minority groups due to the stringent accreditation requirements and the focus on the Australian context rather than a global context.