Authenticity

Definition
Authenticity means more than just the idea that the student is in the real workplace. There are dimensions to authentic practice being emulated which go way beyond the reality of the workplace situation. These dimensions include appropriate autonomy of practice, associated with appropriate responsibility being taken and assigned, consequentiality of the work done, and the relevance of work tasks to the learning objectives and to the organisation. WIL activities should be designed to be as genuine and realistic in function and purpose as possible.

Purpose
Authenticity of the WIL activity is integral to the acquisition of employability skills and connecting theory and practice in workplace contexts. Highly authentic WIL experiences enhance the relevance of the student experience and the application of their studies to employment readiness. Students also feel more engaged if their WIL activity is authentic.

Good practice

Autonomy
Students should be afforded a level of autonomy appropriate to the situation and circumstances. Although there may be risks associated with giving students inappropriate levels of autonomy in their WIL practice, some areas of practice can afford to expose students to quite high levels of autonomy without incurring undue risks to the students, enterprise or clients. In some disciplines it is not appropriate, nor legal, for students to assume certain levels of autonomy during their WIL activity. The level of autonomy given and assumed should be clearly pre-planned and communicated with students.

Responsibility
As with autonomy, the level of responsibility must be appropriate to the situation. Allowing the student an appropriate degree of responsibility that aligns to their skill development and facilitates further growth and development in relation to employability is challenging. Too little responsibility inhibits the evolution of employability capabilities while too much may be considered a risk to the enterprise. Pre-planning and establishing a shared understanding of the appropriate levels of responsibility are important in getting the level right.
Consequentiality
It is preferential that the work students do during their WIL activities has meaning in the wider organisation or community. There is benefit in thinking about the return-on-investment for an organisation or community resulting from a student’s WIL experience and ensuring that there is some worthwhile outcome arising from their activities. Where possible, those activities should make a significant contribution, create a substantial artifact or practice change, or make some other useful contribution to the enterprise or to the clients it serves.

Relevance
The WIL activities in which students engage should have relevance both to the organisation and to the student’s learning and acquisition of graduate capabilities. When deciding what should count towards high-quality authenticity, engagement with industry and the community is recommended at the design phase to ensure appropriate breadth, depth and relevance is given to the design of the WIL activity.

Role of stakeholders

Universities WIL practitioners should:

- Engage and negotiate collaboratively with industry and community partners to ensure that the experience had by students is relevant and authentic and ultimately enhances student work-readiness.
- Devise strategies for monitoring the experience and evaluating stakeholder satisfaction and feedback.
- Ensure curriculum design incorporates opportunities to give feedback to the students on their learning and skill development.
- Review the arrangements with industry and community partners and students so that partnerships are current and relevant to work-readiness and professional-readiness.

Industry partners should:

- Play a key role in co-designing and collaboratively establishing some of the parameters around WIL activities.
- Ensure on-going supervision of students during WIL activities to ensure that they stay on-track to achieve the agreed outcomes and experience the agreed aspects of authenticity.

Students should:

- Be diligent in the reflective appraisal of how the WIL activity is meeting the design and agreed learning outcomes.
- Monitor the degree to which authenticity of the experience and the consequentiality of its outcomes are achieved.
Debrief

Definition

Debrief is the process of having a conversation with the student and industry/community partner (separately or together if appropriate) after the WIL activity. The debrief focuses on reflections on the experience, the learning and/or the design and management of the process.

The purpose of debrief is to structure deliberate opportunities for the student and industry/community partner to “download” and examine aspects of the experience and reflect upon these. The purposes are dual. One is for the benefit of the students; and the other is for the improvement and quality assurance of the WIL activity design and process. The student benefits from reflecting on the learning and the opportunity to divulge or explore unexpected feelings that have arisen as a consequence of the experience. Debrief, when thoughtfully planned and organised, can inform both learning and evaluation of the WIL activity.

Good practice

The debrief opportunity should be:

- structured and planned from the outset, ensuring both the student and industry/community partner know when and where the debrief session will take place;
- confidential and allow for both students and the industry/community partner to express themselves freely and;
- focused on the experience, its quality and nature, the learning and assessment or the design of the WIL activity.

A combination of a group debrief and individual debrief provides opportunities to reflect on the activity and gather important feedback that can improve relationships and future WIL activities.

Role of stakeholders

Universities WIL practitioners should:

- organise, facilitate and provide debrief and counseling opportunities that are safe (confidential and culturally appropriate) for both the student and the workplace
Industry and community partners should:

- Provide feedback regarding the student’s performance and their readiness for the WIL activity;
- Discuss how the university could improve their engagement with the partner and how the WIL supervisor can further enhance the WIL experience.

Students should:

- Attend debrief sessions as part of the broader learning experience beyond the WIL activity to reflect on their learning and to avail themselves of counseling (e.g., careers advice).
- Reflect on their experiences of workplace culture, time management and task completion, professional standards and workplace expectations. Self-awareness of their own abilities and identification of gaps in skills and knowledge will assist students in future learning.
Supervision

Definition

Supervision is the monitoring of the student learning experience, progress and practice during a WIL activity. Industry/community partners and WIL practitioners from universities collaborate in administering, managing, observing, educating, supporting and supervising the student’s progress throughout the WIL activity. Supervision is a complex interpersonal activity that involves numerous activities and functions.

Purpose

Quality supervision and support is central to a positive WIL experience for students. The purpose of supervision is to guide and manage work, support students to develop their skills and formally recognize professional practice and learning. Ongoing supervision provides opportunities to give constructive and meaningful feedback to students about their performance and concerns and to receive feedback from students about their experiences and learning.

Good practice

WIL workplace supervisors and institutional WIL practitioners both facilitate the supervisory process and encourage learners to be active participants in learning/workplace relationships. Providing collaborative, ongoing support and guidance to enable students to practice their skills and knowledge throughout the WIL activity, creates rich opportunities to learn from each other.

The supervisory relationship changes over time as students settle into the WIL activity. More frequent meetings between students and supervisors may be necessary early into the relationship to ensure learning and performance are progressing. As the student becomes more confident in their role, there will be less dependence on their supervisors. It is important to structure regular meetings where students are encouraged to ask questions, reflect on their experience, give and receive constructive feedback and express their feelings.

Role of stakeholders

*Universities WIL practitioners should:*
provide timely access
• provide feedback on learning and establish open communication channels
• provide a conduit for communication if difficulties are experienced
• conduct risk assessments and manage risks
• provide pastoral care
• where required, train or provide advice to industry/community partners to ensure they too are prepared to engage in quality supervision

**Industry and community partners should:**
• Induct the student to the workplace environment
• Inform the student where and when regular catch up sessions will be held
• Manage the day to day workflow, expectations and provide feedback
• Ensure the student knows that they are involved in the workplace, where to ask for assistance and encouraged to participate and ask questions
• Clarify expectations, have regular conversations with students and provide feedback
• Support and guide students learning
• Coach and mentor students, monitoring progress and performance

**Students should:**
• expect that WIL supervisors are available and responsive to their learning needs and personal concerns
• regularly ask questions of both the WIL practitioner and the industry/community supervisor
• make the most of the feedback and guidance they receive
• provide feedback to the WIL supervisor and the institutional WIL practitioner
• reflect on their learning and workplace practice
Preparation

Definition

Preparation activities consist of introductory and practical activities that assist in getting the student ready for the WIL experience. Regardless of the type of WIL activity eg placement, an industry/community project on or off campus, fully online or a combination, students need to be prepared to engage and work with industry and/or community partners. Preparation activities should also extend to preparing the industry/community partner to host WIL students to ensure their involvement in WIL meets all stakeholders’ needs and expectations.

Purpose

The purpose of preparation is to orient the student to the workplace context, manage expectations and prepare students for learning in a different environment. This entails two dimensions of pedagogical preparation and personal/emotional preparation to optimise learning during the WIL activity. Learning in a university classroom environment either face-to-face or online is different to learning in an unfamiliar workplace context and students need to be prepared for this.

Good practice

Pedagogical preparation for students as learners in a workplace context is a critical component of overall preparation for WIL and includes:

- preparing for integrative learning such as being able to reflect on the applicability of discipline knowledge to practice
- preparing students for learning with others in teams and through interactions with others in professional groups
- managing students expectations of the type of work and organizational culture they will experience
- getting ready for the assessments that will be used, for example preparing students to reflect on their experience and
- assisting students to be self-aware and optimise learning from WIL activities by engaging with the feedback provided.

Personal preparation for students as learners in a workplace context is equally important
• administrative and organisational arrangements such as time management, punctuality and workload expectations
• legislative requirements, occupational health and safety, risk management and workplace well being
• diverse workplace cultures and expectations
• professional standards and protocols, workplace literacy, behaving ethically and responsibly, self-management and privacy

Role of stakeholders

Universities WIL practitioners should:

• Prepare students for learning in a workplace environment through an organised and structured induction program that contributes to students having a positive learning experience and confident transition.
• Ensure WIL preparation activities sit within the curriculum and are supported by a range of resources.
• Design quality preparation activities that take into account previous learning and work-related experiences and encourage the student to actively participate in the planning of the WIL experience.
• Consider the student’s capacity to do WIL activities and work with others and provide student support such as counseling and financial advice.

Industry and community partners should:

• play a key role in preparing students for a quality WIL experience by clearly explaining all roles and responsibilities, expected outcomes, workload, deliverables and communication processes
• induct students and brief them on OHS, emergency procedures, risks, security and confidentiality requirements.
• Familiarize students with workplace technologies, operations, work team and supervisor expectations.

Students should:

• take part in all preparation activities, ensuring they are prepared for learning and working in a different context
• be self-aware of their capabilities and competencies
• ensure they are organised and clear about their tasks, responsibilities and timelines
• be clear about the expectations of what needs to be learned, how feedback will be delivered and the communication arrangements between the university, the industry/community supervisor and themselves
• be informed of OHS, security and emergency procedures within the workplace
Assessment

Definition
Assessment is the process of gathering information and evidence about a student’s performance for the purposes of either supporting or accrediting learning. Assessment serves different purposes including providing support for learning through feedback on performances and providing accreditation of achievement through marking against criteria and standards. More broadly, assessment results in the aggregate that can also be used to inform design, re-design and evaluate WIL activities.

Good practice
Assessment must be valid, reliable, authentic and match the learning goals (alignment) in form, content, and structure. There should not be an exam for assessing experience, practice or the production of a product. There are many assessment tools that can be utilised to gather evidence of learning throughout a WIL activity. When designing WIL assessment:

• ensure assessments are equitable allowing for equivalence even if assessments are different in detail from context to context
• ensure assessments align with the learning goals of the WIL activity, appropriate to high-authenticity learning outcomes
• consider the ease or simplicity of administration
• ensure assessments provide opportunities to use and reflect on students’ skills and knowledge throughout the WIL activity
• negotiate different assessment tasks with students and industry/community partners if/when appropriate
• maximise the opportunities for giving feedback to students (and receiving feedback from them)
• build in numerous opportunities for students to critically reflect on their experience

Role of stakeholders

Universities WIL practitioners should:

• design assessment that integrates theory with practice
• encourages students to reflect on their learning and development of discipline skills and knowledge and graduate attributes
• consult with industry partners (and with students as appropriate), about the design of assessment
• communicate with students about the assessment design and clarify expectations.

**Industry partners should:**
• recognize that there is a role in participating in assessment design and delivery
• negotiate what is feasible both practically and in terms of partner expertise
• agree on what will be assessed and how, and the balance of assessments between industry/community and university partner

**Students should:**
• give feedback to the universities WIL practitioner and industry/community partners on their experiences of being assessed in any WIL activity.
Integration

Definition

Integrative learning brings together theory and practice in the workplace or professional context. The “theory-practice nexus” is simply the site in which theoretical ideas or disciplinary techniques and skills which were learnt in class, are developed and applied in the real world.

Purpose

The purpose of integration is to make the WIL experience relevant to the theory learned in university with the practical application in a workplace context and vice versa. Clear alignment of WIL activities to the achievement of learning outcomes is the cornerstone of good WIL practice that underpins the development of capabilities related to employment-readiness.

Good practice

Well-established educational practice within a work context focuses on both workplace performance and learning that integrates theory and practice. Integration goes beyond ‘learn theory at university’ and then ‘practice in the workplace’. Although valid, the mere experience of work is insufficient as a learning outcome. WIL experiences should be designed to provide opportunities for students to use and reflect on the applicability of theory and knowledge in the workplace.

Role of stakeholders

Universities WIL practitioners should:

- consult and co-design the WIL activity with the industry or community partner so that opportunities are provided for students to display integration and reflect on the theory-work nexus.
- Consult with students or alumni to advise on designing learning goals that are relevant to them in terms of the integration that they want to achieve and to help in the design of opportunities for integrative learning in context.
- explicitly communicate to students and industry/community partners the intention of integrated learning
knowledge to workplace practices.

**Students should:**
- be prepared from the outset to identify, develop and apply their knowledge and skills gained in their studies to the WIL activity.
- recognise and evaluate the applicability and value of theoretical ideas in work contexts.