hands on @UON

with Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at the University of Newcastle

newcastle.edu.au/WIL
Providing meaningful, hands on workplace experience to enrich the theoretical learning of its students, and to enhance the employability of its graduates, is a key focus of the University of Newcastle (UON).

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is an umbrella term used to describe a range of approaches that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum. Also known as practicum, clinical placement, internship or work experience, WIL at the UON, offers students an opportunity to gain invaluable hands on knowledge of their field of expertise, generic skills and encourages the professional attitudes and attributes needed to succeed in the workplace.

More than 90 per cent of undergraduate degree programs offered by the UON include an opportunity for students to take part in WIL.

Being provided the opportunity to be career-ready through WIL, is highly valued by our students and the UON. Thousands of students from across the University take part in a diverse range of WIL opportunities each year and the UON shows the value it places on WIL through its membership of the Australian Cooperative Education Network (ACEN). UON is the only Australian university to recognise the contribution of its staff, and the success of its students, through WIL, by hosting the annual WIL Student and Staff of the Year Awards.

Mathew Glover has been given a unique insight into his future profession of photojournalism, as well as the diversity of learning opportunities that the UON provides its students. Mathew worked independently to achieve his brief, photographing a range of UON students studying subjects such as architecture, creative arts, and health, in a variety of settings.

Over a five month period, the Bachelor of Fine Arts student, captured the images of UON students undertaking their work placements, to showcase his own skills, as well as the diversity of learning opportunities that the UON provides its students.

The images where then displayed in an exhibition at the University of Newcastle Gallery as part of the celebrations of the University's WIL Awards, are featured throughout this booklet, and are being used in marketing materials to help promote WIL at the UON.

“I learnt so much from the first-hand experience of photojournalism in the field, all the way to editing for an exhibition and shooting for a client,” Mathew said.
Programs such as Work Integrated Learning (WIL) exemplify how the University of Newcastle (UON) is on the right path to ensure our graduates are career-ready, engaged with their chosen occupation and are excited about their future beyond university.

By taking part in the numerous WIL opportunities at the UON, our graduates are more attractive to employers and more competitive on the world stage, with a high level of employability and higher than average starting salaries.*

*Australian Graduate Survey 2013.

Who benefits from WIL@UON?

The University of Newcastle’s (UON) commitment to providing world-class learning opportunities for its students underpins Work Integrated Learning (WIL) as a process of reciprocal involvement for the mutual benefit of all involved.

**Benefits for hosts:**
- Benefit from the injection of new and innovative ideas and ‘fresh eyes’ of students;
- Work with UON staff to design a project to create real-world outcomes for your organisation;
- Have direct access to a pool of talented graduates for future employment;
- Provide current staff with a valuable professional development opportunity as mentees; and
- Engage directly with the UON and help to shape the future of the degree programs offered by the world-class organisation;

**Benefits for students:**
- WIL makes students career-ready
- Enriched knowledge of field of study through hands on exposure in the workplace;
- Provides an insight into the professional attitudes and attributes needed to be prepared for the jobs of the future; and
- WIL provides a competitive advantage in the competitive global employment marketplace.

WIL allows industry and the UON to work together to develop Australia’s future workforce and to help build our national economy, through ensuring that graduates are adept and sufficiently agile to face the challenges of a changing job market.

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**Creating career-ready graduates**

- **8000+** WIL students on placement each year
- **90%** of degrees include a WIL opportunity
- **135+** courses offer WIL activities
- **160+** international WIL placement opportunities
Recognising the value of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) for all participants and celebrating the success of its students, staff and host partners, is the aim of the annual University of Newcastle WIL Student and Staff of the Year Awards.

The UON is the only Australian university to acknowledge the effort of the whole institution in providing meaningful WIL opportunities to enhance the career-readiness and employability of its graduates.

Facilitating mutually-beneficial professional experiences for students and WIL hosts is the purpose of WIL activities at the UON. This is evidenced in the diverse projects and placement opportunities that have been acknowledged at the Awards.

Short videos created by the winners of the annual WIL Video Award competition capture the diverse range of disciplines for which UON facilitates workplace learning opportunities. The videos can be viewed at www.newcastle.edu.au/WIL.
Mark Arkinstall has taken the knowledge learned while an engineering cadet, to gain world-renown as the designer of the spectacular centerpiece of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games – ‘The Watercube’ National Aquatic Centre.

The innovative and complex structure of interlocking shapes designed to look like bubbles; involved more than 22,000 beams and more than 271 million design constraints, and earned the University of Newcastle (UON) graduate the prestigious MacRobert Award, from the Royal Academy of Engineers.

Mark believes his Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experience, where he gained hands-on experience while applying the theoretical knowledge that he gained studying for a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) at the UON, had provided him with a solid foundation from which to build his successful international career.

“The best thing about my WIL experience was it exposed me to engineering concepts before learning them in the degree, which made learning and exams much easier and less stressful,” Mark said.

“It allowed me to have a deeper understanding of my work, at a quicker pace, and to grasp certain concepts before they were taught in class.”

Now leading a large team as the Associate Director in Arup’s Advanced Technology and Research Team in London, Mark says his WIL experience improved his employment prospects as a graduate.

“Being exposed to work in my profession early, meant that I knew what to expect after graduation and I knew that I was going to like my career,” he said.

“The experience also helped me to have some understanding of the office environment and I slotted straight in.”
WIL@UON –
NOT JUST FOR TEACHERS,
DOCTORS AND NURSES

It is not just future teachers, nurses, doctors and engineers who can take part in meaningful workplace learning opportunities through Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at the University of Newcastle.

WIL opportunities are entrenched in more than 135 undergraduate courses offered by the University, as well as part of postgraduate and research higher degrees. From 2008 to 2013, the number of WIL placements offered by the UON has increased by 82 per cent. The University will continue its commitment to creating career-ready graduates, by continuing to grow the number and variety, of WIL opportunities for its students.

WIL opportunities are offered by the UON in diverse fields such as:

- Information Technology;
- Communications and Design;
- Fine and Creative Arts;
- Architecture and Construction;
- Science and Mathematics; and
- Business, Commerce and Marketing.

Undertaking a third-year physics project as part of his Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Mathematics degree, was a life-changing experience for Sean James Jamieson.

The experience not only helped him to find his calling in Medical Physics, but also contributed to the possibility of improved outcomes for women undergoing cancer treatment, due to a discovery he made while undertaking WIL.

As part of his placement, Sean helped to commission a Nucletron CT/MR Brachytherapy Applicator Set, which is used to provide cutting-edge, and targeted treatment of gynaecological cancers.

Sean applied his knowledge gained during his program and identified an error in the calibration protocols of the device, which when corrected improved the precision and efficacy of the treatment provided to patients.

His discovery earned Sean a WIL Student of the Year award in 2012.

“Without this placement, I wouldn’t have had a clue what I wanted to do, but now I have direction, have motivation and feel great about my future.”

To hear more about Sean’s WIL experience watch his video at newcastle.edu.au/WIL
What is WIL?
Creating career-ready graduates, who are prepared for the jobs of the future underpins Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at the University of Newcastle (UON).

Also known as practicum, clinical placement, internship or work experience, WIL offers UON students an opportunity to gain an invaluable hands on knowledge of their field of expertise, the workplace and professional attitudes needed to be competitive on a global stage, and prepared for the jobs of the future.

How does the WIL host benefit?
By hosting a WIL student, business, industry and community organisations locally, nationally and globally are provided an opportunity to engage directly with the UON and benefit from the injection of innovative ideas, as well as access to a pool of talented graduates for possible employment.

A WIL placement also offers a valuable professional development opportunity for host staff, as they reflect on their own suite of skills and knowledge while mentoring the student.

How does WIL benefit the student?
WIL is highly valued by UON students in preparing them to be career-ready and providing them with a competitive advantage in the global employment marketplace. UON graduates are highly sought by employers, and have a high rate of employability and earn higher than national average starting salaries, especially in fields traditionally associated with WIL, such as health and engineering.*

What areas of study include WIL?
More than 90 per cent of degree programs offered by the University of Newcastle (UON) include an opportunity for students to take part in WIL.

It is not just teachers, nurses, doctors and engineers that can take part in these meaningful workplace learning opportunities, with WIL courses being offered as part of degree programs for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, in diverse fields such as Information Technology, Communications and Design, Fine and Creative Arts, Business, Commerce and Marketing.

Is there any cost to WIL?
UON recognises the value of WIL experiences for its students, and has developed policies to ensure placements comply with the Fair Work Act 2009. As WIL is aligned with the curriculum, there is generally no expectation that the student will be remunerated, with the majority of placements unpaid. The cost to the WIL host will vary depending on the nature of the project and the resources needed to achieve the project goals. Time and expertise of its staff, to help guide and mentor the WIL student to achieve the project outcomes, is the main outlay of a host organisation.

Students who take part in a WIL program may apply to be covered by University insurance for workplace health and safety issues.

What type of students take part in WIL?
WIL opportunities are available to domestic and international students enrolled in most undergraduate, postgraduate or research higher degrees offered by the UON.

Students are expected to exemplify the skills, attitudes and attributes of a professional in their field of expertise, and are encouraged to be innovative and entrepreneurial in their approach to their WIL placement or the completion of their WIL project.

When are students available for WIL?
Most WIL programs are scheduled at particular times of the year to fit annual course structures and may run from one week to 20 weeks. Student availability can be discussed and agreed between the host and the UON.

What projects are considered WIL?
WIL projects can be real, or simulated, provided in your business or externally, and can be designed to meet the needs of a WIL partner to achieve real-world outcomes for the mutual-benefit of the organisation, student and the University.

Depending on the needs of the organisation, UON staff will work with a WIL partner to define the scope and desired outcomes of the project, as well as identify the best student to deliver the project.

How can I get involved in WIL?
WIL opportunities are aligned with the curriculum of more than 90 per cent of undergraduate programs offered by the UON and are delivered at different times of the year, depending on the course timetable.

Identifying the discipline or area that a proposed project may include is the first step to find the best point of contact within the UON. A list of the disciplines that include WIL opportunities, as well as contacts for enquiries, is available by visiting the UON website at www.newcastle.edu.au/WIL

*Australian Graduate Survey 2013
How can I get hands on with WIL@UON?

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The first step is to identify the area or discipline that the proposed project may align, and making direct contact with UON staff or the course coordinator. To check the disciplines that offer WIL and contacts visit www.newcastle.edu.au/WIL