Scaffolding Work Integrated Learning

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Curriculum Design – we all have a process
Scaffolding
WIL @ RMIT

WIL activities in programs must:

• include student preparation, supervision and monitoring of progress and reflective practice/debriefing

• involve authentic engagement with partner organisations (including WIL in simulated workplace environments) and include industry feedback

• be assessed in line with the University’s assessment policy

• comply with relevant government legislation and regulations, university policies, procedures and instructions

• be scaffolded throughout the program so as to enable students to achieve course and program learning outcomes, Graduate Attributes and vocational education Employability Skills

• integrate theoretical learning with practical application in professional contexts which engage students in meaningful and consequential learning activities

• where applicable, be aligned to the requirements of professional registration and accrediting bodies

• be negotiated with partner organisations (where relevant) and designed to be accessible, equitable and mutually beneficial for stakeholders

• not unnecessarily create undue hardship for students or partner organisations.
**WIL in Curriculum @ RMIT**

**Types of WIL**
(f2f, online, combination/blended)

**Placement**
- Internships, practicum, co-operative education, clinical placement

**Project**
- Real projects with industry and community partners, on or off campus, face to face or online

**WIL in simulated workplace environments**
- Environments that simulate real workplaces in their function, equipment and mode of operation

**Stages of all WIL activities**

**Preparation**
- Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders
- Induction, preparation for learning in a different context

**During**
- Supervision, monitoring progress, feedback, ongoing reflection, communication

**Post**
- Debrief, reflection, evaluation, continuous improvement
What does research and good practice tell us about scaffolding WIL?

- Quality WIL in simulated workplace environments is great preparation for placement WIL.
- Partners need to be involved in designing WIL.
- The needs of the learner must be considered.
- Academic standards and expectations of level of performance must shape WIL activities.
- Constructive alignment and meeting stated learning outcomes is paramount.
What is needed to embed WIL in the curriculum?

- Scaffolding across the curriculum
- Constructive alignment
- Engagement with partners
Quality WIL dimensions in curriculum design

- **Authenticity** of the WIL experience eg real work that is engaged with industry and community, with real meaning and real consequences

- **Activities and assessment focused on integration** – applying discipline knowledge in the workplace context

- **Preparation and induction** – preparing students for the work and learning in a different context – manage expectations

- **Quality of Supervision** – access to quality supervision from uni and industry partner, monitoring progress, ongoing feedback

- **Debrief and reflection** – both students and industry partner (review and continuous improvement)

“*The impact of work integrated learning on student work-readiness*, Sonia Ferns, Calvin Smith, Leoni Russell, OLT, 2014.
WIL curriculum in action
Employability Focus – it’s more than just WIL ….

• Employability is not just about graduates securing a ‘job’. It includes “a set of achievements-skills, understanding and personal attributes - that makes graduates more likely to gain unemployment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006).

• Broadening the WIL dimensions to explicitly integrate Career Development Learning (CDL)

• Career development learning is about giving students opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their employability and “to navigate a successful and satisfying life/career” (McMahon, Patton & Tatham, 2003).

• CDL pre and post WIL – eg focus on individual (eg career goals/plans) and knowing about the industry/community sectors

• Co-curricular CDL and WIL activities are equally important and impact graduate employability
Activity – chat to the person next to you

How might work integrated learning be incorporated into your own teaching?

• What opportunities do you see for incorporating WIL into your curriculum?

• What are some of the major challenges you envisage?