

## Negotiating and Maintaining Relationships with Educational Institutions for Work Integrated learning (WIL)

Employers gain many benefits from engaging with students for placements or projects (WIL) during their studies including access to fresh ideas, current knowledge and a talent pool for recruitment.

Establishing and managing partnerships between educational institutions and your organisation is critical to your success in hosting students for projects or placements to ensure the benefits to both your organisation and the student(s) are realised. As each party has different priorities, cultures and approaches, establishing trust and open communication are key to building sustainable mutually beneficial relationships that can overcome any issues that may arise.

The following outlines some key approaches to consider when your organisation is establishing a relationship with an educational institution for WIL placements and projects whether your organisation has initiated the contact, or you have been approached by the educational institution.

### Establishing Relationship

- Clearly articulate your expectations and determine agreed goals in partnership with the institution
- Understand and respect the motivation and priorities of the educational institution, student and your organisation
- Check that the outcomes are mutually beneficial to your organisation, the student and the educational institution and determine how they will be measured
- Check that the outcomes you are expecting for your organization are achievable within the context of the learning experience for students
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined for your organisation, the student and the educational institution

- Educational Institutions often use an agreement for this purpose which can include
  - Roles, responsibilities, tasks and timelines
  - Induction requirements such as occupational health and safety procedures
  - Intellectual property ownership guidelines
  - Professional liability and insurance details
- Agree on clear communication processes during the placement/project
- Identify a main contact in your organisation who can act for the whole organisation
- Ensure the resources required to support the placement/project are available

### Managing and evaluating the relationship

- Use the established communication processes and be open in all communication
- Support your supervisors and give them opportunities to provide feedback
- Initiate a progress review particularly for longer placements
- Address any issues as they arise with the student or educational institution as appropriate
- Give feedback to both the student and educational institution to ensure goals are achieved
- Measure outcomes and evaluate involvement
- Utilise the outcomes and evaluation and findings to jointly modify processes for future
- Celebrate the outcomes.