

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