Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

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- 8 workshops (5 ATN Universities, International 1 Australia 2)
- Webinar
- 6 presentations (Australia 3, International 3)
- 3 keynotes
- 55 interviews with industry, students and academic and professional staff
- 5 models identified and defined:
  - Micro-Placements
  - Online Projects or Placements
  - Hackathons, Competitions and Events
  - Incubators / Startups
  - Consulting
- 16 features identified
- Trends impacting WIL and SMEs identified
- Enablers, success factors and challenges identified
- 24 snapshots of good practice of the 5 emerging models of WIL and 5 examples of two key features
- Website developed and launched
- Resources for industry, tertiary institutions and students developed
- 6 videos produced
- 2 Publications
- 854 Total participants (workshops, presentations, keynotes)
Executive Summary

Project Context
As the world of work continues to rapidly change through the impacts of technological disruption and other forces, universities are adapting to prepare students to enter this changing world and improve graduate outcomes (Ernst & Young, 2018; Australian Technology Network & PriceWaterhouseCoopers [PWC], 2018; Australian Higher Education Industrial Association [AHEIA] & PWC, 2016). Work Integrated Learning (WIL) has been identified as a priority with the National WIL Strategy (Australian Collaborative Education Network [ACEN], Universities Australia [UA], Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry [ACCI], & Business Council of Australia [BCA], 2015) and a key focus for Australian universities in enhancing student employability. Students also continue to express a strong interest in greater industry linkages in their studies (Ernst & Young; 2018; Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017). The opportunity for enhanced collaboration between industry and universities has never been greater as surveys of Australian industry indicate rising rates of collaboration with universities and many companies expressing intentions to establish these connections (Australian Industry Group, 2016; Australian Industry Group 2018). For greater engagement and to enhance the capacity for WIL, there is a need to identify and implement emerging WIL models which offer greater flexibility than traditional models while also achieving optimal outcomes for all stakeholders.

This Australian Technology Network (ATN) funded project explored and identified emerging WIL models such as micro-internships, WIL in Incubators and other approaches that overcome numerous constraints to engagement, particularly for small to medium enterprises (SMEs). Making up over 95 per cent of businesses in Australia, SMEs are a priority in the National WIL Strategy (ACEN et al, 2015) Expansion of WIL opportunities is seriously limited if attention is not given to enabling greater engagement with a broader range of partners, particularly the SME and community-based sectors (ATN, 2018) Greater engagement with SMEs was specifically identified as a priority in the National WIL Strategy (ACEN et al, 2015 ) as engagement into this sector has proved challenging in the past (Atkinson, Misko & Stanwick, 2015 ). This project set out to explore WIL models that are currently or could successfully engage into those sectors and overcome the demands of more traditional WIL models that many organisations find difficult to meet (Patrick et al., 2009; PhillipsKPA, 2014 ). These sectors may also provide students the experiences and context in which to develop the capabilities and skills required to thrive in the context of the changing nature of work.

Project Aim
This project aimed to investigate and showcase innovative approaches to WIL that are effective in advancing graduate employability through industry engagement and have the capacity to engage a broader range of organisations, particularly SMEs and community organisations. Another project aim was to develop the capability of all stakeholders to engage with these models through showcasing examples of successful models, the development of specific resources for students, institutions and industry and community
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Project Approach
The project approach consisted of three iterative stages which provided a strong basis to inform the initial findings (Creswell, 2012) regarding the emerging WIL models. Several data collection methods were employed, including a literature review, workshops and WIL community of practice meetings with project participants including industry partners, the ATN Google WIL Community of Practice, selected WIL practitioners, and students and expert WIL advisors. Through these research approaches the project identified numerous curricula examples of WIL and other co-curricular industry experiences which were subsequently clustered into five emerging WIL models which are becoming prevalent in the tertiary sector. The features, enablers and challenges were also identified through data analysis and organised into clusters. They were then mapped against the 5 emerging models. These findings informed the development of resources for stakeholders and snapshots of innovative practice.

Project Outputs

- A summary report outlining key trends and an overview of identified constraints for SMEs and community organisations in engaging with WIL.
- Snapshots of innovative WIL models showcasing good practice in engagement.
- A matrix outlining key features of successful innovative models of WIL engagement.
- Snapshots, resources, information and self-assessment guidelines for institutions and students.
- Institutional workshops, forums and presentations
- Snapshots, resources, information and guides for SMEs and community organisations, and webinar presentations /forums at all ATN Universities.
- A Communication Strategy developed and implemented.

Project Impact and Key Findings
This project has resonated with and had impact across the sector with well attended workshops at all ATN Universities, initiating active discussion around WIL practice and innovation in their own universities. Presentations in a wide range of national and international forums and webinars (approximately 850 + people) has also generated interest in Australia and internationally. The project has benefited from engagement by the two peak industry groups partners (ACCI and AI Group) which has provided strong industry input to the outcomes. The resources, snapshots and video developed are yet to be disseminated but a comprehensive dissemination plan has been developed that will include promotion of the website through the ACEN newsletter to 1,800 members, to staff at ATN Universities, to peak industry partners members through newsletters and social media platforms, additional conference presentations and refereed conference papers and a journal article. The resources will be used by students, university staff and industry involved in emerging models. The findings and snapshots from the project can also be used as exemplars for the design of WIL activities across the sector.
A key project finding is the identification of five emerging WIL models - Micro-placements, Online Projects or Placements, Hackathons/Competitions and Events, Incubator/Start-ups, and Consulting. These five WIL models represent a range of associated features that are evident in the many highly creative examples of WIL being implemented in ATN Universities, across Australia and beyond. This demonstrates that the Australian tertiary education sector is adapting and innovating to current trends including the changing nature of workplaces and increased demand from government, industry and students. Innovative, sustainable, and scalable models of WIL are essential to enable universities to service a more diverse and larger student cohort and meet the growing demand. These models also have the capacity to equip students with the skills required to navigate the changing workplace and the portfolio of jobs ahead.

Another project finding is that many universities are partnering with a much broader range of organisations, including smaller companies and community groups, and leveraging that engagement through creative WIL models. This engagement includes greater innovation and involvement by industry, and increasingly students, in the co design of WIL activities. The project findings showcase the increased willingness of diverse industry and community organisations to proactively partner with universities, particularly for shorter, less resource intensive WIL activities. These WIL activities overcome many of the long standing constraints to engagement which includes lack of resources, inflexibility of courses, and lack of information or access to contacts in Universities (PhillipsKPA, 2014). This trend, however, is increasing pressure on universities to adopt more flexible processes and enable a more agile curriculum, as well as identifying distinct skill sets and preparation required by all stakeholders to effectively develop, proactively engage with, and sustain these emerging collaborative models. The snapshots and resources developed through this project will go part way to supporting universities, students and industry in meeting the challenges posed by the emerging models. The role of university leadership to encourage and resource innovation in WIL, address institutional barriers and to build staff capability will be pivotal to achieving success in implementing these emerging models and optimising the many opportunities they present. Additionally, further support and information to assist industry and community engagement is also required.
Project Report

Project Context
Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is a national priority and a strategic direction for Australian universities with increased focus on expanding WIL. However, universities are facing numerous challenges in expanding their traditional WIL placements and projects with increased competition for a finite number of WIL opportunities with industry. There is now a focus on broadening the pool of industry and community partners involved. Making up over 95 per cent of businesses in Australia, SMEs are a priority in the National WIL Strategy for greater engagement in WIL (ACEN et al., 2015). Expansion of WIL opportunities therefore would be seriously limited if attention isn’t given to enabling greater engagement and capacity building, particularly in the SME and community-based sectors. To achieve greater engagement, there is a need to identify emerging WIL models and the features which enable greater flexibility and achieve optimal outcomes for all stakeholders. This Australian Technology Network (ATN) funded project explored and identified emerging innovative WIL models that overcome numerous constraints to engagement and developed resources to build the capacity for engagement but all stakeholders.

Project Aim
This project aimed to investigate innovative approaches to WIL and identify emerging models that are effective in advancing graduate employability through industry engagement and real-world learning. The project also aimed to develop resources for students, institutions and industry and community organisations to be disseminated through ATN universities and industry groups to increase WIL opportunities for students and build capacity for greater engagement.

Original Project Outcomes
The project outcomes include:

- A summary report outlining key trends and an overview of identified constraints for SMEs and community organisations in engaging with WIL.
- A suite of case studies of innovative WIL models showcasing good practice in engagement.
- A matrix outlining key factors and characteristics of successful innovative models of WIL engagement.
- Snapshots resources, information and self-assessment guidelines for institutions and students and institutional workshops, forums and presentations to showcase the resources.
- Snapshots, resources, information and guides for SMEs and community organisations, and webinar presentations / forums at five ATN Universities
- A Communication Strategy is developed and implemented.
Project Approach

“This first qualitative phase of the project comprised three iterative stages which together provided a strong foundation to inform initial findings regarding emerging models of WIL (Creswell, 2012). A range of data collection methods were employed over three stages, including a search of contemporary literature, interactive workshops, webinars with WIL practitioners, and interviews with WIL practitioners, students and industry partners. These multiple sources of data enabled and supported a rich perspective, which in turn, enabled robust thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012)” (Kay, Ferns, Russell, Smith, & Winchester-Seeto, in press).

“Stage one involved a search of contemporary literature, spanning the period 2012 to 2017, to identify emerging WIL strategies and their key features. Searches included peer-reviewed academic literature, grey literature such as government and industry reports (including PhillipsKPA, 2014; AiG, 2016; Edwards, Perkins, Pearce, & Hong, 2015) and conference proceedings (e.g. ACEN, WACE) that have the advantage of shorter publication times. Online blogs and event information from the internet also provided leads on emerging models. A matrix was created to map these WIL strategies and their key features. The common features of these WIL strategies were then reviewed and categorised to create an initial set of emerging WIL models. Descriptions of the models were developed to inform collaborative inquiry activities undertaken in the second stage of the research” (Kay et al., 2018 in press). To undertake the broadest exploration of emerging and innovative forms of industry engaged experience both for credit and co-curricular examples were included in the scan. The Project Advisory Group were also consulted at key points during the project and their input included.

Stage two involved the exploration of these emerging models with university WIL practitioners through ten international, national and local workshops, webinars and WIL communities of practice meetings. These events where participants were asked to review short descriptions of WIL strategies identified in stage one and share new strategies from their own practice and contexts to consider key features, success factors and challenges. Participants were also asked to consider how these strategies aligned or did not align with the initial set of emerging models. Data from these workshop activities was collated and analysed to inform the review and refinement of the emerging models, their features and challenges” (Kay et al., in press).

“Stage three involved further in-depth consideration and analysis of the emerging models through 55 semi-structured interviews with WIL practitioners, industry partners and students who were involved directly with emerging WIL strategies. Interview participants were identified during research stages one and two and through national and international WIL communities of practice. Three sets of predetermined open-ended questions were developed to guide the interviews with WIL practitioners, students and industry partners. These questions and other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee helped illicit key features of the emerging strategies, approaches to their design as well as the consideration of challenges and success factors from the participants’ perspectives. Participants were encouraged to be open, thorough and detailed in their descriptions and reflections (Kvale, 2007). Interview data was then analysed and key features, challenges and success factors mapped. A thematic analysis of the mapped
The development and implementation phase of the project involved creating guidelines for SMEs and community organisations, a guide for students and a self-assessment tool for staff in tertiary institutions. The development involved mapping the frequency of challenges and enablers by each stakeholder group derived from the interview data which then informed the development of the guidelines and a self-assessment tool. These were then reviewed by stakeholders including industry partners.

The Project team were advised that succinct and particularly video-based material would be the most effective in engaging industry with the key messages from the project. This advice then guided the development of all the resources for the project.

The communication plan for dissemination of the Project findings included:

- Delivering webinar forums, workshops at ATN universities and presentations at a range of national and international conferences (17 to date with 7 more planned).
- Writing two refereed papers from the project findings.
- Production of a short video to overview emerging models and promote engagement with universities to industry
- Short video clips for Industry Peak Bodies social media feeds.
- Website of 24 snapshots of good practice of the 5 emerging models of WIL and 5 examples of two key features.
- Three short PDF resources for the stakeholder groups.
- Articles in ACEN and Industry groups (AI Group & ACCI Newsletters).

Project Outputs and Findings

A range of trends were identified that are currently impacting on WIL in Australia including:

- Focus on preparing students for the 21st century world of work.
- Greater engagement by industry in work Integrated Learning for identification of talent and to enhance preparedness of graduates.
- Increased focus on graduate outcomes by Government and universities resulting in increased competition between universities for WIL opportunities and engagement into other sectors.
- Demand for specific skills or industry sectors e.g. STEM.
- Greater focus on development of entrepreneurial / intrapreneurial skill development in students.
- Expansion of reach by Universities globally and increase in demand for global experiences for students.
- Greater attention to meeting International students’ expectations including industry experience due to strategic economic importance of international student market to Australia.

For further detail please refer to Appendix 1. Overview of Key Trends Impacting Innovative Models of WIL in Australia.
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To expand WIL opportunities in Australia for students the large SME sector is an area of increased focus. A range of barriers have been identified (PhillipsKPA, 2014, Australian Industry Group 2016, 2018) to industry engagement for WIL. The main ones being:

- limited information about WIL opportunities
- insufficient resources within my organisation
- relevant points of contact at universities
- information on legal requirements
- administration time
- information on supervising and mentoring students
- examples of student activities that could assist businesses

In addition, for smaller organisations the following were also identified barriers for the more traditional WIL models (Philips KPA, 2014)

- lack of resources required for traditional models of WIL
- time commitment required to participate in WIL
- concern about inability to offer a quality experience to students
- inability to supervise students adequately

The project has identified numerous examples of innovative models of WIL which have been clustered into five emerging models of WIL that are becoming increasingly prevalent in the tertiary sector. The models are outlined below along with the defining features, enablers, challenges and opportunities for implementation for each model.

Innovative Models

**Micro-placements**

Micro-placements typically involve short periods in the workplace ranging from two to ten days where students work individually or in teams on highly focused projects. Micro-placements occur in a diverse range of sectors, usually in small to medium companies and startups.

**Online Projects or Placements**

Online projects or placements involve students and industry working online and may be geographically-dispersed. Students communicate via a variety of digital platforms and technologies which may not include any face to face interaction.

**Hackathons/Competitions and Events**

Events typically involve students working in teams on one-off intensive activities for and/or with industry partners or with university-based activities. Universities commonly partner with external events, hackathons, festivals or competitions to provide students with industry or community engaged experiences. In some cases, this engagement can involve multidisciplinary teams of students. Hackathons are specific events in which a range of stakeholder’s team up to create projects, solve problems, and develop pitches or software over a short period of time. In most cases hackathons are focused on a theme, application type or challenge, are sponsored and co-designed with industry and often hosted by Universities. Hackathons are often competitive, with teams presenting their results to judges.
Incubators/start-ups
An incubator is a workspace that provides support for startups including mentoring, information, networks, office space and resources for the early-stage development of new business ventures. WIL students can be placed in incubators to support ventures.

A startup is an entrepreneurial venture which is typically a young, small and newly emerged business that aims to create a new product, process or service to meet a need that is not currently being offered elsewhere in the market. The first stages of a startup are commonly financed and can attract further support once it has proved its potential. Increasingly WIL students are undertaking placements or projects in or for startup businesses.

Consulting
Consulting involves students (individually or in teams) providing consultancy services and information to others, including other students, industry partners and community organisations. Consulting activities are facilitated through the university.

Refer to Appendix 2: Detailed definitions of the Innovative Models of WIL, for more detailed definitions of the 5 emerging WIL models.

Features of Emerging WIL Models
Fifteen common features were identified across the various emerging models. The features that described the common characteristics of these models are outlined in Table 1 clustered across three key areas: stakeholder engagement; design elements impacting on the WIL activity; and the emergence of student and industry or community as partners in co-designing WIL activities.

Table 1
Key Features of Emerging Models of WIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
<td>Involving multi-educational sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Community engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased use of brokers/third parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broad/deep partnerships with host organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanning multiple universities or institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Elements</td>
<td>Engaging multiple disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra/Entrepreneurial elements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scalable and sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility in duration, location and space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coach/mentor elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geographically dispersed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investment elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co Design Partners</td>
<td>Co-designed with industry or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-designed with students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The key features were then mapped across the five innovative models to highlight the common features currently of the innovative WIL models.

Table 2

*Emerging Models of WIL*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Micro Placements</th>
<th>Online projects or Placements</th>
<th>Hackathons, Competitions and Events</th>
<th>Incubators and start-ups</th>
<th>Consulting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholder Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Involving multi-educational sectors</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaging alumni</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community engaged</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increased use of brokers/third parties</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broad/deep partnerships with host organisations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanning multiple universities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design Elements</strong></td>
<td>Engaging multiple disciplines</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra/Entrepreneurial elements</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scalable and sustainable</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility in duration, location and space</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Geographically dispersed</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investment elements</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co design Partners</strong></td>
<td>Co-designed with industry or community</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-designed with students</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: ✓ common feature currently - not a common feature currently
This table represents an overview of the key features common in examples of emerging WIL models identified through this project clustered into three areas, stakeholder engagement, design elements and co-design partners. These were in turn mapped across the 5 emerging WIL models from the data available to the project. It should be acknowledged that implementation and evolution of models is happening very rapidly so this table represents common features for each model at a particular time during the project.

Enablers
Workshops and interviews with students, host organisations and university staff identified a range of enablers associated with the successful implementation of these emerging innovative models.

Table 3
*Key Enablers Identified with Implementing Emerging WIL Models*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Enablers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurial approach of industry/community partners:</strong> establishing trust and willing partners to engage in designing flexible and innovative WIL approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation of stakeholders:</strong> managing expectations and ensuring roles, responsibilities and expectations are explicit and clear for all stakeholders to maximise participation and outcomes in unfamiliar activities or scenarios e.g. online projects or hackathons taking place in a short time frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proactive engaged students:</strong> encouraging student to take initiative, try something new, learn new skills, network and proactively engage with industry in different, unpredictable and time constrained contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope clarity:</strong> clarity around the scope of the task or activity, the processes involved and maintaining good open communication between diverse stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership support:</strong> support from within the university to enable both the flexibility around curriculum and the allocation of resources required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broader range of industry and community partnerships:</strong> creative leveraging of established and willing partner organisations to engage in innovative and deeper ways including a greater engagement with SMEs and the community sector.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges
Analysis of the data identified some specific challenges associated with the emergence of these WIL models. These are highlighted in Table 4.

Table 4
Key Challenges Identified with Implementing Emerging WIL Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University processes and logistics:</strong> emerging models often challenge the existing processes, systems and curriculum. Challenges include timetabling issues with multidisciplinary teams, working within time frames that suit partner organisations and identifying resources required to implement these models. Flexibility of the curriculum to include hackathons, events or multiple short WIL activities is also problematic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload and recognition:</strong> allocation of university staff workload and recognition for their involvement in WIL remains a challenge. Supporting the additional effort required, managing and supporting risk and recognising and encouraging innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff capability:</strong> closer and deeper engagement between universities and industry/community is often a feature of emerging WIL models and requires university staff to be adept at initiating, negotiating and managing these relationships. Emerging models such as hackathons and competitions may require staff to adapt to using various different or unfamiliar approaches, processes, technologies and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability:</strong> transitioning these emerging models from a pilot or initial successful implementation, driven by passionate staff and collaborative partners, into business as usual is problematic. In addition, scaling the model to accommodate the numbers of students engaging in WIL in Australian Universities also presents many challenges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

**Guidelines**
Data from the workshops and interviews has informed the development of guidelines to support and enhance the engagement with these innovative models for:

- Students
- Industry and community partners including SMEs and community organisations
- Tertiary Institutions including professional and academic staff

Draft guides were reviewed by the industry partners to the project, students and professional and academic staff to provide feedback.

Please refer to Appendix 3. Guidelines to Support and Enhance the Engagement of Innovative Models of WIL.
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Website
The project has also documented 24 snapshots of innovative WIL models and 5 snapshots of two key features all of which are available on the project website, which is part of the ACEN website. These snapshots include innovative WIL practices from across the 5 ATN universities and other universities partnering with a range of industry and community partners. The snapshots are designed for both industry and community organisations as well as for staff in tertiary institutions and are based on input from stakeholders involved. The snapshots are designed to be engaging and outline the key features of the innovative WIL models, benefits to all stakeholders, and provides contact information for further follow up. The project team have chosen to include 5 snapshots illustrating two key features identified with examples of WIL brokerage and deep partnerships. Refer to Appendix 4: Overview of Emerging WIL Models Snapshots and Appendix 5: Overview of Deep Partnerships and WIL Brokerage Snapshots, for a full list of the 24 snapshots of innovative WIL models and 5 snapshots of two key features respectively.

A screenshot of the website is included in Appendix 6. WIL Innovation Website.

ATN Community of Practice
A Google community of interested academic and professional staff across the ATN Universities was established at the outset of this project. The community was promoted through the project workshops in each university and through communication channels in each university. To date 125 staff have joined the community with postings about key reports on WIL and Employability, requests for information or support, and information about WIL events. The findings from this project will be disseminated through this ATN Google community.

Discussion
This project has focused on identifying emerging WIL models, associated features, enablers and challenges to better understand the models and provide evidence to inform both the design and implementation of different industry engaged WIL activities. The project has successfully identified the many creative and innovative WIL partnership models that are currently being implemented across Australia and more broadly. There are models that involve very short placements or projects with partners, sometimes completely online, often with a wide range of organisations including SMEs. There are also examples that include deeper partnerships with host organisations or that leverage involvement in innovative ways including the significant increase in the use of hackathons and engagement with events or competitions to provide WIL experiences. Other models involve students acting as consultants providing discipline related information to host organisations organised through their universities.

These emerging models identified significantly expand the capacity of universities to provide students with authentic industry engaged learning experiences. These models also respond to current trends affecting WIL and overcome many long-standing barriers and challenges to engaging a broader range of industry and community groups including small to medium enterprises (SMEs). This project has identified some evidence of increased engagement with SMEs, but there is capacity for more engagement with that sector in the future. The
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

Emergence of a range of for profit and not for profit brokers in this space to facilitate connections is an emerging trend. WIL activities which are linked to startups and incubators, focused on entrepreneurship and innovation, appear to be increasing. However, although currently high profile, these models do not appear to be occurring in great numbers due to the range of challenges they present.

"Many enablers identified for the emerging models, such as communication and preparation of stakeholders (Patrick et al., 2009; O'Shea, 2014), are similar for more traditional forms of WIL. However, with emerging WIL models there appears to be a stronger need to establish clarity with stakeholders around scope, roles, and expectations, including clarification of ownership of intellectual property. Another key enabler is the critical involvement and endorsement from university leadership, especially in the establishment phase, to support implementation of newer models. This support can involve dedicating resources, allocating seed funds, or supporting the streamlining of processes to achieve the flexibility required, particularly in curriculum design and administrative processes. The increased use of one off events and competitions has been achieved by enhanced collaboration with partners utilising combined expertise and industry knowledge to co-design and enact the WIL models" (Kay et al., in press).

This project, in addition to enablers, also identified a range of challenges related to these innovative models. Implementing traditional models of WIL also poses numerous challenges and are well documented (Patrick et al., 2009). Challenges such as resourcing, workload and recognition are also associated with newer innovative models and relate to operations within the University. “In addition these WIL models highlight the need for staff capabilities around technologies for online WIL models, or familiarity with current industry practices. In some instances, staff lack underpinning skills and capabilities such as project management or technical skills, and are either unfamiliar with or lack the flexibility for the newer ways of working with industry partners. Co-designing WIL activities requires a mindset that goes beyond the traditional focus on mutual benefit, to a more involved and complex interaction, where clearly articulating and negotiating the scope and purpose of the activity is critical. Interacting with small, often under-resourced community groups requires skill and sensitivity. Establishing new WIL models involves different rules of engagement with an increasingly broader range of industry partners including growing numbers of community and not for profit organisations. Some emerging WIL models involve deep long term partnerships with high profile organisations, which includes relationship management over the longer term, requiring focus and skilled communication and negotiation.” (Kay et al., in press).

For students to successfully participate in these new models, intense briefing and preparation is required where roles, rights and expectations are clearly and explicitly articulated. The short time frames often involved in these activities and the sometimes unfamiliar and unpredictable formats e.g. Hackathons or events add an additional element to preparation. The diverse cohorts of students (e.g. international students) may have different needs for adequate preparation to participate dependent on their background, level of resilience, and understanding or experience in Australian workplace contexts. Industry/community partners also need to fully understand their role in these WIL models as they may be unfamiliar with the format or tasks required especially their role in providing...
coaching and feedback to students during a learning experience. To be successful, these emerging models of WIL need to be supported with resources to prepare all stakeholders to effectively engage.

Ensuring that these WIL models remain sustainable and can be scaled beyond initial implementation presents a range of challenges within the increasingly resource constrained Australian higher education sector. Ensuring that engagement by industry and community partners with these models isn't too onerous, is productive and has tangible benefits through rigorous evaluation, is critical to success. The growth in engagement with one-off events, competitions and hackathons, as well as increased use of student teams working on projects for industry and community partners, is a notable response by the sector to the increased demand for WIL, the limited number of placements available, and the necessity to find avenues to both significantly scale and sustain WIL opportunities. It also indicates the appetite for engagement with universities from a broad range of industry and community organisations.

“Innovative, sustainable, and scalable models of WIL are essential to enable universities to service a more diverse and larger student cohort engaged with WIL. The newer models identified through this project, enable universities to respond to the changing nature of work and workplaces resulting from increased globalisation and automation, by equipping students with the skills required. This project has identified five emerging WIL models with a range of associated features that are evident in the many highly creative examples of WIL being implemented across Australia and abroad. This demonstrates that the Australian tertiary education sector is adapting and innovating to respond to both the changing nature of workplaces and the increased demand from government, industry and students” (Kay et al., in press).

As indicated earlier” universities are partnering with a much broader range of organisations, including smaller companies and community groups, and leveraging that engagement for creative WIL models. This engagement includes greater innovation from industry in WIL and involvement by industry, and increasingly students, in the co design of WIL activities. The project findings showcase the increased willingness of diverse industry and community organisations to proactively partner with universities, particularly for shorter, less resource intensive WIL activities. These WIL activities overcome many of the long-standing constraints to engagement. This trend, however, is putting pressure on universities to adopt more flexible processes and enable a more agile curriculum, as well as identifying distinct skill sets and preparation required by all stakeholders to effectively develop, proactively engage with, and sustain these emerging collaborative models. (Kay et al., in press). Resources developed through this project together with the enablers and challenges identified provide universities and industry a rich resource to assist in the design of effective, scalable and successful innovative WIL experiences.

Finally, the support and affirmation of university leadership was highlighted as having a significant impact on the implementation of innovative WIL models. Allocation of funds and resources, adapting processes for increased flexibility, reducing barriers to innovative curriculum design and streamlining administrative processes were perceived as enablers university leaders could affect. Recognition and reward for staff in driving WIL initiatives and
acknowledging the expertise and time in establishing industry/community partnerships needs to be prioritized by university leaders (Gunn & Fisk, 2013; Probert, 2015; Ferns, Russell, Kay, & Smith, 2018).

Strategies that need further exploration to support the increase SME engagement in WIL in Australia include:

- Professional development for professional and academic staff required for emerging WIL models
- Preparation of students required for effective proactive engagement with emerging WIL models
- Leadership strategies required in universities to enable these models to be effectively implemented
- Staff reward, recognition and workload implications for university staff
- University logistics and arrangements required for innovative models
- Curriculum implications and strategies required for designing innovative models
- Resourcing required to implement and sustain emerging models in universities
- Incentives for industry for engagement particularly SMEs in WIL models
- Effective partnership arrangements with industry for emerging models
- Research required around the role of emerging WIL models in building 21st Century capabilities
- Strategies for engagement of diverse cohorts of students in emerging models

Project Impact
This project has resonated with and had impact across the higher education sector with well attended workshops at all ATN Universities which has initiated great discussion around WIL practice and innovation in ATN universities. Presentations in range of national and international forums and webinars (approximately 850 people) has also generated great interest both in Australia and internationally. There has been active engagement with the project by the two peak industry groups (ACCI and AI Group) with invaluable advice provided to the project team.

The resources, snapshots and video developed are yet to be disseminated but a comprehensive communication plan has been developed that includes promotion of the website through the ACEN newsletter (1,800), ATN Universities, the industry partners newsletters and social media platforms and additional conference presentations and two refereed conference papers to be published. The resources developed will be used by students, university staff and industry involved in emerging models to build capability and enhance engagement. The findings and snapshots from the project will also be used as exemplars for the design of WIL activities across the sector.

Project Dissemination
To accommodate the high priority indicated by the National WIL strategy consultation and identified by ATN Universities, the project team progressively disseminated resources developed during the project. Table 4 documents the dissemination of resources and information throughout the project.
Additional dissemination will occur at the conclusion of the project when the implementation of the communication plan will be fully implemented. Please refer to Appendix 7. Project Communications Plan for further details.

Table 4  
_Overview of Completed Project Dissemination_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Attendees</th>
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<tr>
<td>Global Careers Summit: Limerick Ireland</td>
<td>National Project: Expanding Innovative Work Integrated Learning (WIL) models</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand Association of Cooperative Educations</td>
<td>Meeting the Challenge: Innovative Work Integrated Models:</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
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<td>World Association of Cooperative Education</td>
<td>Transforming Practice: Innovative models for WIL</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic/Tas ACEN workshop at Deakin</td>
<td>Expanding Innovative Work Integrated Learning (WIL) models</td>
<td>Overview presentation</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Association of Field Educators Australia</td>
<td>Bridging the Gap: The National WIL Strategy and Innovative Industry Engagement</td>
<td>Keynote</td>
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<td>Western Sydney University</td>
<td>Bridging the gap: emerging strategies for WIL partnerships with industry and community</td>
<td>Keynote</td>
<td>November 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACEN</td>
<td>Transforming practice: Innovative models for WIL</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Emerging Models of WIL</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
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<td>workshop</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tabor College</td>
<td>Collaborative engagement with industry: approaches and considerations</td>
<td>Keynote</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
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<td>WACE Research</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Emerging WIL Models’ Workshop</td>
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<td>Sept. 2018</td>
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<td>Emerging Models of WIL: Enablers &amp; Challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACEN National Conference</td>
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Table 5.
Overview of Scheduled Project Dissemination

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Pathways Conference</td>
<td>Strategies to improve student employability outcomes through WIL</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Emerging WIL models</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT learning &amp; Teaching Conference</td>
<td>Industry Engagement with Emerging WIL Models</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEQSA</td>
<td>Overcoming challenges to maximise the outcomes: Implementing innovative work integrated learning models</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Nov 2018</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACEN</td>
<td>Innovative Models of WIL</td>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>Nov 2018</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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</table>

Project Evaluation
This project was evaluated by Adjunct Professor Robyn Nash of QUT. The evaluation report can be found in Appendix 8: Evaluation Report.

Acknowledgements
The Project Team would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of the Project Advisory Group:

- Julieanne O’ Hara : University Technology Sydney,
- Brendan Hughes : University of South Australia
- Assoc Prof Denise Jackson, Edith Cowan University, ACEN Board nominee
- Dr Norah McRae, Executive Director Cooperative Education Program and Career Services, Director Office of Community University Engagement, University of Victoria, Canada
- Dr Kristina Johansson, Assistant Research Director, University West, Sweden

The project team would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution to this project of Kristy Harper for project management and three RMIT Students: James Ratsasane for communications, website design and video production, Lisa Vu for communication design and Nicholas Shu for video production.
References


Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models


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Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of Key Trends Impacting Innovative Models of WIL in Australia.
Appendix 2: Detailed Definitions of the Innovative Models of WIL.
Appendix 3: Guidelines to Support and Enhance the Engagement of Innovative Models of WIL.
Appendix 4: Overview of Emerging WIL Models Snapshots.
Appendix 5: Overview of Deep Partnerships and WIL Brokerage Snapshots.
Appendix 6: WIL Innovation Website.
Appendix 7: Project Communication Plan
Appendix 8: Evaluation Report.
### Appendix 1: Overview of Key Trends Impacting Innovative Models of WIL in Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contemporary Trends</th>
<th>Emerging/ innovative WIL practices</th>
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</table>
| Focus on preparing students for the 21st Century world of work | ● WIL in start-ups, incubators and SMEs  
● Expansion of Global WIL opportunities  
● Increase in multi-disciplinary teams |
| Industry seeking greater engagement in Work Integrated Learning for identification of talent and enhancement of graduate employability | ● Co designed with industry e.g. Hackathons  
● Deeper long term [partnerships with universities  
● Event based partnerships  
● Active engagement by Industry associations  
● Company employees with teams of students to solve problems Multi-disciplinary teams |
| Focus on increasing skills in specific industry sectors or demand for skills eg STEM | ● Emergence of brokers for specific industry sectors  
● Funding available for programs in specific disciplines |
| Greater focus on development of entrepreneurial / intrapreneurial skills and capabilities in students | ● WIL in incubators  
● Targeting engagement with start-ups by Universities  
● Students starting businesses for WIL  
● Brokers targeting start-ups  
● Engagement with SMEs  
● Programs in universities focused on entrepreneurial skills including multidisciplinary projects |
| Expansion of global Universities and increasing demand for global experiences for students | ● Partnerships and collaboration between universities for WIL projects regionally and globally  
● Increased use of technology  
● Increased use of global networks of alumni |
| Increased focus on WIL resulting in increased competition between universities for WIL opportunities | ● Expansion of partners for WIL including engagement with community organisations  
● Greater flexibility in duration e.g. brief placements or micro placements  
● Greater use of on campus opportunities  
● Increased interest in use of technology and virtual opportunities  
● Broadening focus of WIL to non-traditional areas for students WIL experiences  
● Increased use of alumni  
● Rise of brokers, brokering systems and portals for profit and not for profit including industry associations and government |
| Focus on meeting International students’ expectations including | ● Specific initiatives for international students by Universities |
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

| industry experience due to strategic economic importance | • Initiatives and funding from, state governments and funding from federal Government  
• For profit brokers offering fee for service WIL experiences to international students |
Appendix 2: Detailed Definitions of the Innovative Models of WIL

Definitions Emerging Models of WIL

1. Micro-Placements

Short version Micro-placements typically involve short periods in the workplace ranging from two to ten days where students work individually or in teams on highly focused projects. Micro-placements occur in a diverse range of sectors, usually in small to medium companies and startups.

Long version Micro-placements typically involve short periods in the workplace ranging from two to ten days where students work individually or in teams on highly focused projects. Micro-placements occur in a diverse range of sectors, usually in small to medium companies and startups. A number of UK universities including Oxford, Aberdeen and Newcastle (not for credit)

Benefits of micro-placements include:
- students gain a short intensive experience in a professional work environment
- SMEs are attracted to this model because of the shorter time frameless commitment and resources required
- Host organisations can take the opportunity to complete specific projects and access talented students with specialist skills and innovative ideas.
- These micro-placements can provide opportunities for international students to gain workplace experience

1. Online Projects or Placements

Short version Online projects or placements involve students and industry working online which may be geographically-dispersed. Students communicate via a variety of digital platforms and technologies and may not any face to face interaction.

Long Online projects or placements involve students and industry working in teams online which can be geographically-dispersed and often spread across different countries or regional locations. Communication for these online projects and placements is via a variety of digital platforms and technologies and technologies and may not include any face to face interaction at all.

Benefits of online projects for students include:
- gaining insight into working globally
- learning to effectively use the technologies
- experience in working with teams from different countries and cultures
- access to working with a broader range of employers

Benefits to industry and community partners:
- ability to cost-effectively tap into a rich pool of talent from various global or regional locations
- progressing projects in shorter time frames with teams are working across different time zones

Benefits to universities:
- projects can be scaled to include large groups of students undertaking a real engagement with industry but on campus
- Fulfils a commitment to students for a global experience which prepares them for ...
1. **Hackathons, Competitions and Events**

**Short version: Competitions and Events.**
Events typically involve students working in teams on one-off intensive activities for and/or with industry partners or with university based activities. Universities commonly partner with external events, hackathons, festivals or competitions to provide students with industry or community engaged experiences. In some cases this engagement can involve multidisciplinary teams of students.

**Longer version:**
**Festivals, events and competitions** are commonly organised by the university either for internal purposes or in conjunction with external stakeholders. Team activities such as industry sponsored competitions maybe one-off for specific purposes or annual events. These activities are typically co-curricular, but are increasingly becoming discipline aligned and credit bearing. Short-term industry-engaged activities provide flexible and innovative approaches to engaging students in WIL, many of which can be scaled to include larger cohorts of multidisciplinary teams.

**Short version: Hackathons** are specific events in which a range of stakeholders team up to create projects, solve problems, develop pitches or software over a short period of time. In most cases hackathons are focused on a particular theme, application type or challenge, are sponsored and co-designed with industry and often hosted by Universities. Hackathons are often competitive, with teams presenting their results to judges.

**Long version: Hackathons** are specific events in which a range of stakeholders team up to create projects, develop pitches or software over a short period of time, such as a weekend or a week. In most cases hackathons are focused on a particular theme, application type, or challenge. In many cases, hackathons are sponsored by and co-designed with industry and are often hosted at Universities. These events are sometimes competitive, with teams of students, alumni and industry, presenting their results to judges.

**Benefits for industry**
- Industry use the events as recruiting tools or to develop new ideas.
- form relationships with universities
- provide opportunities for one off engagement

**Benefits for students**
- Provide opportunities for students to develop skills, network with others and solve meaningful challenges
- A means for computer programmers and interface designers to develop or showcase their skills to industry

**Benefits for universities**
- Mechanism to provide valuable industry engaged experiences to larger cohorts of students.
- Co-designed with industry ensures access to current real industry issues, problems tools and datasets for students

1. **Incubators / Startups**
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

**Short version:** An incubator is a workspace that provides support for startups including mentoring, information, networks, office space and resources for the early-stage development of new business ventures.

**Start up:** A startup is an entrepreneurial venture which is typically a young, small and newly emerged business that aims to create a new product, process or service to meet a need that is not currently being offered elsewhere in the market. The first stages of a startup are commonly financed and can attract further support once it has proved its potential.

**Benefits for industry**
- Access to information or expertise unavailable within the start up
- Access to universities’ staff, alumni, industry connections and students to inform and shape entrepreneurial activities

**Benefits for students**
- Opportunity to gain an understanding of the startup landscape and develop an enterprise mindset and skill base
- Exposure to a range of stakeholders and innovative processes

**Benefits for universities**
- As the importance of enterprise skills grows, universities are seeking to engage students into the startup and incubator space for work integrated learning to enhance their entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and mindset
- Opportunities to engage with a variety of stakeholders and entrepreneurial activities

1. **Consulting**

**Short Version:** Consulting involves students (individually or in teams) providing consultancy services and information to others, including other students, industry partners and community organisations facilitated through the university.

**Long version:** Consulting involves students (individually or in teams) providing consultancy services and information to others, including other students, industry partners and community organisations facilitated through the university. It can be based on or off campus involving students from various disciplines providing consulting services into organisations and/or to community members.

**Benefits for industry**
- Access to information or expertise unavailable within the host organisation

**Benefits for students**
- Opportunity to apply student’s discipline knowledge and skills to an issue, question or problem to inform other stakeholders

**Benefits for universities**
- Mechanism to provide valuable industry engaged experiences to larger cohorts of students.

Students are then allowed the opportunity to apply their collective business knowledge and skills towards a project, ideally addressing open ended questions, for which various approaches can be
applied and recommendations made. Student teams generally present their findings to the business with a written report with recommendations. Generally the student teams are relatively autonomous in their roles.
Appendix 3. Guidelines to Support and Enhance the Engagement of Innovative Models of WIL.

Maximising the Benefit of Your Work Integrated Learning Experience:
A Guide for Students

Work integrated learning (WIL) is the term universities use to describe any activity that lets students practice what they learn at university in a professional setting. It’s different from work experience you might organise yourself, because it forms part of a purposefully designed curriculum to ensure the experience contributes to your learning and development. Put simply, it’s the integration of work with learning.

There are so many advantages for students who engage in WIL whilst at university. Students report that WIL makes them more employable and attractive to potential employers, and employers back this up, reporting WIL favourably influences their perception of student’s abilities. Students also report WIL helps them assess their career direction, complements their learning, increases their networks, increases their motivation to study and helps them prepare for future employment.

Now newer models for work integrated learning are emerging that include, micro placements (2 days to a few weeks), online projects or placements, engagement with events, hackathons, or competitions, students undertaking consulting activities for industry partners and student engagement with start-ups or incubators.

Benefits

These new and innovative models of WIL have the same benefits as the more traditional models, however they also have added benefits for students that include:

- Working with industry and community partners in a way that encourages getting to know each other and facilitates the development of authentic working relationships.
- Working with a team of student you may not otherwise interact with – from different disciplines, different universities, different cultures and even different countries.
- Working with all the different stakeholders on a project that everyone is passionate about and motivated to achieve together.
- Challenging students to move out of their comfort zone, try something new, challenge themselves professionally and personally and finish the experience with a real sense of accomplishment.
- Being challenged to think outside the box and find innovative solutions to real world problems.
- Gaining a competitive edge through evidence of up-to-date, real world capabilities relevant to industry and community partners.
Strategies for Success

It is important to get the most out of your WIL experience. When asked how best to prepare for a WIL opportunity, industry and community partners, university staff and students who have successfully completed a WIL experience made the following suggestions:

- **Appreciating your project context**: do your background research before you begin. Review the industry or community partners website, review individuals LinkedIn profiles, and read all relevant information provided to you regarding the WIL opportunity.
- **Value what others bring**: embrace the diverse perspectives that different stakeholders bring. Having diverse perspectives is important and will benefit the work. Remember diversity brings opportunity.
- **Be open to new opportunities and ways of working**: innovative models of WIL are designed to encourage students to experience new ways of working; embrace the learning and try something new.
- **Be clear about roles, responsible and expectations**: it’s important to identify, before you commence your WIL opportunity, who you are collaborating with and who are you reporting to. Who are the stakeholders and what they are hoping to achieve through the WIL.
- **Clarify purpose and scope**: once you have identified the expectations of all stakeholders, it’s important to clarify the purpose, scope and deliverables of the project you are working on. Referring to this throughout the WIL experience will make sure your team stays on track.
- **Listen and communicate regularly**: work with the different stakeholders to establish clear communication strategies, timelines and modes of communication (e.g. face to face, online conferencing, email, SMS). Negotiate these early and check these communication strategies are effective for each stakeholder group throughout the project.
- **Be proactive**: grab opportunities and take initiative to collaboratively work through challenges.
- **Manage time complexity and ambiguity**: innovative WIL activities often occur across short time frames so employ project management strategies and tools to help achieve the best outcomes. Don’t be afraid to proactively seek advice and support from experts and stakeholders to manage changes in scope, timelines and deliverables. Time pressures are designed to be achievable but challenging, and often cause stresses. Be mindful of time constraints and work with these instead of against them.
- **Be ready to pivot**: be ready to adapt to unforeseen changes. It’s all part of the process and managing change is a key skill to practice and demonstrate in today’s world.
- **Evidencing your capabilities to others**: plan for how you are going to capture your emerging capabilities and reflect on any gaps.
- **Manage intellectual property and information of contributors and industry**: arrangements regarding intellectual property, use of non-disclosure agreements, and insurance will be arranged prior to commencement of the WIL activity by the university and industry and community partners. This information should be provided to you before the WIL begins. Make sure you read this information and agree with it prior to commencing any WIL opportunity.
Self-Assessment Checklist for Innovative WIL Models:
A Guide for University Staff (Professional and Academic)

Students report that WIL helps them assess their career direction, makes them more employable and attractive to potential employers, and employers back this up, reporting WIL favourably influences their perception of student’s abilities.

Newer models for work integrated learning are emerging that include, micro placements (2 days to a few weeks), online projects or placements, engagement with events, hackathons, or competitions, students undertaking consulting activities for industry partners and student engagement with start-ups or incubators.

This self-assessment checklist will assist you in designing and implementing quality innovative WIL activities.

Tick the box to indicate you have evidence to support the Quality Indicators listed below relating to your WIL activity.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Quality Indicators</th>
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</table>
| Curriculum Design| □ Ensure curriculum design allows flexibility in time, space and duration.  
□ Develop WIL curriculum from a whole of program perspective to enable progressive skill development with increasing complexity.  
□ Design curriculum that is inclusive and accessible to a diverse student cohort.  
□ Design curriculum in collaboration with industry/community partners and students.  
□ Allow for multi-disciplinary experiences when designing WIL curriculum.  
□ Scaffold WIL across the program to enable incremental skill development.  
□ Design curriculum that incorporates authentic, real-world learning for the development of employability skills relevant to the future workplace.  
□ Build career development learning into curriculum to support career planning through innovative WIL activities.  
□ Develop a connected and coherent curriculum where WIL assessments are aligned to learning outcomes.  
□ Design WIL curriculum that can be scaled and adapted for growing student numbers.  
□ Ensure WIL activities build and strengthen students’ entrepreneurial skills. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Expanding WIL possibilities | □ Ensure compliance with national and institutional regulatory requirements to facilitate approval of curriculum design  
□ Design WIL curriculum such that preparation and debriefing are a core component allowing for personal reflection and continual improvement. |
| Learning activities/ during WIL | □ Support students’ learning and skill acquisition with high quality and supportive industry and academic supervision and mentoring.  
□ Prepare, orientate and induct students to optimise outcomes.  
□ Design and implement learning activities that actively engage and motivate students.  
□ Design and implement learning activities that promote regular feedback and reflection.  
□ Design and implement learning activities that use technology effectively.  
□ Design and implement learning activities that allows students autonomy, and personal responsibility.  
□ Develop diverse learning activities that are authentic and require active contribution. |
| Due diligence              | □ Assess risks and identify mitigants of WIL activities for the safety and well-being of participants.  
□ Where appropriate, negotiate and authorise a legal agreement with external parties that clarifies:  
□ Roles and responsibilities  
□ Intellectual property ownership  
□ Insurance liabilities  
□ Legal requirements regarding disclosure of information, confidentiality and privacy.  
□ Ethical protocols  
□ Health and safety requirements |
| Assessment                 | □ Design assessment tasks and processes in collaboration with industry/community partners and students.  
□ Design authentic assessments that incorporate the application of theoretical concepts in real-world scenarios.  
□ Provide opportunities for practice and feedback in the assessment profile.  
□ Ensure assessment tasks are reliable, valid and educationally effective in measuring student performance of learning outcomes.  
□ Create assessment tasks that validate students’ performance of skills required for the future workforce.  
□ Design assessment tasks that are scalable and sustainable.  
□ Build in opportunities for students to reflect on performance during WIL in the assessment profile. |
| Staff                      | □ Provide leadership and vision that support staff to implement innovative and creative approaches to WIL  
□ Promote a learning and teaching culture that encourages innovative approaches that challenge traditional modes of WIL. |
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

| Quality assurance/standards | □ Provide professional development and learning opportunities to build staff capability for industry engagement.  
□ Allocate workload and recognition for involvement in WIL.  
□ Allocate appropriate resources to support innovative models of WIL.  
□ Reflect on and conduct regular quality reviews on WIL activities.  
□ Gather data on quality and outcomes from staff, students and industry/community partners.  
□ Identify evidence that validates student’s achievement of the learning outcomes.  
□ Comply with University policies and procedures, the Higher Education Standards Framework and professional accreditation requirements as required.  
□ Conduct national and international benchmarking against specified standards for quality WIL activities. |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Student Agency              | □ Establish a culture of shared responsibility between all parties for student outcomes.  
□ Promote student ownership of their learning and proactive engagement in WIL experiences. |
| Evaluation                  | □ Evaluate student outcomes and perceptions.  
□ Evaluate industry and community partner outcomes and perceptions.  
□ Evaluate staff outcomes and perceptions.  
□ Promote self-reflection for continuous improvement. |
| Industry/community engagement | □ Promote benefits for stakeholders involved in WIL activities.  
□ Articulate the purpose and value of the relationship.  
□ Clarify roles and responsibilities of industry and community partners.  
□ Evaluate relationship management processes. |

Project Partners:

Funded by Australian Technology Network (ATN) Grants Scheme for Excellence in Learning & Teaching 2017
Maximising the Benefits of Innovative Engagement with Uni students:
A Guide for Industry and Community

Industry and community organisations have gained many benefits from engaging with tertiary students to undertake placements or projects sometimes known as work integrated learning (WIL). Now newer models for work integrated learning are emerging that include, micro placements (2 days to a few weeks), online projects or placements, engagement with events, hackathons, or competitions, students undertaking consulting activities for industry partners and student engagement with start-ups or incubators.

Benefits

These models provide many opportunities for broader engagement between tertiary education and industry and community partners particularly for small to medium enterprises due to the flexibility of the activities, and the less time and resources required. The benefits to industry and community include completion of short projects, identification of future talent and access to new thinking or technologies that can assist with growth and the competitiveness of your organisation.

Strategies for Success

Although many of the key approaches to forming and maintaining partnerships are consistent across all forms of work integrated learning, the following outlines some of the extra considerations required when entering into these emerging models. Your tertiary education institution contact will also support you through these steps to maximise the benefits from the activity.

Establishing the relationship and preparation before the activity

As many of these newer models can be quite short or undertaken in an online environment it is even more critical to be very clear, explicit and realistic about your expectations and establish good communication with your tertiary education institution partner.

Many of these newer models incorporate elements of co-design where the tertiary institution will partner with industry and community groups to design the WIL activity. This will require proactive engagement between the partners to shape the activity to ensure it meets the industry organisation’s goals, the students learning needs, and is achievable from the tertiary institutions perspective.

The following outlines key enablers for success:

- Ensure the scope is clearly articulated, documented and agreed by the educational institution. With many of these innovative models there is no time, for example, during a micro placement or hackathon to adjust the scope so it is imperative that this is discussed in advance.
- Agree on realistic timeframes for the WIL activity.
- Ensure roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders are articulated particularly your organisation’s role and contribution in relation to staff attendance, supervision of students and any provision of equipment or software. If you are involved in a Hackathon or event on
campus be aware of what technical and other support will be provided by the tertiary institution and its availability or arrangements for access during the event.

- Discuss and agree on arrangements such as intellectual property, use of non-disclosure agreements, and insurance prior to commencement. This is very important with hackathons and competitions. Ensure that students involved are clear about these and their responsibilities.
- Agree on issues such as naming rights, use of logos for promotion and attribution on social media. Ensure consent is given by all participants for taking and using photos.
- Negotiate, agree and then communicate criteria for any judging or providing feedback to participating students in an activity ahead of time.
- Agree on appropriate timeframes and expectations around progress reports and who should receive them and communicate this to students.
- Be aware that start-ups wanting to engage with students may be required by the tertiary institution to sign an agreement to proceed; this requires being legal entity so suitable alternate arrangements may need to be negotiated if start-ups haven’t yet been formalised.

**Optimising your engagement during the activity**

- Utilise your communication channels with tertiary institutions actively throughout the activity.
- Provide timely feedback to tertiary institution staff and address issues as they arise and attempt to resolve them to the mutual benefit of all stakeholders.
- Coach students in either their participation or performance to build their personal capacity and maximise outputs during these activities. This can include:
  - guide students participating in unfamiliar and unpredictable contexts like hackathons or virtual projects recognising that diverse cohorts of students will have differing levels of experience and resilience
  - encourage students to ask questions, take an entrepreneurial approach and seek feedback
  - encourage connection through the use of communication strategies including use of technologies for students working virtually
  - prompt students to reflect on their experiences and challenges encountered and recognise these as opportunities for learning
  - prompt participants around health and safety issues e.g. rest and hydration during events or hackathons
  - role model respectful communication and behaviour towards and between participants

**NB:** Any concerns regarding unacceptable behaviour should be brought to the attention of tertiary institution staff immediately.

**Evaluating the WIL activity**

- Measure the outcomes and evaluate your organization’s involvement.
- Consider what return on investment your organisation received from involvement.
- Share your feedback with the tertiary institution to jointly agree on future improvements.
- Review the design (co-design), implementation and outcomes of the WIL activity including the collaborative approach.

---

**Project Partners:**

RMIT University

Funded by Australian Technology Network (ATN) Grants Scheme for Excellence in Learning & Teaching 2017
## Appendix 4: Overview of Emerging WIL Models Snapshots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snapshot</th>
<th>WIL Model</th>
<th>Industry and Community Partner</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Credit Bearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Consulting</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Awareness - A Service Learning Experience</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Global Rainbow Foundation</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Industry Partnership</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>QSuper</td>
<td>QUT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Community Engaged Learning Project</td>
<td>Micro-placement</td>
<td>Cherbourg Council</td>
<td>QUT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Innovation Impact Hackathon</td>
<td>Hackathon/Competition and Events</td>
<td>City of Melbourne (Melbourne Innovation District)</td>
<td>RMIT University and University of Melbourne</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Skills</td>
<td>Global Employability</td>
<td>Online Project or Placement</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>RMIT University Kirkwood Community College Dundalk Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC Australia Asia-Pacific Commercial Mediation Competition</td>
<td>Hackathon/Competition and Events</td>
<td>The Australian Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing Innovation and Entrepreneurialism</td>
<td>Micro-placement</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>University of Technology Sydney (UTS)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Empathy Simulator – Communication in Teaching in a Virtual Learning Environment</td>
<td>Online Project or Placement</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtin Fashion Graduate Show –</td>
<td>Hackathon/Competition and Events</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Integrated Learning and Employment Model</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion and Event Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Consulting Using Design Thinking</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Design and Construction Cooperative</td>
<td>Micro-placement</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Innovative Solutions - A Hackathon</td>
<td>Hackathon/Competition and Events</td>
<td>Ericsson Australia</td>
<td>University of Technology Sydney (UTS)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Innovation Incubator Connecting Students with Startups</td>
<td>Incubator/Start-up</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>QUT (The Foundry)</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Through Consulting</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Industry Beans (brokerage via NISPP)</td>
<td>RMIT University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Start Up Launchlab</td>
<td>Incubator/Start-up</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>University of Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Consultancy Model</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>University of Groningen, Netherlands</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlocking the Entrepreneurial Mind-Set</td>
<td>Incubator/Start-up</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>RMIT University (RMIT Activator)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Inside-Out Project</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>South Australian Department of Correctional Services (DCS)</td>
<td>The University of South Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-2-Peer Social Media Campaign</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>US State Department (2016) South Australian Police (SAPOL) (2017)</td>
<td>The University of South Australia</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicked Problems</td>
<td>Innovative Solution</td>
<td>Micro-placement</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>RMIT University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Industry/Government</td>
<td>University/Institution</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Student Auditing Project</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>The University of Tasmania</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Industry Lead, Practice-Based Degree</td>
<td>Incubator/Start-up</td>
<td>Animal Logic</td>
<td>University of Technology Sydney (UTS)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-internships</td>
<td>Micro-placement</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Oxford University</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5: Overview of Deep Partnerships and WIL Brokerage Snapshots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deep Partnership &amp; WIL Brokerage Snapshots</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Industry and Community Partner</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Credit Bearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting and Facilitating WIL for Small Business</td>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia (Brokerage)</td>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT ABC Fact Checker</td>
<td>Deep Industry Partnership</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)</td>
<td>RMIT University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting Students and Businesses to Positively Benefit the Region</td>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>NISPP</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribit – Connecting Students to Innovative Companies</td>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lasting Impacts of Deep Partnership</td>
<td>Deep Industry Partnership</td>
<td>Brimbank City Council</td>
<td>RMIT University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6. WIL Innovation Website

Website visit: https://acen.edu.au/innovative-models
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models
## Appendix 7. Project Communication Plan

### Communication Plan — September 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Name / institution / media outlet</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Audience (who)</th>
<th>Message (what)</th>
<th>Intent (why)</th>
<th>Delivery Channel(s)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIGroup</td>
<td>Anne Younger General Manager, Education and Training <a href="mailto:anne.younger@aigroup.com.au">anne.younger@aigroup.com.au</a> <a href="http://www.aigroup.com.au">www.aigroup.com.au</a></td>
<td>SMEs: Traditional, innovative and emerging industry sectors and associations.</td>
<td>Benefits for employers: Students bring fresh ideas into an organisation. Engaging with universities can help identify suitable projects based on business demand. There are new less resource ways of engaging with university student Promote key WIL contacts with Australian Universities</td>
<td>To access AIGroup’s national newsletter To highlight WIL activities and communicate to SME’s ways in which they can engage with universities and the benefits. To provide information on How to contact Australian Universities for WIL</td>
<td>EDM featuring links to case studies, promotional video—for inclusion into AIGroup’s national newsletter.</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCI</td>
<td>Jenny Lambert Director - Employment, Education and Training at Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
<td>SMEs: Traditional, innovative and emerging industry sectors and associations.</td>
<td>Benefits for employers: Students bring fresh ideas into an organisation. Engaging with a university can help identify suitable projects based on business demand. There are new less resource ways of engaging with university student Promote key WIL contacts with Australian Universities</td>
<td>To build capacity for employers to participate in WIL by: Providing models and guidelines to adopt such as legal requirements, pay structures. Encouraging alumni in the industry to invest back in students. Helps businesses in recruitment processes, they can observe first hand the future readiness of participants.</td>
<td>EDM featuring links to case studies, promotional video—for inclusion into AIGroup’s national newsletter.</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SmartCompany</td>
<td>The editor <a href="mailto:news@smartcompany.com.au">news@smartcompany.com.au</a>.</td>
<td>Start ups and new businesses.</td>
<td>Engaging with students through WIL, can help address market labour needs and cash flow shortfall for lean startups. Young talent can provide fresh ideas Ensuring competitiveness through university-industry collaboration.</td>
<td>To encourage startup businesses to consider WIL as a bridge to solving their market labour and cash flow challenges. Promote awareness of this opportunity to a broader startup audience.</td>
<td>as required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATN staff</td>
<td>Judie kay Academic and professional staff</td>
<td>WIL models serve to benefit all partners and stakeholders. Information about snapshots and resources for industry, students and institutions</td>
<td>Build staff capability in innovative Models</td>
<td>ATN WIL and Employability Google community ATN Universities Communities of practice</td>
<td>ATN WIL and Employability Google community ATN Universities Communities of practice</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

### ACEN Members

**Judie Kay**

- Academic and professional staff
- Relevant Association members

| Information around Innovative models, resources available and Project findings |
| To notify and encourage partners to share snapshot links to their networks. |
| To provide national leadership towards expanding (WIL) |
| Build support among students, universities, employers across all sectors and governments – and increase participation. |

**Newsletter link to website:**
- Promotional videos
- Digital assets that incorporate hero imagery with CTA's to drive traffic back to WIL innovation's snapshot page.
- A downloadable highlights PDF
- Conference proceedings, journal articles and Webinar

---

### Stakeholder Name / Institution / Media Outlet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Audience (who)</th>
<th>Message (what)</th>
<th>Intent (why)</th>
<th>Delivery Channel(s) (how)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### The Conversation

**https://theconversation.com/au**

- Booths a relevant audience of educators and industry in excess of 10 million users.

**Project Load**

- SMEs, Employers, Start-ups and New Businesses.

How innovative WIL models help overcome constraints and respond to current labour market trends for industry whilst building capacity in universities to better equip students.

To increase awareness and interest in the WIL space by directing traffic back to WIL snapshots

Pitch a thought piece to the Conversation.com. Researchers or academic staff with a university are eligible to contribute.

As required

#### Medium

**https://medium.com/**

- Medium taps into the world's most insightful writers, thinkers, and storytellers to bring you the smartest takes on topics that matter.

**Project Load**

- SMEs, Employers, Start-ups and New Businesses, University Staff Globally

How innovative WIL models help overcome constraints and respond to current labour market trends for industry whilst building capacity in universities to better equip students.

To contributing meaningfully to the conversation around the industry topics around WIL.

Self-publish a thought leadership piece which provides links back to WIL’s snapshot site. Promote engagement by asking stakeholders to share the piece across their LinkedIn, Facebook, Google Plus networks. Triggers for engagement are topical relevance, tone and contextual delivery.

As required

#### ACEN Linkedin

**Judie Kay**

- SMEs, Employers, Start-ups and New Businesses, University Staff Globally

How innovative WIL models help overcome constraints and respond to current labour market trends for industry whilst building capacity in universities to better equip students.

To contributing meaningfully to the conversation around the industry topics around WIL.

Self-publish a thought leadership piece which provides links back to WIL’s snapshot site. Promote engagement by asking stakeholders and readers to share the piece across their LinkedIn, Facebook, Google Plus networks.

As required

#### Other

**Project Load**

- Project team’s immediate network

To promote external interest and drive maximum reach and traction back to WIL innovation’s models and case studies.

Via personalised electronic communication. Ask members of the project to share the WIL innovation thought piece through their socials.

As required

---

### 3. Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Name / Institution / Media Outlet</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Audience (who)</th>
<th>Message (what)</th>
<th>Intent (why)</th>
<th>Delivery Channel(s) (how)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Twitter: ACEN

**Judie Kay, Sonia Ferns, Jude Smith**

- ACEN members, ACEN twitter follower

Showcase WIL innovative models
Promote resources available
Support ACEN members to innovate

ACEN twitter feed

As required

---
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Twitter : ACCI, AIGroup</th>
<th>Anne Younger, Jenny Lambert</th>
<th>Peak industry Association members</th>
<th>All sorts of interesting ways you can engage with universities. Students bring fresh ideas and refresh the environment. Engaging with a university can help identify suitable projects based on business demand. Showcase WIL innovative models.</th>
<th>Promote more collaborations between universities and industry. Show that the process is easy.</th>
<th>AIG and ACCI twitter feeds</th>
<th>As required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>RMIT comms manager</td>
<td>University Community, Alumni, employers, SME’s, academics</td>
<td>All sorts of interesting ways you can engage with universities. Universities produce graduates who are ready for any workplace. Students bring fresh ideas into organisations. Engaging with a university can help identify suitable projects based on business demand. Showcase WIL innovative models.</td>
<td>Demystify the belief by some employers that students are not up to the job. Promote more collaborations between universities and industry. Demystify any perceived risks. Show that the process is easy. Show the benefits of collaboration.</td>
<td>Coordinate with RMIT to feature WIL innovations promotional video on their Youtube channel. Provide links in the description back to WIL innovation’s snapshots.</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models

External evaluation report

Adj. Prof. Robyn Nash
September 2018
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1.0 Introduction

2.0 Project outline
   2.1 Aim and intentions of the project
   2.2 Project context, events and processes

3.0 Functions of the evaluation

4.0 Evaluation approach and procedures
   4.1 Approach
   4.2 Procedures

5.0 Commentary
   5.1 Achievement of intended outcomes
   5.2 Nature and effects of process

6. Summary
1.0 Introduction

This report outlines details and findings of an external evaluation of the project entitled *Expanding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) possibilities: enhancing student employability through innovative WIL models* undertaken by Judie Kay from RMIT University (the Lead Institution), and team members Leoni Russell (RMIT University), Sonia Ferns (Curtin University) and Judith Smith (Queensland University of Technology) in partnership with Jenny Lambert (Australian Chamber of Commerce) and Anne Younger (Australian Industry Group).

The following sections outline the purpose and intentions of the project, approach of the evaluation, key evaluation findings and overall conclusions.

2.0 Project outline

2.1 Aim and intentions of the project

The overall aim of the project, as outlined in the project proposal, was ‘to increase industry engagement in work integrated learning (WIL), particularly with small to medium enterprises, by identifying and showcasing innovative approaches that overcome constraints and respond to current labour market trends’.

Five specific sub-aims were identified for the project, namely:

1. Identify key trends and barriers to SMEs and community organisations in engaging with WIL;
2. Identify the success factors in innovative models of WIL engagement, particularly in SMEs and community organisations;
3. Build capacity in ATN institutions for greater engagement with industry and community organisations, particularly SMEs, through a WIL Community of Practice;
4. Support greater engagement by SMEs and community organisations in WIL;
5. Communicate and disseminate WIL engagement strategies and resources to employers and institutions to ensure widespread impact of WIL innovations.

Key deliverables for the project were:

1. Development of a matrix that identifies success factors and key characteristics of innovative WIL models, particularly as regards SMEs;
2. Establishment of an ATN Community of Practice;
3. Development of resources to support greater SME engagement in WIL;

2.2 Project context and processes

The project took a participatory action research (PAR) approach to achieving the identified outcomes, drawing on the extensive expertise and experience of team members with respect to Work Integrated Learning, their involvement in ACEN at Board and State Chapter Committee levels, and a partnership with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
(ACCI), the AI Group and peak Australian industry groups representing the majority of businesses in Australia.

**Stage 1**

The project, as originally designed, involved four stages. However, due to issues outside the control of the project team which delayed the start of the project, these were streamlined into three stages. A key activity undertaken during the first stage involved a comprehensive literature review to inform the following stages of the project. Government and industry reports, academic peer-reviewed papers and relevant conference proceedings, e.g. ACEN and WACE, were included in the review. This was followed by the development of a matrix that mapped the emergent WIL strategies and their key features, and the creation of an initial set of emerging WIL models.

**Stage 2**

The second phase of the project focussed on exploring these emerging models with university WIL representatives through a series of local, national and international workshops, webinars and WIL community of practice meetings. The information gathered from these discussions was analysed to inform the ongoing refinement of the emerging models along with their key characteristics and challenges. An online Community of Practice was also established to enable widespread engagement in the sharing of information regarding emerging models, and to facilitate discourse regarding the development of success factors, resources etc.

**Stage 3**

Stage 3 involved in-depth consideration of the outcomes from Stage 2 with a range of WIL practitioners, industry representatives and students who were involved with the emerging models. The data from these interviews informed the further refinement of the five main types of models which had emerged along with the identification of specific examples of innovative WIL practices. Also included in Stage 3 was the development of a project website which will be ‘housed’ with the ACEN website. It showcases twenty-nine snapshots of innovative WIL practices that are designed for industry, community organisations as well as the university sector. Additionally, guidelines to support these innovative models have been developed for industry (SMEs) and the tertiary sector. It is particularly noteworthy that dissemination of the project’s activities and findings has occurred during each of the three Stages, and is a significant strength of this project.

### 3.0 Functions of the evaluation

The evaluation was designed to –

i. ascertain progress towards achievement of the project’s intended outcomes;
ii. identify the nature and effects of the processes adopted for the project; and
iii. provide feedback to the project team.

The project leader was extremely helpful with information about the project and processes that had been/were being followed, and genuinely open to comment and feedback. This allowed constructive dialogue and feedback to the project leader to take place.
4.0 Evaluation approach and procedures

4.1 Approach

A process-outcome approach was adopted for the evaluation. This involved the evaluator in reviewing and analyzing project documentation, along with other information gathered directly from the project leader (and project team members), in order to review project outcomes and assess the nature and effects of project processes.

4.2 Procedures

Key information sources for this report included project documentation (such as the project proposal, project materials and progress reports), a face-to-face meeting between the project team leader and the external evaluator, communication via telephone and email with the project team leader, and conversations by telephone/F2F with project team members.

Throughout the project the project team engaged in an iterative internal evaluation process. Data gathered at each stage of the project were analysed and critically discussed. The team’s thinking was further informed by feedback from conference presentations and the workshops and webinars conducted throughout the project. The resultant findings were used to guide ongoing implementation of the project.

5.0 Commentary

The following comments are made in relation to the first two functions of the evaluation listed in section 3.0

5.1 Achievement of intended outcomes

5.1.1 Development of a matrix that identifies success factors and key characteristics of innovative WIL models, particularly in relation to SMEs

In the early part of the project a matrix was developed to map the emerging WIL strategies and their key features. As noted by the team, the analysis of this data informed the creation of an initial set of emerging WIL models, and thus was a highly important part of the project. As the project progressed, the initial set of WIL models was iteratively explored and refined through the mechanisms outlined earlier.

5.1.2 Resources to support greater engagement by SMEs in WIL

Key resources that have been developed through this project include 1) a project website and 2) guidelines to support engagement with innovative models of WIL. The project website, which will be ‘housed’ on the ACEN website, contains 24 snapshots of good practice of the 5 emerging models of WIL and 5 examples of two key features that are purposefully designed for industry and community organisations as well as staff in the higher education sector. The snapshots are based on input from stakeholders and are intentionally designed to highlight
the kind of information that will resonate with the respective audiences. The guidelines are aimed at students, industry partners and university staff, and have been informed by the commentary from workshops and interviews held during the course of the project.

5.1.3 Establishment of ATN WIL Community of Practice

As indicated earlier, an online WIL Community of Practice was established by the team to enable the sharing of practices, resources and project findings. The community has approx. 125 members from across Australia, and has been well utilised for the dissemination of information right throughout the project.

5.1.4 Dissemination strategy

Progressive dissemination of project resources and findings has been a significant strength of this project. The team have systematically used a variety of opportunities including local, national and international workshops, forums and conferences to share project outcomes and gain feedback. Importantly, industry engagement through the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Australian Industry Group (AI) has also been strong, and has included dissemination about the project via a weekly AI e-newsletter. It is also intended to promote the project website through the ACEN newsletter, ATN universities and industry partners, as well as the publication of refereed papers.

5.2 Nature and effects of processes

The second function of the evaluation was to identify the nature and effects of the processes adopted for the project. An outline of the project processes has been provided earlier in Section 2.2. Associated with these processes were a number of factors that helped and hindered the project’s operation and progress. These are outlined in the following, the key sources being discussions with the project leader, three of the project team members and review of project documents.

Factors identified as helping the project’s operation and progress were identified as:

- Qualities of team members, with those interviewed using descriptors including ‘great team that worked well together’, and ‘the combined expertise of team members was invaluable’;
- Communication processes that assisted members in the project’s implementation were regular ZOOM meetings, email consultations and telephone calls;
- Being able to leverage earlier work undertaken by project team members in this field and their ready access to a range of relevant networks;
- Connection with the National WIL Strategy (2015);
- ‘Piggybacking’ off serendipitous, common meeting opportunities to include F2F ‘get-togethers’ wherever possible;
- Strong engagement of industry partners with the project which was described as ‘a real plus’.

Factors identified as hindering the project’s operation and progress were identified as:
● Initial delay in being to commence the project whilst project funding issues were being resolved;
● Several changes in administrative personnel (project officer) during the course of the project; and
● Difficulties in gaining access to academic staff and students over the summer period which caused some delay in developing the snapshots and guidelines.

The geographical dispersion of team members could have provided potential difficulties for the project’s operation and successful completion. However, the commitment and goodwill of the team, supported by its positive leadership, enabled this challenge to be successfully overcome.

6.0 Summary

The overall intention of this project was ‘to increase industry engagement in work integrated learning (WIL), particularly with small to medium enterprises, by identifying and showcasing innovative approaches that overcome constraints and respond to current labour market trends’.

The key strategies planned to achieve this overall aim were ‘to develop a matrix that identifies success factors and key characteristics of innovative WIL models, particularly as regards SMEs’, develop a set of resources to support engagement in WIL and ‘to establish a WIL Community of Practice’. These strategies have been effectively operationalised with the development of a typology of emerging WIL models, creation of a purpose-built website with 24 snapshots of good practice of the 5 emerging models of WIL and 5 examples of two key features, development of guidelines for industry and community partners, student and staff in universities, and the establishment of a WIL Community of Practice.

There has been strong dissemination of project outcomes throughout the course of the project, with further dissemination opportunities planned for later this year. However, as is the case with many projects, strategies to facilitate the uptake of project outcomes in industry, community and university settings will be an ongoing challenge in terms of maximising the project’s impact.

In summary, a great deal of valuable learning has accrued from this project. The knowledge gained has the potential to make a significant contribution to the ongoing dialogue regarding WIL, enable capacity building and facilitate greater engagement of industry, particularly SMEs, and universities in the provision of innovative WIL experiences that advance student employability.