



## ACEN Submission: TEQSA Guidance Note: Work-Integrated Learning

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### Introduction

Established in 2006, the Australian Collaborative Education Network Ltd ( ACEN) the Australian peak body for work integrated learning (WIL) in Australia, is internationally recognised as a leader in WIL practice, curriculum, research and scholarship. WIL is an “umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum”<sup>1</sup>

The ACEN vision is based on intentional collaboration with stakeholders including higher education sector staff and students, industry partners, community and government representatives.

The objectives of ACEN are to:

- promote and enhance WIL throughout Australia and the Asia Pacific Region
- facilitate the development and sharing of knowledge and practice in WIL for the improvement of the student experience
- enhance partner/industry involvement with the higher and vocational education sectors for the provision of WIL opportunities
- foster and facilitate research and scholarship initiatives in WIL

Most Australian Universities are ACEN members with ACEN representing over 1600 academic and professional staff working in tertiary education in Australia in work integrated learning across all discipline areas. The ACEN president represents Australia on the world board WACE.

ACEN welcomes the opportunity to give feedback regarding the TEQSA Guidance Notes for Work- Integrated learning

The ACEN Board endorses the Guidance notes focus on:

- ensuring an effective and positive experience for students with a focus on ensuring the quality of the WIL experience
- the mutual benefit of WIL to all parties involved
- understanding and addressing the risks

The ACEN Board provides specific feedback in the following sections of the Guidance Note.

### What Does Work- Integrated Learning encompass?

- The definition included in the Guidance notes does not reflect current WIL practice nationally as it is too narrow and needs to be broadened to include:
  - o WIL activities on campus where the university is the host employer
  - o WIL in campuses that are jointly managed with industry partners eg located in Hospitals

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick, C. Peach, D. & Pocknee, C. (2009) The WIL (Work Integrated Learning) report: A national scoping study, Australian Teaching and Learning Council



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- o Simulated WIL including case studies, role plays, and replicas of workplace environments (eg Mooc courts)
- o Virtual WIL experiences
- o field experience where activities are supervised by a subject matter expert or industry professional
- o entrepreneurship or enterprise activities supervised by an academic and often in collaboration with an industry mentor
- The term Professional placement is sufficiently generic to cover all types of placements therefore the terms clinical and internships should be removed from the Guidance Notes.
- Workplace projects should be changed to industry or community-based projects to better reflect WIL as it is practised in Australia.
- The second paragraph needs to be re written to reflect the broader scope of WIL as outlined in the preceding points as it focuses on placements in the workplace and suggests the level of integration is dependent on the immersion in the workplace whereas this integration is evident for all models of WIL when done properly.
- There is no reference to partnerships with industry and community organisations which is fundamental to work integrated Learning and a particular focus of the National WIL Strategy
- It should be noted that many WIL placements, especially projects can take place on campus or online.
- The current definition of 'workplace outside of their higher education provider' may not accurately reflect the complex campus environments that exist - for example, clinical environments that are jointly provided by a HEI and a hospital, industry partner or more complex relationship (eg UQ TRI: <http://www.di.uq.edu.au/tri>), or even university hospitals (eg. Macquarie <http://muh.org.au/>)

### **Intent of the Standards**

WIL does not directly impact on employment outcomes of graduates (the number of graduates that are successful in gaining employment post-university). However, research confirms that WIL does impact on work-readiness<sup>2</sup> and the development of employability capabilities that improves the potential chances of employment. Therefore the term employability should replace employment and the sentence be rewritten to better reflect a more encompassing and broader outcome from WIL.

### **Risks to Quality**

Replace "the workplace does not have the capacity to deliver the desired learning outcomes or students experiences with "deliver or support the desired learning outcomes "

Additional areas for consideration:

- Ethical and professional behaviour is not mentioned as risks to be managed and should be included. The point be added should read academic and professional integrity and ethical practice
- There should be a reference to partnerships with industry and community as a source of potential risk in this section

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, C., Ferns, S., & Russell, L. (2014). Assessing the impact of Work Integrated learning on student work-readiness: Final Report. Office of Learning and Teaching. Sydney, Australia.



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- Management of student IP, which should reference the agreement with the industry partner

## Resources and References

The following resources should be added to this list.

- Ferns, S. (Ed). (2014). *Work Integrated Learning in the Curriculum. HERDSA Guide*. NSW: Higher Education and Development Society of Australasia Inc.
- National WIL Strategy <http://acen.edu.au/resources/national-wil-strategy>
- Principles, Guidelines and Strategies for Inclusive WIL [http://acen.edu.au/access-participation-progression/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PGS\\_flyer\\_WEB\\_FINAL-VERSION-12\\_6\\_15.pdf](http://acen.edu.au/access-participation-progression/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PGS_flyer_WEB_FINAL-VERSION-12_6_15.pdf)
- Principles, Guidelines and Strategies for Inclusive WIL [http://acen.edu.au/access-participation-progression/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FINAL-Principles-Guidelines\\_and\\_Strategies-Inclusive-WIL-as-at-6\\_11\\_15.pdf](http://acen.edu.au/access-participation-progression/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FINAL-Principles-Guidelines_and_Strategies-Inclusive-WIL-as-at-6_11_15.pdf)

The ACEN Board welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on this important Guidance note would be keen to provide follow up information or clarifying information

## ACEN Board of Directors

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