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RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON BEST PRACTICE WIL PROGRAMS

University of Canberra
Faculty of Arts and Design: Public Relations Internship
www.canberra.edu.au/pr-internship
www.canberra.edu.au/pr-internship/overview
Faculty of Education: Professional Experience Program
www.canberra.edu.au/faculties/education/professionalexperience/subjects/6904
Faculty of Health (2010) Field & Clinical Placements Handbook
Faculty of Information Sciences and Engineering (2009) Business Informatics Internship Information Pack
Faculty of Law: Internship Program
www.canberra.edu.au/faculties/law/courses/internship
Australian Government Higher Education (CRICOS) Provider; University of Canberra #00212K, University of Canberra College #01849E.

Information in this guide was correct at time of printing. The University of Canberra reserves the right to change course offerings, arrangements, and all other aspects without notice.

Up-to-date information will be available on the University’s website www.canberra.edu.au as changes are accredited by Academic Board.

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WELCOME TO WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

At the University of Canberra, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) is one of the signature themes of our courses and disciplines, and is intended to forge links between our educational programs and the world of work.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Stephen Parker, states in the Strategic Plan that

“Our courses will be known for the way they prepare professional people professionally, through work-based learning and collaborative teaching with external agencies.”

Work-integrated learning, to me, means educational activities that integrate theoretical learning with activities of vocational relevance. Academics, government, industry and community need to collaborate closely on curriculum ensuring that courses stay close to real world requirements. This is important for the student and also for the University, particularly in the context of developing relationships with Commonwealth and ACT government departments and local industry.

In this brochure, we show a University-wide framework that supports student experiences in work-integrated learning throughout their study programs. We feature this framework and some faculty examples where work-integrated learning is well established. We hope you enjoy it and learn something new!

If you are interested in learning more about work-integrated learning at the University of Canberra, or are willing to host students in your organisation, please contact us. You’ll find full details, and the WIL website, on the back cover of this publication.

Professor Carole Kayrooz
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
University of Canberra

JUST SOME OF THE UNIVERSITY’S COURSES THAT OFFER WIL

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is about learning through working hands-on in work-like environments. Students experience the reality of their chosen careers, and in the process learn professional skills and a lot about themselves.

At the University of Canberra we believe that:

- Work-integrated learning is deliberate and intentional.
- Learning in work - theory is applied to, and generated from, practice.
- Supported - through curriculum design, where activities align with intended learning outcomes.
- Subject to assessment - imaginative and authentic assessment tasks support critical thinking, analysis, creativity and practical skill development.

The University regards WIL as a significant contributor to the professional career development of its students. It is continuously improving its educational programs through a comprehensive agenda to integrate WIL in professionally-oriented courses.

WIL already has a significant presence in the curriculum, through the teaching of professional expertise, through clinical placements, internships, community and industry placements and projects, through real-life simulations and virtual experiences.

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WHAT’S IN HERE FOR YOU?

This brochure is a presentation of the possibilities and advantages of work-integrated learning. Its purpose is to engage all stakeholders, students, universities, employers and community groups, invite them to discover the mutual benefits of WIL and help further its application in professional education.

In the University grounds you’ll find a sculpture with a quotation from Plato that reads: “The mind is not a vessel to be filled—but a fire to be kindled”

The University of Canberra’s dedication to professional preparation for professional careers and its focus on work-integrated learning are self-renewing sources of highly combustible fuel.

The ways in which WIL can be incorporated into study are many and varied, we invite you to read on, assess their value, be creative and get involved!

WIL OFFERS MANY BENEFITS

FOR STUDENTS

In today’s workplace, employers are looking for graduates with work experience who can quickly play a significant role and help the organisation achieve its objectives. Undertaking a WIL component as part of your degree helps you prepare to meet these expectations. It gives you the opportunity to:

• Put theory into practice
• Consider and develop possible careers
• Establish networking opportunities
• Develop your ability to think critically and creatively
• Investigate employment prospects and demonstrate what you can do
• Establish a work history
• Find out what you don’t want to do
• Learn how the professional, corporate or governmental world works
• Develop a range of essential generic skills sought by employers

Students who have participated in WIL programs speak highly of their benefits.

“It enabled me to discover the real world application of skills learnt at uni”.

Mark Sweaney
Environmental Science student

SOUGHT AFTER SKILLS

In addition to state-of-the-art knowledge relevant to your actual discipline, employers seek the ability to quickly bring yourself up to speed and contribute as a productive professional.

Employers look for:

• Graduates with general work and personal skills. These include judgment, resilience, the ability to manage expectations, and to take direction.
• Graduates who can communicate, and express ideas in written and oral form. Ideas resulting from their ability to think creatively, critically and analytically.
• Graduates with enthusiasm and a problem-solving mind-set, who can work independently and with others, show leadership, be self-aware, act ethically and with social responsibility.

FOR STAFF

WIL provides opportunities for regional, national and international community engagement. When WIL is incorporated into the curriculum, you derive benefits such as:

• Extended professional networks to generate new projects, synergies and partnerships
• You stay abreast of industry requirements
• You improve students’ satisfaction with their study
• You increase interest in the degree
Programs become more successful as their reputations spread.

The University develops long-term relationships with graduates through alumni contact.

You have engaged students who have experienced the relevance of theory in the real world.

You see students mature in their thinking and approach.

You help increase stakeholder participation in other aspects of the curriculum.

You develop expertise in work placement initiatives, programs and assessment.

"I see WIL as producing programs that give students a well-rounded education and develop lifelong learning skills and employability skills to go with it."

Greg Boland, Senior Lecturer in Business and Government

FOR THE COMMUNITY

There are many ways in which you, as a professional, a business manager or a community group leader, can benefit by becoming involved with WIL. You might offer student placements, invite students to work on authentic projects in your workplace, or offer to share your expertise with students in the classroom.

Benefits reported by current WIL partners include:

- Access to enthusiastic and motivated students
- Access to new ideas that promote creativity and encourage innovation
- The opportunity to form associations and networks with staff in their field
- An efficient and cost-effective method of assessing students for future employment
- The professional satisfaction of watching a student learn and develop

Staff development through engagement with the students.

The opportunity to provide feedback that shapes what future students are taught.

The opportunity to share your organisation’s culture, expectations and procedures with future graduates.

WIL is “one of the most effective human resource development tools available.”

“I couldn’t recommend work integrated learning highly enough. Having students in clinical placements not only gives us greater insight into student capabilities, but also greater influence over how they learn.”

Deborah Booth, General Manager, Calvary Retirement Community, Canberra

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- The professional satisfaction of watching a student learn and develop

WIL is a holistic program that embraces the concept of professional preparation for professional careers. It includes teaching professional knowledge, skills and strategies, simulations, mentoring, community engagement, internships and clinical placements.

- **INTERNSHIPS** involve the placement of students in a work environment, usually for a specified number of hours or days, under the supervision of one or more of the employer’s staff. Students undertake authentic work tasks, and are required to complete University-set assessment tasks during the internship. Students in both undergraduate and graduate degrees undertake internships, including students in Business Informatics, Public Relations, and the Entrepreneurship Major.

- **TEACHING PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE** is woven into the curriculum in many courses offered by the Faculty of Education. Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Teaching students undertake classroom practice and assessment in each year of their course.

- **INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY** provide rich and authentic learning experiences. Work projects can take many forms, for example:
  - The University’s Environmental Science academics, undergraduates, and local primary schools work together on a conservation project; or
  - Architecture students provide design concepts for the development of a new Australian Museum of Nature.

- **PROFESSIONAL MENTORING** is an important way to learn professional skills and develop confidence. In the Faculty of Business and Government, students have regular access to business mentors as part of their studies. While professional mentoring can stand alone, it is also implicit in many forms of WIL.

- **SIMULATIONS** are simulated workplaces set up at the University. They provide students with physical experiences in highly skilled work without risk to vulnerable patients or clients. Simulated environments include a Pharmacy, several Nursing Wards, Physiotherapy Clinics, a Law Court, a Student Led Communications Agency, Television, Radio, and Digital Design studios.

- **VIRTUAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS** such as the Australian Stock Exchange share market game are also examples of WIL.

- **CLINICAL PLACEMENTS** are key components of Faculty of Health courses. These include Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, Clinical Psychology, Nutrition and Dietetics. In clinical placements students discover the crucial links between theory and practice; develop their professional networks and gain real-life insights into their future careers.
There are many extremely effective University of Canberra WIL programs currently engaging students, staff, corporate and community organisations.

CASE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE – COMMUNITY PROJECT

"Universities aren’t just about educating a small subset of people"

In 2009, Senior Lecturer Dr Margi Böhm and four Environmental Science students were involved in a highly successful school community project on environmental sustainability, which engaged Years K-6 at historic Yass Public School.

The project included the design and planting of a native garden, and a water use analysis.

It was an integrated community effort:

- Student Sue Hiroko designed the garden to attract native birds.
- Yass Landcare donated the plants, and
- Greening Australia, school children and the community participated in the planting.

Simultaneously, students from both the University and the School conducted a water-use project.

One Environmental Science student, Mark Sweaney, found that his involvement enabled him to discover the “real-world application of skills learnt at Uni”.

All UC students benefited from Landcare’s feedback on their work in the form of professional assessments to inform their learning.

The Principal of Yass Public School, Ms Jenny Garnett, likes practical tasks, and feels that the main value of the project was: “the opportunity for school children to work with real-life environmental scientists.” She observed that the chance for children to engage in hands-on science tasks built good understanding of environmental issues, and that working with Landcare and Greening Australia in planting provided rich opportunities for peer support.

Yass Public School has undertaken a set of actions that provided immediate improvements in water use. They also have longer term plans to transform the school grounds into a predominantly native garden; one that is safe and easy to maintain. It will incorporate interesting alcoves to attract native wildlife and encourage human learning and play.

CASE 2: ARCHITECTURE – INDUSTRY PROJECTS

“It’s very creative, for the students and for us – and that’s what sustains us.”

Lecturers in Architecture, Ann Cleary and Gurdev Singh, have been involving their students in industry-based projects for a number of years. The vehicle they use is a ‘studio design’ unit.

The integration of architecture studies with community and actual projects builds in scale over the course of the degree.

“You start with smaller things such as local wineries and coast houses in second year. By fourth and fifth year, students are working on major public space redevelopments,” said Gurdev Singh.

A recent example of the studio design approach is a project linked to Questacon’s exploration of a possible new Museum of Nature to be located on a site incorporating part of Acton Peninsula and Springbank Island in Lake Burley Griffin.

Questacon approached the University of Canberra with the idea of expanding into a separate site. Its Director, Professor Graham Durant, visualized a museum of nature which would be of international significance.
As the client, Questacon provided the University’s students with the unique opportunity to come up with new concepts that address what Gurdev described as: “a museum that comprehensively addresses the issue of sustainability.”

Ann Cleary saw the design task for the museum as one of “adaptive porosity, as students need to focus on the nature of an entity that’s completely adaptable and porous in terms of public engagement.”

Master of Architecture graduate Elizabeth Masters recalled that “each year, you could choose a variety of projects, or specialise and build your expertise in one area.”

Oliver Gee, another Master of Architecture who graduated in 2009, agreed that the variety of projects was very helpful. The studio design approach “helped him to think in a design way.”

Ann concluded that, although the involvement with large projects “pushes students and our abilities to the limit, it’s very stimulating. It’s exhausting, but it’s positive exhaustion. It’s very creative, for the students and for us, and that’s what sustains us.”

**CASE 3: PUBLIC RELATIONS – INTERNSHIP**

“I want them to be able to think”.

WIL is a major focus for third year Public Relations students. They undertake a Communication Internship spread over two semesters. This experience combines 150 hours of work experience with assessment tasks and reflective practice.

Communications Lecturer Jim Mahoney feels strongly that the internship helps to equip students for real-life practice as communication professionals. As the National Secretary of the Public Relations Institute of Australia, Jim claims that “senior professionals want intelligent communicative writing, and people who can take direction, and critical analysis.” He quoted a professional colleague who said: “I want them to be able to think”.

One former University of Canberra intern claims: “I do not understand how students enter the workforce without this experience. It’s beyond valuable.”

Learning agreements are an important component of the internship. They are negotiated by the employer and student before the commencement of the program. Throughout the experience, students learn about their performance by collecting feedback from work colleagues, other students, in-class activities and reflection on their performance.

Many graduates complete the internship with a professional portfolio that gives them a decided advantage when entering the work force as a graduate. The internship website states: “Students use their work experience to reflect on their study, as well as develop their professional and personal skills.”

For small and medium businesses, the UC internship provides opportunities to mentor and encourage students, and to identify and evaluate potential new staff.

**CASE 4: INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT**

Greg Boland, Senior Lecturer in Business and Government gets straight to the point. “I see WIL as producing programs that give students a well-rounded education and develop lifelong learning skills and employability skills to go with it”.

Greg uses a variety of work integrated learning techniques in his units. These include community projects, formal internships and professional mentoring; a portfolio of techniques that yield win-win outcomes for students, professionals, communities and the University.

Greg uses WIL in conjunction with the Young Achievement Australia program. Volunteer business mentors visit the University for one afternoon each week throughout the semester. They help groups of students set up their own trading companies which they take from Business Start up to Wind up in one Semester. These companies compete against other tertiary student companies throughout Australia.

According to Greg “Students get a real buzz out of the experience. They develop good relationships with business mentors and expand their networks. On their side, business mentors enjoy the satisfaction of helping young people develop their confidence and professional knowledge.”

One of Business and Government’s high-achieving students, Jason Prowd, said, the challenge of the Innovation unit is “a good way to experience the real world and an opportunity to put theory into practice.” Jason feels his career opportunities have been enhanced by learning negotiation and operational skills and, importantly, he has “learned how to ask.” Jason said that even though asking for sponsorship for his virtual business seemed a bit difficult at first,
he found people are more than willing to help if asked. Lisa Baker, Bachelor of Commerce 2009, described her Internship as:

“a fantastic program ... it’s magic if you get into an accounting firm ... it’s a really good job application where student and employer get to know each other.”

Neil finds significant satisfaction in seeing students achieve. Through supervising internship students, he “gets to know them and how they are going in their degree”. Such contact is also helpful in that students provide feedback about the degree itself. As Neil said, “watching students’ experience internships over their final year, I get to see them grow up.”

CASE 6: EVIDENCE LAW – COURTROOM SIMULATION AND MOCK TRIAL

“My purpose was to create an authentic learning environment and engage all students”

Lecturer Anthony Hopkins’ personal experience as a legal practitioner in Northern Territory courtrooms convinced him of the value of teaching the ‘dry’ rules of evidence in a practical mock trial framework.

Over a semester, students participate in fictional trials held in the realistic environment of the University’s well equipped operational courtroom. Students appear in the roles of defence and prosecution lawyers and witnesses. This provides a controlled approximation of evidence law in action. Students get to focus on both the articulation of the rules of evidence and on the process of proof.

Pedagogically, this experiential-learning approach incorporates a cycle of theory acquisition, planning, doing and reflecting.

Anthony’s basis for the unit “was not simply that evidence law is best understood in a practical context, but that ‘in role’ student engagement fosters a capacity for critique and challenge, as the complexities and shortcomings of the trial process are directly revealed.”

Students value the moot court experience: One of his favourite student quotes is:

“It really enabled me to focus on the relevant issue being taught ... without this exercise, I believe that I would have missed a vital part of making the connection between theory and practice.”

Anthony was concerned initially that he might have been asking too much of students by requiring them to perform in court before their peers, at the same time rapidly mastering principle and process; but he found that they rose to the challenge admirably.

There are important ancillary benefits for students in that they are engaged as rational, ethical actors, aware of the importance of their own decisions to an emerging trial narrative.

The Faculty of Law’s mock court, (known as the e-court, because it enables mooting competitions with other universities via the internet) was one of the first high-tech courtrooms in the Southern Hemisphere. The e-court enhances WIL by facilitating authentic court processes and procedures. It provides students with a practical real-life feel when mooting and mock trial competitions are held. The state-of-the-art electronic facilities of the e-court include plasma screens, a smart-whiteboard and Hansard style digital audio and visual recording systems.
CASE 7: NURSING AND MIDWIFERY – CLINICAL PLACEMENT

“In second year they start to see the people”

Clinical placements for Nursing and Midwifery students at the University of Canberra are an important part of their preparation for professional practice. As Clinical Facilitator and Lecturer Alan Merritt explains: “the clinical placements provide an authentic nursing experience for the students, not just the clinical tasks like taking out a wound drain.” Although initially these clinical aspects are what interest many students, as they progress through their placements, students start to see the whole person: “In first year they are focused on the tasks. In second year they start to see the people.”

The pillars of an authentic environment, and critical reflection on students’ experiences, are central to the clinical placement experience. Alan finds that listening to the students as they progress through this experience is very rewarding.

A range of professional health services host the University’s nursing and midwifery students. Commenting on the vital importance of this facet of training, Deborah Booth, General Manager of Calvary Retirement Community, Canberra said:

“I couldn’t recommend work integrated learning highly enough. Having students in clinical placements not only gives us greater insight into student capabilities, but also greater influence over how they learn.

There are very important positive outcomes for Calvary in terms of gaining access to students who provide an amazing feeling of energy and a new perspective. Through contact with the students, our existing staff are encouraged to study their own practices.

It strips the workforce in a way, but in return we get an enlivened staff. Also, the students that we have met during clinical placements quite often become employees on a casual basis, increasing their workplace readiness.

For students, the benefits include workplace readiness, and a not-too-harsh reality check about the profession and the type of person who is likely to be their patient. Students may start out with ideas about doing sports physiotherapy, or flying to remote areas, but the reality is that as nurses and physios, they will often be dealing with elderly patients.”

CASE 8: EDUCATION – PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING

New workflow-based database management system increases the development of industry partnerships.

Every year the Professional Experience (PE) Program at the University of Canberra places more than 1,700 students in pre-service teaching positions. Logistically, this is a huge task. As the Director of Professional Experience, Dr Jackie Walkington explained: “although the PE Program is now characterised by a high level of organisation, it was not always the case.”

A coordinated program has been developing over a number of years, and continues to strive for improvement. It is now supported by a comprehensive website that provides information for students, staff, teachers and schools. A Manual and Guide for Primary and Secondary sectors are key documents for students and stakeholders.

The substantial PE Program is supported by a dedicated team of staff responsible for placements and liaison. Placement coordinators and liaison officers are all qualified teachers who have extensive experience in the profession as well as local ACT school knowledge.

A new database, the Professional Placement Management System (PPMS), is currently under construction, and the PE Team expects that this sophisticated database and communication system will automate the placement process.

They are excited about the potential benefits and efficiencies of PPMS, a workflow-based management system which will simplify the whole process of student placement.

Teaching placements are essential not only for accreditation of the University’s teaching programs. They also are invaluable for students, in that they allow the practical implementation of theory and, importantly, confirmation of a student’s decision whether or not to become a teacher.

For employers, the benefits are also significant and include access to new knowledge, new ideas, additional resources and enthusiasm.

As with other authentic work experiences, reflective practice is a key feature and Mentor Teachers play an important role in student learning and assessment.

The University provides professional development to mentors in this and other placement programs, in the form of online modules and face-to-face workshops.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF WIL

- WIL programs are in accord with the University’s strategic values and mission to professionally prepare professional people through work-based learning and collaborative teaching with external agencies.
- The University recognises that quality WIL programs improve student learning, engagement, retention, and employability.
- The University recognises that students who are well prepared benefit more from their work experience. It therefore provides training programs to prepare students for WIL placements.
- Effective relationships with the University’s stakeholders are critical to the success of WIL programs. The University has a stakeholder engagement framework for professionally building, managing and sustaining relationships.
- The University values its relationships with stakeholders and seeks to develop WIL programs collaboratively for mutual benefit.
- Training and support is provided to academic staff involved in WIL programs including good practice guides, program design tips, and resource libraries.
- The University encourages staff to engage in WIL through its promotion and performance review policies and processes and its awards for teaching excellence.
- The University supports an interdisciplinary research network to expand its capacity for research into all aspects of WIL and thereby improve the quality of WIL.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.canberra.edu.au/wil

FOR STUDENTS
For information about WIL programs at UC, and any other aspects of WIL, contact:

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T 02 6201 5221 or 02 6201 2365
E careers@canberra.edu.au
F 02 6201 5116
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