University of the
Sunshine Coast
Australia

School of Business and Creative Industries
Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Program

Industry
WIL
Guide

Contents

Preface

The University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) is committed to developing its learning and teaching products so that our graduates are well equipped for a changing work environment. Employability is a strategic goal of the University. The essence of The WIL Program is to prepare our students as job ready graduates.

Work integrated learning (WIL)- what is it?

WIL is a formal process within higher education that brings together formal learning, often within the students' field of study, and productive work. WIL is a collaboration between industry/employers, community groups, the university, and students.

WIL can be conducted as a project that is supervised by a UniSC academic expert and in collaboration with an interdisciplinary student team, allows students to showcase their knowledge and skills, and develop skills of project development, coordination, and negotiation. These projects are completed on campus. For projects designed for one, or up to four students only, those students may attend the workplace and complete the project on site should the workplace prefer.

Alternatively, WIL provides an opportunity for students to experience the workplace in the form of a placement, that is, working on site within a team of the host organisation. Whilst in the workplace, students will undertake and complete a set of work activities under the guidance and supervision of a dedicated workplace supervisor from the partner organisation and supported by an academic supervisor at the University of the Sunshine Coast. During their placement, students will not only apply knowledge and skills gained throughout their university studies, they will also learn and develop new skills and knowledge relevant to their chosen industry and/or profession.

Employer/Industry and community groups who participate in WIL assist and support students to:

- socialise into professional roles and develop professional capabilities
- grow their professional network and strengthen employability
- develop professional identity and professional values.

While WIL provides not only a formal collaboration between employer/industry, community groups and the University, along with critical workplace learning experiences for students, many benefits also exist for our partner organisations. These benefits include:

- access to fresh perspectives, new ideas, and skills for your workplace
- up to date knowledge from our students and staff
- increasing productivity
- establishing or deepening connections with the university
- supporting the education of the next generation of our region's business owners and employees
- helping to educate the future workforce for other communities to benefit
- enhancing the supervisory and mentoring skills of your staff
- enriching your work environment
- recruiting for your workplace.

We encourage you to join with us and play a key role in supporting UniSC to become Australia's premier regional university by engaging our students in workplace learning. In doing so, together we will assist and support our students to become skilled, future-ready, socially responsible, entrepreneurial and in-demand contributors to their communities, wherever they may be, whether working for themselves or for others, in paid or voluntary work.

The WIL Program

Welcome to the School of Business and Creative Industries' (SBCI) WIL Program for undergraduate students. The WIL Program is a mandatory degree requirement. Students in their final year of study will complete a project, a placement or both. Each option attracts 12 credit points toward the student's degree. Students must complete 96 hours of placement across the study period to successfully complete the WIL placement and be eligible to complete the WIL placement course. 96 hours is equivalent to 12 x 8 hour working days. The number of days in the host workplace will depend on the student's availability around their study schedule and other competing obligations and responsibilities. Pending such availability students may be available to be attend as follows:

- 1 x 8 hour working day per week for 12 weeks; or
- 2 x 8 hour working days per week for 6 weeks; or
- 3 x 8 hour working days per week for 4 weeks

The project course is delivered in semesters 1 and 2, while the placement course is delivered in semesters 1 and 2, and session 8. Placements must be aligned to the dates of the university semesters or sessions. Semesters typically take place between:

- **Late February to end of May (Semester 1)**
- **Late July to end of October (Semester 2)**
- **Late November to early late January/early February (Session 8)**

Often students undertake The WIL Program in their final semester of study, just prior to graduation. In addition to working in a placement or on a project, students complete several academic assessments under the guidance of their WIL Course Coordinator.

Also, students have a fixed capacity to undertake their placements and do so while juggling competing obligations. We ask that our placement hosts are available and ready to welcome their students to their workplaces in the first week of the semester or session. Students who commence their placements late may be disadvantaged and find themselves running against the clock to complete their placement prior to exam period and other end of semester responsibilities.

Please note: No remuneration or payment is made by the businesses or community groups to the students or to the University for hosting a placement student. The University provides insurance policies for worker's compensation and third-party insurance for all students who work in the host organisations workplace. However, should the student be asked to undertake additional work outside of their placement hours, the student is expected to be paid as an employee.

Students are studying a variety of disciplines in commerce, business and creative industries fields, in readiness for their professional careers. Organisations who choose to partner with us can have students studying within the following fields, work with them:

Accounting	Creative Writing and Publishing
Business Administration	Digital Culture
Digital Futures	Game Design
Economics and Finance	Interactive Media
Human Resource Management	Journalism
Marketing	Music
Small Business Management	Screen Media
Tourism, Leisure and Event Management	Social Media
	Theatre and Performance
	Visual communication

OFFERING A WIL EXPERIENCE TO STUDENTS

Employer, industry, and community groups wanting to participate in the School's WIL Program may first like to consider the following questions prior to offering a WIL experience to students:

- What is the business wanting to achieve?
- What skills, knowledge and competencies do you need the student/s to possess?
- Will a project or a placement be most suitable to achieve your outcomes?
- How long is the WIL experience likely to be?
- What resources might you require e.g. a detailed position or project description, a dedicated Workplace supervisor, a workstation, computer, phone, other equipment?
- Will the student require any vaccinations, a police check or a Working with Children check, prior to commencement?
- What is expected from you as an employer/host organisation?
- What support is provided by the university?
- What can I expect from the student/s?
- In the event of a COVID-19 lockdown, does the business have the capability and willingness to support the student to work from home in a virtual placement situation?

Please note: For students on placement, it is a requirement that participating businesses and community groups nominate a Placement Workplace Supervisor with no less than two years supervisory experience, who will be responsible for guiding the student/s duties and progress in the workplace. The Placement Workplace Supervisor will also be required to complete an on-line evaluation form at the conclusion of the placement. Workplace supervisor evaluations inform the university as to the workplace readiness of our students.

GETTING STARTED

Ensuring that the student is the correct choice for the organization, and the organisation is the correct choice for the student is crucial. To assist students to make an informed decision and to assist your organisations and the School to select the most suitable student/s for your project or placement, we ask that you please complete either our WIL Project Proposal or our Workplace Host Expression of Interest form.

It will be helpful if you prepare a position or project description. Information we require will include:

- A description of your organisation and its purpose
- It's location and size
- Overview/vision of project(s) or placement position you are offering
- Issues or market gap the project is seeking to address
- The tasks or set of activities the student/s will undertake
- The knowledge and skills required of the student/s
- Expected deliverables
- Any requirement for the student to have any vaccinations, a police check or a Working with Children check prior to commencement (Placement students only)
- The name and contact details of the dedicated workplace supervisor (Placement students only)

As the School plays a key role in preparing students for WIL activities, the Course Coordinator will approve or decline all proposed placements and projects. Please ensure that you provide as much detail as you can about the structure, purpose of the program of work, key tasks and learning goals. The project or placement should be worthwhile, that is, both meaningful to the student/s and valuable to the organisation. Please include tasks that are both challenging and achievable within the given timeframe and explain how the student's project or tasks fits into your organisation's goals or strategy, so the student/s understand the 'bigger picture'. This will also ensure a shared understanding of the purpose of the experience for all stakeholders and safeguard against confusion or unmet expectations.

PROJECTS

Students join interdisciplinary groups to work on a project that is developed in collaboration with industry. The projects usually involve developing solutions to address a current industry problem or seizing a new opportunity. Projects are typically completed on campus under the supervision of an academic staff member from the School, who is an expert if their field, and in consultation with the business lead or community group lead.

A student is assigned as the project lead and organises and coordinates their student peers within their project group to undertake and complete relevant tasks and meet the set timelines. Work on the projects commence in teaching week 5 of the academic calendar. In the first four weeks, students undertake project management workshops.

PLACEMENTS

The following information relates specifically to students undertaking a placement.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Placement Officers from our central WIL Office at the University will be in contact directly to formalise a Placement Partnership Agreement (PPA) between your organisation and the University. This agreement will cover areas such as insurance provisions by the University, confidentiality and privacy, and intellectual property.

Our Placement Officers will also be in contact with you to conduct a Host Risk Assessment (HRA) survey to ensure our students are placed in a safe environment with appropriate WHS and emergency procedures in place.

Both the PPA and HRA can remain current for several years if you choose, allowing you to opt to host future students without the need for repetitive paperwork each semester.

GETTING READY TO HOST YOUR STUDENTS IN A PLACEMENT

To ensure a smooth beginning for your student/s and your staff, we recommend you carry out the following activities prior to the student/s commencing:

- Organise the supervision/workload and communicate that with your work team
- Set up computer logon/access and workstation
- Contact the student/s to provide relevant starting information- for example, starting date and time, dress code, and work hours
- Security access details and parking arrangements

THE FIRST DAY OF PLACEMENT

For many students, the first day of placement may be their first experience in a professional workplace, or in a workplace relevant to their chosen career. It can be a daunting time for them so there may be a brief period of adjustment while they become accustomed to your workplace expectations. Often, the best place to start is by introducing them to other members of staff.

On the first day it is particularly important to go over all the key information any new staff member would need to succeed in the workplace. At the same time, it is important to remember that while your student will make every effort to behave as an employee, they are still a student and may need a little more supervision than a new staff member. A full workplace induction is strongly recommended. You could commence by

giving the student/s some information about the organisation and information about the department or section of the business they will be working in, and how the operation of the department or business section services the overall organisational strategy.

Once the overview of the organisation and business section has been covered, other induction points should include:

- Workplace Health and Safety procedures
- Emergency procedures and risk and security processes
- Location of their workstation and other amenities including printer room, kitchen, and bathroom
- Location of relevant resources
- Gaining computer access
- Workplace technologies and other tools required for the role
- Introduction of confidentiality and intellectual property processes and requirements
- Any polices such as social media and privacy to protect everybody's reputational risk
- Familiarising students with the workplace culture, diversity and expected professional ethical behaviour

It will be important that the student/s is aware of who their workplace supervisor is, and that person sets all necessary expectations and has a collaborative discussion with the student/s about:

- Responsibilities and scope of the role
- Agreed outcomes
- Workload and deliverables to professional standards
- The workplace supervisor's reporting responsibilities to the workplace and to the University
- The method and frequency of communication, for example how and when the workplace supervisor and the student/s will communicate

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Communication is a key function for a successful placement. Open communication between the student and their workplace team is encouraged. It is desirable if possible that the student/s workstation is located close to their workplace supervisor. It is optimal if the workplace supervisor can set up a regular time to provide feedback to the student and discuss the progress of the project. The student will appreciate having a designated time in which they can ask questions and review their work. For example, a brief meeting each morning to clarify the tasks and activities for the coming day, and a brief meeting in the afternoon to check on progress is helpful. Scheduling a placement review with the student at the halfway mark of the placement period will also prove to be beneficial to both the workplace and the student. Other times and methods for communication will be based upon the availability of the workplace supervisor. It is also helpful to the student/s if there is another experienced staff member available who may be able to assist and support the student/s in the absence of their workplace supervisor.

To support the development of the student/s communication skills, it is recommended that the workplace supervisor and workplace team:

- Help the student/s understand the tone of communication required by different stakeholders
- Highlight to the student/s which styles of communication are effective in different situations
- Review important documents so that the student/s knows where improvement is required
- Demand high standards from the student/s, particularly around external communication to customers
- Provide feedback to the student/s on their development of communication skills

It is also important for the workplace supervisor to discuss with the student/s:

- How they will provide ongoing feedback
- How they will supervise and monitor student/s performance
- The format, frequency, and method for evaluating student/s performance

Please note: The workplace supervisor will also be asked to complete an on-line Workplace Supervisor Feedback Form at the conclusion of the placement. This is a compulsory component in finalising the student placement result.

CREATING A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS AND THE WORKPLACE

Often it is the little things that make the biggest difference in determining the success of any new collaboration. For students in placement, this is particularly true. Some of the things the workplace supervisor and their team can do to assist and support the student/s include:

- Be a role model by presenting yourselves as you would expect the student to
- Ensure goals and expectations are understood correctly from the start
- Empower the student/s to add value to their placement
- Help the student/s think through the smaller components of big tasks
- Build small milestones into the student/s' plan which will help you both monitor progress
- Ask the student/s to demonstrate a task to ensure it has been adequately explained and that they fully understand what is required
- Brief your team to encourage the student/s to share thoughts and ideas at every opportunity
- Encourage the student/s to ask questions and approach you with any problems they are experiencing within the workplace
- Challenge the student/s to think about how they could go one step further
- Expose the student/s to brainstorming and decision-making processes
- Clarify when you want the student/s to review things with you and when to seek your approval
- Encourage the student/s to look for answers before relying on you
- Allow the student/s, where appropriate, to have some leeway to learn from their mistakes
- Be generous with your praise. Like all of us, students will appreciate being told when they are doing a job well.

WORKING THROUGH PROBLEMS WITH THE STUDENT ON PLACEMENT

Occasionally problems arise during the student's placement. Such problems may include health or behavioural problems associated with the student, or organisational problems associated with the placement. With any challenge the most important thing to remember is communication. Often issues can be resolved or prevented from escalating by having a conversation with the student or with your university contact.

If you are unsure of how to proceed, or such problems arise which cannot be easily resolved, we encourage the workplace supervisor to consult with the academic supervisor at the earliest convenient time. Please contact SBCIWIL@usc.edu.au. It is often helpful to speak with the academic supervisor as they have measures and strategies to support industry hosts and students.

You may also find these tips useful in resolving problems:

Problem	Solution
Student is unable to complete the tasks required	- Confirm that the student understands the task and has the necessary skills and capabilities to execute it - Ensure the student is equipped with all information and equipment necessary to complete the task - Check that the student is working on tasks in order of priority - Ensure the student listens to instructions - Ascertain whether the student has been allocated extra tasks by other members of staff - Assess timeframes in accordance with the student's capabilities
Student appears unwilling to complete the task required.	- Determine whether there is a reason the student is unable to complete the work - Take care not to confuse inhibition with lack of motivation - Ask the student if they are experiencing any other difficulties in relation to and extraneous from the placement.
Student is late or absent.	- Explain to the student that their lateness is unprofessional and that they need to conform to your expectations in future - If the student is absent without notification, contact the academic supervisor immediately

AFTER THE STUDENT COMPLETES THEIR WIL EXPERIENCE

After the WIL experience has ended, we will be pleased if you would take the time to provide us with feedback about your experience. This will assist the University and our School in continuing to improve the WIL experience for you and future students. Please write to us at SBCIWIL@usc.edu.au to provide your feedback. We will look forward to hearing from you.

WIL CHECKLIST FOR INDUSTRY/COMMUNITY GROUPS

Before your WIL student starts

- ☐ Identify appropriate experiences, tasks, projects tailored to students if this has not already been determined

- ☐ Identify professional development opportunities and resources required and find out how the university can help and provide support and advice

- ☐ Manage administrative tasks such as:
  - ○ a. organising Supervision/workload and communicate with your work team
  - ○ b. contacting the university liaison person and establish communication strategies
  - ○ c. setting up Computer logon/ access

- ☐ Make contact with the student to provide relevant starting information e.g. starting date and time, dress code, and work hours

- ☐ Security access details and parking arrangements.

Onsite WIL induction

- ☐ Introduction to supervisor and team members

- ☐ Workplace Health and Safety procedures

- ☐ Emergency procedures and risk and security processes

- ☐ Location of fire exits

- ☐ Location of desk and other relevant amenities

- ☐ Location of relevant resources

- ☐ Computer access and login

- ☐ Introduction to confidentiality and intellectual property processes and requirements

- ☐ Any policies such as social media and privacy to protect everybody's reputational risk

- ☐ Familiarise students with the workplace culture, diversity and expected professional ethical behaviour

- ☐ Workplace technologies and other tools required for the role

Offsite WIL introduction

- ☐ Introduction to you and your organization

- ☐ Workplace supervisor availability

- ☐ Location of relevant resources

- ☐ Identify preferred communication and reporting methods. For remote WIL placements negotiate agreed online communication tools

Supervising a WIL student

☐ Set expectations

☐ Promote learning environment by encouraging students to ask questions, offer their own ideas and come to you or their lecturer with their problems / issues.

☐ Encourage students to find their own answers before coming to you.

☐ Ask students to reflect on successes and failures to foster professional evaluative judgment skills

☐ Model the behaviour you expect of the student

☐ Provide students with the "bigger picture" so that they can understand where their work fits within your organization

☐ Remain patient and understanding as this may be the students' first experience with work related activities

☐ Where possible provide students a sense of ownership over the work they are doing e.g.offering discrete projects

☐ Offer regular feedback and encouragement when they are doing well

☐ Have set regular meetings / check ins with the students or the university

☐ Check for understanding with the student by asking them to explain back to you what you would like them to do

☐ If it is placement encourage your team to support the student in the same way. For example, for remote placements invite students to online team meetings

☐ Schedule a placement review with the student at the halfway mark of the placement period for the benefit of both the workplace and the student.

After the WIL experience

☐ Provide your student with final feedback.

☐ Provide your university contact with feedback about your experience

☐ Ask the university and student for their feedback

☐ Arrange for your next WIL student to start

This Industry WIL Guide has been created using resources provided by the University of the Sunshine Coast, the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN), and Murdoch University.