



Curtin University



WORK  
INTEGRATED  
LEARNING

# A Guide for Host Organisations

## What is Work Integrated Learning?

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is the intentional integration of theory and practice. It is the process whereby students learn through experience in practical settings. WIL is learning which is embedded in the experience of work, whether it is paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time. It may be embedded into a course or unit, or completed as an extra or co-curricular activity. Other terms used to describe WIL include practicum, internships, fieldwork, cooperative education, field education, sandwich course and service learning. Please see the [WIL website](#) for more information.

Curtin University values authentic learning and is committed to developing graduate capabilities through embedding WIL in all undergraduate courses. Established partnerships and flexible arrangements with business, industry and community enable the development of professional practice to be embedded within those contexts, promoting reciprocal and mutually beneficial outcomes.

WIL supports the provision of authentic learning, in a variety of settings, within curricula and co-curricular programs which enables students to develop and maximise their graduate employability.










WIL pedagogy supports the university's endeavour to strengthen students' capacity to develop work-ready skills through an aligned curriculum where development of Curtin's Graduate Capabilities is scaffolded across the course. The [WIL Guidelines](#) apply to all undergraduate courses at Curtin.

## Curtin Graduate Attributes

Graduate Attributes are a set of personal attributes, skills, capacities and values relevant to the world of employment that make our graduates valuable and worthy employees.

Curtin is committed to producing graduates who demonstrate Graduate Attributes. Students are presented with appropriate learning, teaching, and assessment experiences to enable them to develop and demonstrate the Curtin Graduate Attributes. The Curtin Graduate Attributes are explicitly communicated to staff and students in all course and unit documentation.

Curtin graduates demonstrate evidence, as appropriate to their disciplines, that they can:

1.  Apply discipline knowledge, principles and concepts;
2.  Think critically, creatively and reflectively;
3.  Access, evaluate and synthesise information;
4.  Communicate effectively;
5.  Use technologies appropriately;
6.  Utilise lifelong learning skills;
7.  Recognise and apply international perspectives;
8.  Demonstrate intercultural awareness and understanding; and
9.  Apply professional skills.

## Shaping student roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of a student undertaking a WIL opportunity should be shaped by the learning outcomes of the unit they are studying, which reflect Curtin's Graduate Attributes. Learning outcomes are specified in the Unit Outline, which can be obtained from the student or Fieldwork / Unit Coordinator. Skills and knowledge developed during WIL opportunities, and evident in the learning outcomes, should address assessment requirements in the Unit Outline.

## Glossary of terms

**Academics** are teachers and researchers in the higher education institution.

**Assessment** is a set of processes that measure the outcomes of students' learning, in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed, and skills gained.

**Course** is the program of study necessary to qualify for a University higher education award.

**Unit** is a unit of study or unit of competency. A student must complete a group of units, or a **unit set**, to fulfil the requirements of a course.

**Unit Controller/Coordinator** is the academic responsible for ensuring the integrity, relevance and currency of the unit in relation to both documentation and delivery.

**Unit Outline** is the binding contract between Curtin University and the student which outlines how the unit will be taught.

**Unit Plan** is a supplement to the unit outline which provides a clear statement on how the unit is being offered and run in a given offering period.

## The benefits of Work Integrated Learning

Your organisation can benefit from participating in WIL in the following ways:

- Access to motivated, enthusiastic and willing students
- The opportunity to plan new ideas and establish new projects
- The opportunity to complete existing projects
- The advantage of having a dedicated person to work on special projects and tasks
- Staff development through interaction and engagement with students and Curtin staff
- Developing links with the University and other organisations
- The opportunity to trial prospective employees
- The opportunity to provide feedback that shapes what future students are taught
- A mutually-beneficial collaboration with Curtin and its various Faculties and Schools
- The assistance of motivated students who bring the latest theory, techniques and ideas to the organisation
- Active participant in [The National WIL Strategy](#)

## Host organisation roles and responsibilities

Host organisations are required to:

- Provide a structured and supervised practical experience for the purpose of enhancing students' work readiness.
- Ensure that the Student is subject to the rules, regulations and workplace requirements as they apply to staff employed by them
- Inform all staff at the host organisation that the student is engaged in a WIL opportunity and describe the nature and purpose of the activity
- Contact the Unit Coordinator (or other contact person) as soon as practicable if problems arise with the WIL activity to enable the University to intervene and take steps to achieve resolution
- Contact the Unit Coordinator (or other contact person) immediately if the student is absent, ill, injured, or asked to leave before the expiration of this agreement
- Notify and induct the student into the appropriate Occupational Health & Safety systems within the workplace including:
  - Health and safety policies

- Emergency and evacuation procedures (including emergency numbers)
- First aid arrangements (including names and phone numbers of first-aiders)
- Procedures for reporting accidents/incidents/risks
- Name and location of health and safety representative
- Details on the process for managing and resolving health and safety issues.

### **Supervision of students**

A host organisation/partner should nominate an appropriate individual to supervise, support and mentor the student while in the workplace. This person will be required to:

- Ensure a collaborative learning experience for the student
- Facilitate a student-centred approach to fieldwork
- Provide a positive and constructive learning environment
- Provide feedback that facilitates learning
- Guide the professional development of the student
- Assign duties that provide a wide variety of experiences
- Provide opportunities students to apply professional knowledge and skills
- In consultation with the student, assess their performance in the workplace
- Ensure a safe working environment for the student.

### **Support from Curtin University**

A Curtin University contact (Unit Coordinator or WIL/Fieldwork Coordinator) will be ultimately responsible for the management and coordination of the WIL program or opportunity, including:

- Regular communication with the host organisation to support and collaborate with the host organisation/partner supervisor for mutual benefit
- Ensure that the student is prepared to undertake the WIL opportunity and reap maximum benefit from it. This includes briefing about learning outcomes, professional conduct, ethical behaviour and The Privacy Act
- Ensure the safety of students by completing relevant governance processes (e.g. risk assessments, legal agreements, travel approvals, required health or statutory requirements), which renders students eligible for Curtin insurance
- Management of any student disciplinary issues.

### **Professional conduct of students**

Students are responsible for their own professional conduct, including relevant codes and standards of conduct, ethical behaviour, privacy and confidentiality. The Student and the University acknowledge the need to respect commercial-in-confidence and other material owned by the Host. Curtin students may have access to privileged or confidential information in the course of their WIL placements. In such cases, the host organisation may require the student to sign a confidentiality deed. If the student's WIL placement includes assessment, the student will be able to include that confidential information in their final report for assessment by a Curtin Unit Coordinator. The Unit Coordinator must not use the final report for any other purpose and may also be required to sign a confidentiality deed.

### **Insurance and indemnity**

Curtin University has in place Student Personal Accident, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance Policies to protect the university and its students involved in authorised WIL activities. Please refer to the [Risk Management website](#) for the [Certificates of Currency](#).



## A Guide for Host Organisations: Supplement for Organisations Hosting Engineering Students

### Background

All Bachelor of Engineering students at Curtin need to gain 480 weighted hours of exposure to professional engineering practice over the course of their degree. This is required by Engineers Australia for the continued accreditation of our engineering programs.

A mixture of experiences — paid and unpaid, engineering and non-engineering, Australian and international — is allowed and encouraged. We apply a weighting factor and cap system to the hours for different types of activities, with higher weights being given to experiences more representative of the work of professional engineers.

### Environment and Activities

To count for the maximum weighting factor, the work environment should:

- Be typical of the environment in which professional engineers work, allowing exposure to engineering work culture; and
- Provide the student with access to professional engineers, scientists and other staff who can give guidance and feedback.

The activities should ideally:

- Give the student the opportunity to develop and apply engineering skills doing “real life” work that has a clear benefit to the host organisation;
- Be challenging, but not beyond the student’s abilities given his or her academic level;
- Involve participation in or exposure to one, two or more engineering areas of the organisation; for example, operations, management, maintenance, procurement, sales, fabrication, quality assurance, design, R&D and similar; however, some exposure to non-engineering areas is also valuable; and
- If possible, consist of a range of durations and work types; for example, a student could do some work shadowing in one area while assisting other staff with their regular duties and working on a longer-term project.

The activities can be similar to those done by a graduate engineer or the student can work as a laboratory technician, tradesperson’s offsider, plant operator, labourer or comparable role.

## Student Report

For engineering placements of one week and longer, the student needs to submit a report to the university that reflects on the aspects of professional practice that the student observed and experienced. The report is about one page long for each week worked.

## Confirmation Letter from Host Organisation

At the end of the placement, to allow the student to claim the hours of experience he or she has gained, the host organisation needs to provide a letter to the university:

- On company letterhead paper;
- Stating the starting and ending dates, and the total number of hours worked; and
- Confirming that the student's report has been read and is accurate.

## Payment of the Student

Curtin does not impose any rules for payment during WIL placements.

Both paid and unpaid experiences count towards a student's exposure to professional practice.

**If payment is to be made** then the following serves a guide:

1. Some engineering organisations that have previously taken Curtin Engineering students have historically paid around 80% of a first-year graduate's salary for undergraduates entering their final year of studies. This figure is reduced by about 20% for each year earlier in the student's course.
2. Professionals Australia gives the following suggestions for the payment of engineering students (<http://www.professionalsaustralia.org.au/blog/thinking-about-work-experience/>):

Year of course completed	% of current market rate for entry level graduate
First year	50%
Second year	60%
Third year	70%
Fourth year	80%
12-week industrial experience	90%

3. However, any relevant employment award overrides the guides above.

**If the placement is unpaid** then Curtin has a standard Fieldwork Agreement and insurance coverage in place for authorised WIL activities.

## Further Information

Please contact Ms Kym Sher, Partnership Coordinator for Science and Engineering:  
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