

# Succeeding on placements



Work Integrated Learning (WIL), also known as placement, clinical placement, practicum, internship or fieldwork, is an integral part of many University of Newcastle degree programs. Placement can be anxiety provoking for many students.

### Before placement:

- Contact the supervisor at your placement and enquire if they would like to set up a meeting (phone, skype or face-to-face) prior to you starting so you can discuss your placement further. Talking to, or meeting your supervisor prior to placement can help to reduce your anxiety.
- Know where you are going – research the organisation and geographical location. Organise your accommodation and transport early and consider a practice run. This will reduce your worry and anxiety on your first day.
- Advise people close to you that you will be busy during placement and that you are seeking their support and understanding if you are not as available as usual.
- Examine your finances. If your financial circumstances will change whilst you are on placement you may want to do a budget, seek financial advice or explore if you are eligible for a loan, grant or scholarship.
- Be aware of what is expected of you during placement including learning goals and assessments. Enquire if there is any pre-reading or planning you can do to prepare for the placement. Feeling prepared can increase confidence.
- Identify the skills and strengths you bring to the placement. Reflect on what you have learnt in your course and your skills from previous work experience and how you can apply these during placement.

### During placement:

- Be organised - write 'to do' lists and prioritise tasks. Allocate reasonable timeframes to get things done. Be flexible about tasks while taking directions from your supervisor.
- Ask your supervisor questions and be open to their feedback. You will learn by receiving feedback, so clarify anything you don't understand. Taking notes to review later is a useful strategy.
- Keep on top of paperwork or record keeping. Putting off writing may relieve your workload or stress in the short-term but it will certainly intensify it towards the end of placement.
- Remember you are a student that is learning so set realistic expectations. Avoid comparing yourself to other students or staff; each individual brings something different to placement.
- Avoid making judgements and assumptions about workplaces. You may have had a difficult placement in the past but don't let that get in the way of the next placement. Think of each placement as a new experience full of opportunity.
- Communicate well by using clear and simple statements and ask lots of questions.
- Take time out - take a lunch break, go for a walk, or do some calm breathing.

### Reduce stress:

- Learn some mindfulness skills so that you are better able to concentrate, focus and not get carried away by unhelpful thoughts and emotions.
- Your daily routine may change so ensure you eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly, get adequate sleep, and make time for friends and yourself.
- Keep up your regular activities whilst on placement, even if you are away from home. This includes keeping in touch with friends and family.

For strategies to prepare for placement as well as study and wellbeing resources contact us at Student Wellbeing.

### Online resources

#### This Way Up - Student Wellbeing Program

A free online course with practical strategies for coping with stress and study.

[www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/student-wellbeing-program](http://www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/student-wellbeing-program)

#### University of Newcastle: Financial Assistance

[www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/study-essentials/fees-scholarships/financial-assistance](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/study-essentials/fees-scholarships/financial-assistance)

#### University of Newcastle Counselling

[www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling)

#### University of Newcastle: Work Integrated Learning

[www.newcastle.edu.au/work-integrated-learning](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/work-integrated-learning)

### Apps

Search on the App Store or Google Play

#### Breathe2Relax

Practice slowing your breathing down and extending your inhale.

#### Finish

Finish allows you to set tasks for the short, medium and long term.

#### Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a mindfulness app with a number of different audio scripts to help you develop your mindfulness skills.

[www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app](http://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app)

#### T2 Mood Tracker

Allows you to rate and track your moods across a number of emotions.



**Access support and more information**

**[www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/counselling) or call (02) 4921 6622**