Work Integrated Learning (WIL) or ‘placement’ is an integral part of many UON degree programs, and with that comes anxiety for many students.

**Before placement:**

- Know where you are going – research the organisation and geographical location. Organise your accommodation and transport early (consider a practice run - worry is usually triggered by uncertainty so this may reduce some anxiety on your first morning).
- Advise people close to you that you will be busy during placement and that you are seeking their support and understanding.
- Examine your finances - do a budget or seek some financial counselling.
- Be aware of what is expected of you during placement (including learning goals and assessment). Are there things you need to know to help you feel more confident about starting placement? Make a list of questions and find out who is the best person to ask.
- Identify the skills and strengths you bring to the placement. Think about what you have learnt in your course. What skills do you bring from previous experience? Reflect on your strengths and plan to apply them while on 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 questions of your supervisor and be open to their feedback. You will learn by receiving feedback, so be accepting of it. Take some notes so you can review it later.
- Keep on top of any paperwork or record keeping. Don’t delay it as this will increase your stress. 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 and learning - try not to place such big expectations on yourself. Avoid comparing yourself to other students or staff; each individual brings something different to placement.
- Try not to make judgements and assumptions about workplaces. It may be that you have had a difficult placement in the past - don’t let that get in the way of the next placement. It is a new experience full of opportunity.
- Communicate well by using clear and simple statements or questions. Be specific and avoid strong emotional statements. Make eye contact and be aware of others’ body language.
- 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 your unhelpful thoughts and emotions.
- Your daily routine 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 connect with a Student Support Advisor. Visit newcastle.edu.au/studentsupport. You can also access support whilst you are on placement via online counselling, or visit our website or blog for resources.