Work Integrated Learning Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) will provide opportunities for students to undertake Work integrated Learning (WIL) experiences to support graduate employability.

(2) The University is committed to supporting students to engage in approved WIL experiences through the Career-ready Placement (placement) program, which is the University's flagship WIL initiative.

(3) This Policy and its associated procedures are designed to meet the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework as it applies to WIL.

Section 2 - Purpose

(4) The Policy establishes the University's principles for WIL undertaken by students as requirement of their program and/or course at the University.

(5) This Policy is supported by the WIL and Career-ready Placement Procedure and the WIL and Career-ready Placement Risk Assessment Procedure and should be read in conjunction with these documents.

(6) This Policy must be read and understood by University staff, students, host organisations and third-party providers involved in the design, delivery and supervision of WIL experiences.

Section 3 - Scope

(7) This policy applies to:

a. staff of the University, host organisations, and third-party providers involved in the design, delivery and supervision of WIL experiences; and
b. students undertaking approved WIL experiences in undergraduate and postgraduate programs and courses, both paid or unpaid, including placements and Work Experience in Industry (WEI) units.

(8) This Policy does not apply to:

a. work-related activities undertaken by students that are outside the requirements of a program or course; or
b. WIL experiences undertaken by Higher Degree by Research students.

Section 4 - Definitions

(9) For the purposes of this Policy:

a. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is an umbrella term that refers to a range of practical experiences designed to give students valuable exposure to work-related activities during and relevant to their study.

b. Career-ready Placements (placement) is the University's flagship WIL initiative. Career-ready placements include student experiences of work within the curriculum that are undertaken in partnership with and for industry, business or community partners, through engagement with authentic and genuine activities, and which are credit-bearing and assessed.

Section 5 - Roles and Responsibilities

University Responsibilities

(10) The University will meet its obligations as per the Higher Education Standards Framework by:

a. ensuring that learning environments, including facilities where external placements are undertaken, are fit for their educational and research purposes, and accommodate the numbers and educational and research activities of the students and staff who use them (HESF 2.1.1).
b. ensuring that WIL experiences, placements, and other community-based learning and collaborative research training arrangements are quality assured, including assurance of the quality of supervision of student experiences (HESF 5.4.1).
c. ensuring methods of assessment are appropriate for the level and nature of learning outcomes (HESF 1.4 and 3.1).
d. implementing processes to monitor and support students and ensure the wellbeing and safety of students engaged in WIL (HESF 2.3 and 2.4).

Section 6 - Principles

(11) WIL supports students to become work ready graduates by providing the opportunity to:

a. learn from sector professionals;
b. build professional contacts and networks;
c. develop discipline-specific skills and knowledge through hands-on exposure in the workplace, see the Safework Young Workers Toolkit for more information;
d. apply skills and knowledge obtained during their studies in a practical environment;
e. explore future career options;
f. gain insights into the professional attitudes and attributes necessary for the jobs of the future; and
g. develop a competitive edge in the local, national and global employment marketplace.

(12) Each WIL experience must:

a. be credit-bearing and assessed (with the exception of Work Experience in Industry (WEI) courses – See Clause 19);
b. constructively align to the learning outcomes of a course and/or program and methods of assessment;
c. incorporate authentic assessment tasks that link theory and practice the learning outcomes;
d. be preceded by learning that ensures that students are adequately prepared before the WIL experience commences;
e. be undertaken in an environment that is fit for educational and research purposes, and accommodates the numbers and educational and research activities of the students who use it;
f. provide adequate monitoring and support with clear processes for resolving issues and managing incidents, should they arise;

g. be designed and implemented to promote mutually beneficial exchange between students, host organisations, and the University;
h. be designed to meet the specific professional accreditation, discipline, and student support requirements including those contained within relevant legislation and standards;
i. comply with health and safety legislation of both the host jurisdiction and the NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 as well as University policies to mitigate potential risks and safety hazards to the University, University staff, students, host organisations and third-party providers;
j. support diversity and equity considerations;
k. facilitate a learning environment, whether face-to-face, online, or blended, that supports the integration of student experiences beyond formal teaching;
l. adhere to ethical practices (refer to Ethical Framework);
m. comply with the Fair Work Act 2009 and anti-discrimination legislation;
n. be designed and implemented to maintain academic and research integrity and accountability;
o. manage potential conflicts of interest in accordance with the Disclosure of Interest Policy and Disclosure of Interest Procedure;
p. respect intellectual property rights;
q. uphold confidentiality, privacy, and data security including ensuring compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) and the Digital Security Policy; and
r. be subject to quality assurance and evaluation processes including the collection of feedback from students and host organisations.

(13) WIL experiences may include:

a. professional workplace placements (also known as internships, clinical placements, fieldwork, practicums) whether local, interstate or international;
b. online or virtual WIL (e.g. telehealth) with real clients or industry input;
c. industry-partnered projects in the classroom (e.g. hackathons, incubators / start-ups) that involve industry, community or professional partners;
d. a simulated work environment with industry input, consultation or assessment; or
e. activities in other contexts involving industry or community partners.

Design and Approval of WIL

(14) The design, creation and approval of WIL experiences will align with the principles outlined in this Policy (See clauses 12-14), and the requirements of the Course Design and Management Manual.

Grants

(15) Where the WIL experience meets the relevant requirements of the Commonwealth Government National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund (NPILF), the University may be eligible for a NPILF grant amount.

Legislative Compliance

(16) WIL for international students studying onshore must comply with the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

(17) Work Experience in Industry (WEI) units may be established in accordance with the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and associated Guidelines. WEI units are

a. comprised wholly of work done as part of, or in connection with a course of study;

b. designed to obtain work experience relevant to the course of study; and
c. where none of the following tasks are performed by staff of the University or persons engaged by the University:
    i. ongoing and regular input and contact with students;
    ii. oversight and direction of work occurring during its performance, and not just the progress of a students work;
    iii. defining and managing the implementation of educational content and objectives of the course;
    iv. defining and managing assessment of student learning and performance during the placement;
    v. defining and managing the standard of learning and performance to be achieved by the student during the placement.

Monitoring and Evaluation of WIL

(18) WIL experiences will be subject to monitoring and evaluation which:

a. ensures students are adequately supervised, monitored, and provided with feedback (through an appropriate combination of supervision and assessment) before, during, and after the WIL experience;
b. ensures students and host organisations can escalate any concerns in a timely manner;
c. ensures students and host organisations can to provide feedback on the WIL experience; and
d. supports course improvement activities as outlined in the Education Quality Assurance Policy.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

(19) Students can apply for credit/Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for their WIL course.

(20) Eligibility for credit/Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be assessed in accordance with the Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and the Recognition of Informal and Non-formal Learning Procedure.

Accessibility, Capability and Support

(21) Students will be required to meet any Inherent and/or Fitness to Practice requirements that are associated with their program and with the relevant WIL experience.

(22) Students will be required to meet any capability and skill requirements or certifications of the host organisation at their own expense.

(23) The University will provide reasonable adjustments for students with disability who are required to complete WIL in accordance with the Supporting Students with Disability Policy and without compromise to the health and safety of the student or host organisation.

(24) The University will actively promote equitable access to WIL experiences for all international students and ensure that WIL experiences for onshore international students comply with the student's visa conditions.

(25) The University will provide information to international students about relevant Australian workplace legislation and advise that unpaid WIL hours, which are a requirement of their course and/or program at the University, do not count towards the hours per fortnight work limit that applies to student visa holders.

(26) Unless otherwise negotiated, students will be responsible for any costs associated with placement including, but not limited to, travel to and from an organisation.

International WIL

(27) Where WIL involves international travel the University must identify and manage risks and other considerations related to offshore WIL experience as outlined in, but not limited to, the Outbound Global Experience Procedure, the Travel Policy and Travel Procedure, as well as any travel advice or restrictions at the time of the activity.

(28) WIL experiences must comply with the requirements of the Fair Work Act 2009 or the relevant country's legislation if it is an overseas activity.

Remuneration of Students by Host and Insurance

(29) Under the Fair Work Act 2009, unpaid work experience may be unlawful if it gives rise to an employment relationship between the worker and the employer. An exemption exists if the unpaid work experience is a vocational placement undertaken as a requirement of an education or training program and/or course for which there is no entitlement to pay for the work the student undertakes and in which the primary purpose is student learning and development. This exemption ceases to apply once the placement hours required for the education or training program and/or course have been completed.

(30) Host Organisations may remunerate students undertaking a WIL experience provided that the remuneration is consistent with the employment provisions governed by the Fair Work Act 2009 and Fair Work Regulations 2009. In this circumstance, the student becomes an employee of the host and is covered under the employee workers compensation insurance.

(31) Any student undertaking an approved vocational (unpaid) WIL experience is covered by the University's insurance cover to the extent that the General Insurance Program may apply.

WIL Host Organisations

(32) The University will undertake a due diligence assessment of potential host organisations to ensure the quality of the WIL experience and compliance with all relevant legislative obligations as well as University policies and procedures.

(33) The facilities where WIL experiences are undertaken must be fit for their educational purposes and able to accommodate the numbers and activities of the students and staff who use them.

(34) Monitoring and evaluation of host organisations, including third-party providers, will be completed as part of the overall quality assurances of WIL experiences, including opportunities for partners to provide feedback to the University.

(35) The University may engage third party providers to deliver high-quality WIL experiences. Third-party providers must comply with relevant legislative obligations as well as University policies and procedures.

(36) The University may act as the host organisation and deliver WIL experiences.

Student Conduct and Performance Related to WIL

(37) While undertaking WIL, students will be required to:

a. observe the Student Code of Conduct at all times;
b. comply with workplace standards of professional behaviour and the host organisation's policies and procedures;
c. maintain satisfactory attendance and/or participation; and
d. complete all components of the WIL experience as specified in the course outline or the Student Undertaking.

(38) Where a student's conduct during a WIL experience is not consistent with the University's student conduct requirements, the matter may be referred for management under the Student Conduct Rule.

(39) Where a student's performance during a WIL experience is unsatisfactory or at risk of not meeting progress requirements, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Work Integrated Learning and Career-ready Placement Management Procedure.

Intellectual Property

(40) This policy does not regulate title to intellectual property rights including copyright of all material created by a student as part of a WIL experience. Title to such rights is regulated by the University's Intellectual Property Policy and Intellectual Property Procedure.

Governance, Quality and Reporting

(41) WIL experiences will be documented in accordance with the Records Governance Policy.

(42) WIL courses will be monitored in accordance with the University's Education Quality Assurance Policy.

(43) The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) will provide WIL and WEI student cohorts outcome reports.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th December 2024
Review Date	12th December 2027
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	9th October 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	Eleanor Edwards Executive Officer

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Credit" - When referring to course credit, credit is the recognition of equivalence in content and learning outcomes between different types of learning and/or qualifications. Credit can reduce the amount of learning required to achieve a qualification. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)" - Means an assessment of an individual's prior learning to determine where credit will be granted. RPL includes formal, informal, and non-formal learning.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"Unit" - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Intellectual property rights" - All present and future rights to intellectual property including any inventions and improvements, trademarks (whether registered or common law trade marks), designs, copyright, any corresponding property rights under the Laws of any jurisdiction and any rights in respect of an invention, discovery, trade secret, secret process, know-how, concept, idea, information, process, data, or formula.

"International student" - A student (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). This includes students who will be studying offshore and those who will be studying onshore and have a student visa, provisional residency, temporary residency, bridging visa, or any other category of non-permanent visa for Australia.