

Work Integrated Learning in Science

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Background

- Whilst WIL can be represented in any number of forms, we use a 60 credit point unit (aka course) which represents an entire semester (12 weeks) of study (for undergrad and postgrad)
- WIL has been available since 2007, but really started ramping up in 2010/11
- In 2014 our Bachelor of IT, Comp Sci and Cyber Security and Master of Comp Sci and Cyber Security were re-designed with WIL in mind
- In 2016 School of Computer and Security Science merged with School of Natural Science – creating the School of Science
- WIL then placed in all of those undergrad courses as well

WIL Criteria

- WIL is opt-in
- Students need to have completed 2 years of undergrad or 1 year of postgrad before they can apply
- Must have a course WAM of 65% or higher
- Must be willing to commit to an unpaid placement for the equivalent of a semester
- In nearly all of the courses (programs), students accepted into WIL scheme will replace core project unit + electives with WIL unit (taken in final semester)

Processes

- I work with each student in the year leading up to their placement in terms of;
 - Sourcing their own placements (where possible)
 - Applying for ACS Foundation scholarships
 - Placing the student with one of our regular hosts
 - Getting their CV in order
- Working with students and hosts in signing off documentation just prior to commencement
- Communicating with students and hosts from time to time during placement
- Marking students end of placement reflections and gathering host reports

Some Figures

- Since 2011, 144 students have participated in WIL
- ~50/50 split between domestic and international students
- 67 of the students received ACS Foundation paid scholarships
- An ever growing number of industry hosts, from small organisations through to big banks, government agencies and large multi-nationals are seeking a regular supply of students

Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

- Increased student employability
 - Some students directly employed
 - Shorter job seeking timeframe
 - Increased likelihood of students 1st job being the job they want
- Increased industry visibility for School
- Students aiming to perform at a high level from the start of their degree with WIL in mind
- Student reflections and host feedback help inform incremental updates to course content and structure(s)

Challenges

- A lot of work for WIL coordinator, course coordinator(s) and professional staff
- Ensuring there are enough hosts to meet student demand
- Course structures and alignment to WIL
- Reputational and insurance risk
- How to ensure that those who do not meet WIL entry criteria are not left behind
- Selling the benefits of WIL to non-believers
- Scalability

Any Questions?