What is workplace learning?

Workplace learning involves students taking placements with a host organisation for the purpose of linking theoretical learning with its application in the workplace. This will enable students to extend their professional knowledge, enhance their employability, and reflect on and evaluate their own work practices.

Why should an organisation take a placement student?

Host organisations provide placements for a variety of reasons. Some reasons offered by organisations are as follows:

- an opportunity to evaluate prospective employees
- a desire to help students gain practical experience
- the potential to address skills shortages and assist with the retention of graduates in rural / regional areas
- access to additional skills and knowledge
- access to additional resources for completing specific tasks / projects
- injection of new ideas and fresh perspectives
- an obligation to the profession to provide leadership in the training of future professionals
- an opportunity for staff development of employees through mentoring students
- an opportunity to build links with the University community
- the opportunity to establish your organisation as an employer / industry of choice for graduates.

Although individual organisations may have varying capacities to assist students in achieving the subject aims, most organisations can provide a setting where students can appreciate the workplace and attempt to give context to their university studies through that workplace.

Placement details

**The work placement may be completed as:**

- a block placement
- one day per week for the required number of weeks or
- any other format mutually agreed between the host organisation and the student.

Duties will be assigned to the student as appropriate to the situation, the needs of the workplace and the level of experience of the student.

It is expected that the student will make a meaningful contribution to the business that will be of benefit to the organisation as well as to the development of the employability skills of the student. Students will be encouraged to participate in placements that closely align with their business studies, for example, a Marketing student would seek placement in an organisation that would offer marketing experience.

The number of hours the student is expected to complete will depend on the subject in which they are enrolled, for example:

- **BUS110** (generally undertaken by first-year Business students) = **35-hour placement**
- **BUS220** (generally undertaken by second-year Business students) = **70-hour placement**
- **BUS370** (generally undertaken by third-year Business students) = **120-hour placement**
- **ACC275** (generally undertaken by second-year Accounting students) = **100-hour placement**

Remuneration

Students are **NOT** entitled to be paid any remuneration for placement work.

How is the placement arranged?

We encourage organisations looking for students to contact us so that we may endeavour to fulfil the needs of both students and organisations. Once a placement has been deemed suitable, the student is then responsible for working out an agreement with the host organisation as to:

- nature of duties to be assigned
- work hours / times
- precise dates on which the placement is to begin and end

This information must be formalised in a Placement Agreement.

Insurance

The University provides insurance cover for its placement students. To ensure coverage, it is vital that the Placement Agreement is completed and signed by all parties (host organisation, student and the University) prior to the placement commencing.
What are the responsibilities of the host organisation?

The host organisation is expected to provide the placement student with:

(a) a variety of responsible work tasks, opportunities for ‘shadowing’ and, if possible, the opportunity to complete a specific project for which the placement student (either individually or as an integral part of a team) can be in some way responsible

(b) adequate and professional supervision

(c) regular feedback to the placement student regarding their performance.

Once the placement is complete the host organisation would be expected to complete a short evaluation of the student’s workplace performance in relation to employability skills.

If any aspect of the placement is of concern you should contact the Workplace Learning Placement Officer or the Manager of Industry Liaison / Workplace Learning for advice or to resolve the problem.

What are the responsibilities of the placement student?

Placement students are advised about issues such as confidentiality and privacy, and are expected to respect the organisation, its activities and personnel during and after their placement. They should not reveal any confidential information about individuals, or about commercial or other organisational matters, except where it is clearly appropriate to do so.

Placement students should attend the workplace as required, adhere to any specified dress or conduct codes, and perform to the best of their ability.