



Abstract Book

WIL for Impact:
Partnering for Scalable Practice



18-20 October 2026

Adelaide Convention Centre
Adelaide/Tarntanya

#WILImpact2026



Showcases

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Barbara Adonteng-Kissi	Ensuring Quality, Not Just Quantity, in WIL	Showcase	1
Tasnia Alam Hannan	Real Problems, Real Constraints, Real Impact: Community-Partnered WIL with Social Enterprises	Showcase	2
Elena Balcaite	Scaling Meaningful WIL through WIL-CDL Integration: Student-Driven and Industry-Informed Approach	Showcase	3
Rachael Baron	Communities of Practices: Enabling Research, beyond WIL Practice	Showcase	4
Luc Bauwmans	Expanding WIL Beyond Internships: Responding to the Growing Demand for Employable Graduates. A Case Study of a Dual-Stream WIL Approach Shared by Two Master Programs at CQUniversity	Showcase	5
Elaine Bentley	Whole of Community Facilitators: Cross Sector Partnerships in Action	Showcase	6
Fiona Bird	Delivering WIL@Scale: Designing a Scalable and Sustainable University Approach to Mul2-Disciplinary WIL	Showcase	7
Felicity Blackstock	From Practice to Evidence: Building Institutional Capacity to Measure WIL Quality	Showcase	8
Jo Borren	Developing a Regional Pre Registration Nursing Competence Assessment Tool through Collaborative Partnership	Showcase	9
Kathryn Bowd	A New WIL Model for Creative Fields in a New University	Showcase	10
Kathy Bradley	Bringing Order to the Wild West: Moving from a Scattergun WIL Admin Model to Cohesive Collaboration	Showcase	11
Anna Branford	Supporting Student Agency in Identifying and Navigating 'Stretch Zones' in Preparation for WIL Experiences	Showcase	12
Matthew Cameron	Delivering International Experiences at Scale in the New NCP Environment	Showcase	14
Stacey Carter	Breaking Barriers: Digital Improvements for Quality and Equity in WIL	Showcase	15
Sonja Coetzee	Seeing Agency and Self-Efficacy Emerge: A Social Cognitive Career Theory Lens on Business Students' Observations and Reflections during Work Integrated Learning	Showcase	17
Jin Cui	Motivational Beliefs and Engagement in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL): A Mixed-Methods Study of International Students in UniSA Business	Showcase	18
Clare Dannenberg	A Reimagined Model for Scalable, Embedded WIL	Showcase	19
Anita Dewi	LIS Work Placements in the Eyes of Accrediting Bodies: A Study of Australian Context	Showcase	20
Nahid Divandari	Conversations on the Move-Parkinson's: Co-Designing an Interprofessional Program to Address Workforce Development and Community Need in Parkinson's	Showcase	21
Alice Dodd	A Co Design Approach to Scaffolding Online WIL for Social Impact	Showcase	23
Grace Dulawan	Building Reciprocal Community-University Partnerships: Lessons from 30 Years of UTS Shopfront	Showcase	24
Michelle J. Eady	Immersive Learning Practices (ILPs) as Enhancers of High-Quality Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in Higher Education Ethics	Showcase	25
Nicola Fish	Understanding Quality WIL Supervision: Insights from Industry Supervisors	Showcase	27
José Gomes Sakakibara	From Participation to Agency: A Longitudinal Study of Professional Identity Development in a Student-Led Enterprise WIL Model	Showcase	28
Jenni Graves	An Evidence-Based Review Tool for Strengthening Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Partnerships and Outcomes	Showcase	29
M. Sarah-Jane Gregory	WIL by Design: From Toolkit to Transformative Thinking for Quality, Inclusion and Capability	Showcase	30
Fran Gullaci	Embedding Quality and Risk Management at Scale: Codesigning a Compliant, Transparent and Sustainable WIL Procedure	Showcase	32
Tash Herman	Aligning Ambitions: Perspectives on Employability in Nursing Curricula	Showcase	35
David Hobbs	Students Immersed in Industry: What Works Well and how Long is Enough?	Showcase	36
Kelly Hooper	Beyond Stress: Reframing Student Placement Safety through a Psychosocial Hazards Lens	Showcase	38
Denise Jackson	Employer Perspectives on the Role and Development of Graduates' Professional Identity	Showcase	40
Stacey E. Jones	Work-Integrated Learning Partnerships and Shared Responsibility in Australia's Teacher Education Professional Experience Guidelines	Showcase	41
Ingo Koepfer	Science Connect: Non-Placement WIL for all Science Students	Showcase	42
Yuki Kojima	Making WIL Visible Institutionally: Moving from Static Reporting to Embedded Analytics to Enable Transparency of WIL Quality, Impact and Risk Management at Scale	Showcase	43
Karli Kollegger	Linking Students to the Future of Agriculture through Multidisciplinary Team Placements	Showcase	44
Clare Lade	Evaluating Scalable WIL: Insights from a Centralised Multidisciplinary Subject	Showcase	46
Luella Leon	Supporting the Whole Learner: Relational and Psychological Considerations in WIL Pedagogy	Showcase	48
Shufen Lin	Partnering with Purpose: A Tiered Engagement Model Driving Measurable Outcomes	Showcase	95
Faisal Lodi	A Scalable Industry-Integrated Work-Integrated Learning Model	Showcase	49
Adrian Low	Was it Worth it?: A Four-Year Transition to a Centralised Placement Model	Showcase	51
Milind Mandlik	MBA Capstone Journey: Agency through AI-Led Innovation and Futureproofing	Showcase	52



Showcases

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Amna C. Mazeh	Can AI-Supported Patient Simulations Better Prepare EAL Students for Clinical Placements? Preliminary Findings from a Mul2-Discipline Study	Showcase	53
Sophie McKenzie	Host Readiness Model: Improving Quality Partner Engagement in STEM	Showcase	54
Helen McLaren	It's Not the Social Work Placement that Matters: It's the WIL You Do that Counts	Showcase	55
Ellie Meissner	More Than a Placement: Co-Designing Reciprocal WIL Partnerships with Small Psychology Practices	Showcase	57
Melissa Moore	City of Newcastle's Future Fit Internship Program	Showcase	59
Annette Morgan	From Concept to Cross-Disciplinary Practice: A Scalable Blueprint for On-Campus Professional Clinics	Showcase	60
Beate Mueller	Life and Career Design at UTS: A Design and Impact Study	Showcase	61
Patricia Muncey	Using an Escape Room to Prepare Students for Work Integrated Learning	Showcase	62
Linh Nguyen	Collaborating with Purpose: Creating Mutual Value for Students and Social Enterprises through Work-Integrated Learning	Showcase	66
Mark O'Dwyer	Partnering for Impact: A Transdisciplinary WIL Model for International Collaboration in Higher Education	Showcase	67
Lizette Olivier	Scaling WIL for All: Building a Mul2-Stream Career-Ready Graduate Ecosystem in a Regional Business School	Showcase	68
Lynda O'Sullivan	From AI Hesitation to WIL Integration	Showcase	69
Nicola Parkin	Design Considerations to Support Students' First Time Experiences on Placement	Showcase	72
Heather Pate	Interaction, Engagement and Purpose: Building a Better World through Interdisciplinary Community-Based WIL	Showcase	73
Larissa Pearce	Designing Whole-of-Community Infrastructure for Sustainable Rural Placements	Showcase	74
Kalpana Raghunathan	Designing a Scalable Multidisciplinary WIL Model for Interprofessional Clinical Education: Challenges and Insights from a Case Study	Showcase	76
Wayne Read	Scalability via Project-Based WIL: Training Wheels, Mentoring, Reputation, and Pitfalls	Showcase	77
David Reid	Student-Centred, Industry-Powered: Over a Decade of Authentic Advertising WIL in Australasia	Showcase	78
Laura Rook	Regional Co Design in Action: Strengthening Participation, Impact, and Industry Capability through a Partnership with Crooked River Estate	Showcase	79
Jennifer Ruskin	Embedding Career Development Learning in WIL: Institutional Factors that Facilitate Integration	Showcase	80
Nicky Scarvelis	Mobilising Employability at Scale: A Program-Level Approach to Integrating Career Development Learning and Work Integrated Learning	Showcase	82
Krystal Schaffer	Simulation-Based Learning: Innovative WIL Strategies for Enhancing Confidence in Recognising and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence	Showcase	83
Suzanne Schibeci	WIL and ePortfolios: Implementing an Impactful and Meaningful Assessment Task in a Scaled Work-Integrated Learning Offering	Showcase	84
Bess Schnioffsky	Care in Uncertain Times: Reflections on Applying a Feminist Ethics of Care to Work Integrated Learning	Showcase	85
Jessica Amy Sears	"If I Can Teach This, I Can Teach Anything!": Embedding Work Integrated Learning in Teacher Education through a Cyclical Model of Practice	Showcase	86
Michael Sharp	Reframing Interprofessional WIL: A Scalable Student-Led Allied Health Model in Educational Contexts	Showcase	87
Renee Smith	Supervising Placement Students: Strengthening WIL through Supervisor Capability Development	Showcase	90
Bhavani Sridharan	From 'Just a Final Grade' to Real Work: An Evidence-Based Evaluation of Quality, Inclusion and Authenticity in Industry-Partnered WIL	Showcase	91
Alice Standfield	Wellbeing for Australian Veterans and Emergency Services (WAVES): Educating Future Allied Health Professionals	Showcase	92
Kylie Taffard	Looking Back to Move Forward: Digital Storytelling as Career Narrative in WIL	Showcase	94
Asha Thomas	Work Integrated Learning in Digital Age: A Practical Risk Management Framework for Authentic Industry Placement Experiences in Australian Universities	Showcase	96
Lauren Thurgood	Addressing Variability in WIL: Industry-University Co-Design of Core Laboratory Training for Workforce Readiness	Showcase	97
Franziska Trede	Teaching on Shifting Grounds: Innovating Authentic WIL with GenAI	Showcase	99
Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl	Extending Industry Mentorship in the Classroom in WIL at Scale: Evaluating Student Use of an AI Virtual Partner	Showcase	101
Vy Anh Vu	DynamicWIL: A Scaffolded Model for Designing Scalable and Sustainable Work-Integrated Learning	Showcase	103
Ben JJ Walker	Scalable, Authentic, and Generalisable Design Features of Industry-Based Work-Integrated-Learning Projects	Showcase	104
Katie Wang	Co-Designing Curricula with Industry: Actionable Strategies to Close the AI Skills Gap	Showcase	105
Amali Weerasinghe	TITAN: A Scalable WIL Platform for Enhancing Student Engagement in ICT Projects	Showcase	106
Robyn Westerman	Interprofessional Learning in Remote Australia	Showcase	107

Showcases

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Grant Wigley	Embedding Extended Internships in ICT Degrees: A Scalable and Accreditation Compliant WIL Model	Showcase	109
Michelle Wootton	Building Equity-Capable Practice: Developing Staff and Students through the FreelancingHUB Work-Integrated Learning Program	Showcase	110
Seung Jung (SJ) Yang	When Universities Partner with SMEs: Creating Impact for Business and Students through WIL	Showcase	111
Ada Yeung	From Classroom to Newsroom: Co-Designed WIL Partnership Enhancing Graduate Employment	Showcase	113
Bitu Zaferanloo	Shaping STEM Futures: An Inclusive and Evidence-Based Co-Curricular Model Advancing Quality and Innovation in WIL	Showcase	115

Roundtables

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Brett Hall	Making WIL Work: Harnessing the Role of Industry in Successful WIL	Roundtable	33
Leoni Russell	Utilising the Quality WIL Standards Framework (2026) to Design Impactful WIL	Roundtable	81
Karen Young	"Ready123GO": Moving the Needle on Student Engagement and Reporting on Employability Learning Gains	Roundtable	114

Panel

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Katrina Greig	Beyond Transactional: Building WIL Partnerships that Deliver Mutual Value at Scale	Panel	31

Pecha Kucha

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Stefanie Bucher	Evaluating a Hybrid Telesupervision and F2F Placement Model in Speech Pathology for Aged Care	Pecha Kucha	13
Joanne Castelli	Articulating the Transformative Impact of WIL through Critical Reflection	Pecha Kucha	16
Samantha Fien	Successful International WIL Experience	Pecha Kucha	26
Jared Harrison	The Sixth Team Member: Building Career-Ready AI Capability through WIL	Pecha Kucha	34
Luise Hollmann	The GenAI Paradox in Clinical Placements: An Observational Mixed Methods Study of Academics and Supervisors of Health Students	Pecha Kucha	37
Stefan Huth	Scalable Professional Experiences for Diverse Pharmaceutical Science Student Cohorts	Pecha Kucha	39
Amanda Krause	Building Professional Capabilities through Research-Based, Work-Integrated Learning: The JCU Undergraduate Research Internship	Pecha Kucha	45
Charmaine Logan-Fleming	Using a Service-Learning Framework through a Community Internships Course to Cultivate Graduates Capable of Envisioning a Sustainable Future through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals	Pecha Kucha	50
Sue Meares	Good WIL: Hunting for Purpose-Led Learning in a Local Government Case Study	Pecha Kucha	56
Abd Moh'd	Scaling Authentic WIL through Live Client Consulting Projects in Online Higher Education	Pecha Kucha	58
Jeffrey Naqvi	Co-Designing a Digital Partnership: Using AI to Create a 24/7 Industry-Academia Collaboration	Pecha Kucha	63
Bridget Naughton	Supervisors to Super Coaches: Improving Learning in the Clinic	Pecha Kucha	64
Cynthia Nguyen	Designing Strategic WIL Partnerships for Sustainable Industry Engagement in STEM	Pecha Kucha	65
Anne Ozdowska	Supporting Host Supervisors through Universal Design for Learning Informed WIL Resources	Pecha Kucha	70
Jessica Pace	Transforming Pharmacy Student Placements through Mystery Shopping: A Mixed Methods Retrospective Evaluation of Student Experiences and Perspectives	Pecha Kucha	71
Dannielle Post	The Healthy Choices Health Coaching Service: Developing the Skills of Future Health Professionals	Pecha Kucha	75
Simran Sidhu	Work and Research Integrated Learning in Health Sciences: Student and Supervisor Perspectives on Career Preparation	Pecha Kucha	88
Jennifer Smith	Collaborative Impact through Purposeful Partnership: A Co-Designed Student-Led Telepractice Clinic Bridging Service Gaps and Placement Shortages in Speech Pathology	Pecha Kucha	89
Angus Stead	Partnering for Impact: A Scalable and Sustainable Cross Sector Student Led Clinic Model Enhancing Workforce Ready Learning and Community Wellbeing	Pecha Kucha	93
Nooshin Torabi	From Simulation to Practice: Scaling a Climate Adaptation Game to Strengthen Non-Placement Work-Integrated Learning in Undergraduate Education	Pecha Kucha	98
Robert Trott	The Weird of WIL: Adopting Systems Thinking to Improve Student and Academic Management and Outcomes	Pecha Kucha	100
Rosa Virgara	Real-World Health Promotion: Building Workforce-Ready Graduates through WIL Partnerships	Pecha Kucha	102
Hayley Yates	Enhancing Equity in Education Placements: Building an Accessibility Database for Inclusive Practice	Pecha Kucha	112



Sponsored

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Beau Leese	UK Case Studies: Towards Guaranteed Industry Experience	Sponsor	47
Guthrie White	Paid For and Never Used: What Happens to a Placement After We Secure It	Sponsor	108



Posters

Author Name	Abstract Title	Type	#
Christine Bilsland	Beyond the Ivory Tower: Enhancing Graduate Research Professional Development and Career Mobility through Applied WIL Principles	Poster	116
Jordan Box	Pragmatics in Practice: How Pragmatic Labelling can Improve Outcomes in Work-Integrated Learning	Poster	117
Adrian Buck	Work-Integrated Career Development Learning (WICDL): A Students-as-Partners Approach to Employability Development through Interdisciplinary Project-Based WIL	Poster	118
Joanne Castelli	Bridging the Engineering Professional Practice Gap through WIL	Poster	119
Estee Ch'ng	Embedding Structured Teamwork as Work-Integrated Learning for Career Self-Efficacy	Poster	120
Lara Escane	Embedding Career Development Learning in Clinical Laboratory Medicine Placements	Poster	121
Elizabeth (Lisa) Evans	Ideas to Impact: The Achieving Improvement Masterclass (A_I_M) Program	Poster	122
José Gomes Sakakibara	From Uncertainty to Responsible Use: Simulating Professional Practice through Synthetic Users in WIL-Aligned Business Education	Poster	123
Rosemarie Herbert	Understanding the Needs of Disabled and Neurodiverse Students during University Coursework Studies and WIL Placements to Improve Graduate Employment Outcomes	Poster	124
Rupali Hinge	Undergraduate Male International Nursing Students' Experiences of Living and Studying in Australia	Poster	125
Jun Kha	Leveraging Data at Scale	Poster	126
Kwang Kim	Owning the First Two Stages: Adapting the UTS WIL Quality Framework for a Pathway College	Poster	127
Abd Moh'd	Scaling Authentic WIL through Live Client Consulting Projects in Online Higher Education	Poster	128
Thi Phuong Lan Nguyen	Pre-Service Teacher Placement Programs: Challenges to International Students and Suggested Solutions	Poster	129
Kyle Norton	From Logbooks to Learning Systems: Systemic Design for Scalable WIL	Poster	130
Larissa Pearce	DVE Business Solutions' 2025 Work Integrated Learning and Placements Sector Survey	Poster	131
Adeline Peh	One Problem, Three Framings: Fourteen Years of Evidence on Work-Integrated Learning for Chinese International Students	Poster	132
Jake Port	Reflection in Practice: Creating Lifelong Introspective Learners	Poster	133
Lucy Reading	Embedding Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in Capstone-Style Units: Case Study of Science Capstone Projects at the Queensland University of Technology	Poster	134
Ilizel Retita	Expanding Access to Engineering WIL: A Scalable Intensive, Project-Based Model	Poster	135
Nicole Ronald	Impacts of NP and Simulated WIL Experiences Every Semester in Computer Science and IT	Poster	136
Roslyn Sayers	Evidence-Based Micro-WIL at Scale: Embedding Responsible and Sustainable Practice through Assessment Design	Poster	137
Liz Smith	Personalised and Targeted Career Development Approach in Engineering	Poster	138
Adriana Alana Stibral	Humanitarian Workforce Readiness through Immersive Humanitarian Education	Poster	139
Robert Trott	The Weird of WIL: Adopting Systems Thinking to Improve Student and Academic Management and Outcomes	Poster	140
Geetika Verma	Reframing WIL: Designing Programs Around Authentic Work and Career Development	Poster	141
Thomas Vincent	Short or Long Industry-Based Placements? What do Students Choose and Why?	Poster	142
Grant Wigley	Embedding Extended Internships in ICT Degrees: A Scalable and Accreditation Compliant WIL Model	Poster	143

Ensuring Quality, Not Just Quantity, in WIL

Barbara Adonteng-Kissi, Southern Cross University

Co-Authors:

Jena Buchan, Southern Cross University

Erica Russ, Southern Cross University

Kristy Buist, Southern Cross University

Carrie Thomson-Casey, Southern Cross University

Luke Del Vecchio, Southern Cross University

Linda Furness, Southern Cross University

Donna Wilson, Southern Cross University

Corinne Cribb, Southern Cross University

Borkwei Ed Nignpense, Southern Cross University

Gareth Vanderhope, Southern Cross University

Wes Matthews, Southern Cross University

Lyn Ebert, Southern Cross University

Rebecca Lever, Southern Cross University

Fiona Naumann, Southern Cross University

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) is a pedagogical approach that bridges academic learnings with professional experiences. Within health, WIL is commonly a core element of the pedagogy occurring in the form of industry placement. At one regional Australian university's health faculty, WIL is managed by WIL Academic Coordinators (WILACs). This role extends beyond management of WIL, also incorporating substantial preparation and support of students, stakeholder engagement, and awareness of the overall program to support scaffolded experiences. In 2023, a WILAC Community of Practice (CoP) was formed in the health faculty, to support sharing of practices, professional identity, and foster a community of learning and scholarship. Through this CoP, it was identified that programs were experiencing similar challenges, significant diversity in practices existed, and there were key opportunities for improvement. As such, a Quality Assurance process was undertaken, to understand current practices across programs and identify best practices, opportunities for collaboration, and key areas to address at program- and faculty-wide level. The Quality Assurance was guided by an existing framework centred on four key domains of practice: student experience; curriculum design; institutional requirements; and stakeholder engagement. This practice report outlines the process undertaken, initial learnings, and applications to future practice, within and beyond health.

**Real Problems, Real Constraints, Real Impact:
Community-Partnered WIL with Social Enterprises**

Tasnia Alam Hannan, UNSW Sydney

Co-Author:

Linh Nguyen, UNSW Sydney

Work-Integrated Learning partnerships are predominantly designed around corporate and government hosts, organisations with dedicated supervision capacity, structured onboarding, and established graduate pipelines. Social enterprises operate differently. They are mission-driven, often under-resourced, and rarely have the infrastructure to support student placements in conventional ways. Yet they represent some of the most meaningful WIL environments available: students engage with real problems, real constraints, and real social impact.

This practice-based case study examines the Social Entrepreneurship Practicum at UNSW Centre for Social Impact - a WIL course delivered across undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts, which has thus far partnered with over ten social enterprise organisations across three years. Students work as consulting teams to address organisational challenges, with deliverables directly adopted by partner enterprises.

We explore what it takes to make social enterprise WIL work: how to select and brief partners with limited supervision capacity, how to scaffold student support when the host cannot, and how to design assessments that serve both learning outcomes and partner utility. We also reflect on the tensions, between student learning needs and partner expectations, between academic rigour and organisational pragmatism and capacity.

Our contribution is introducing a model of community-partnered WIL that is replicable, equitable, and designed for the reality of small mission-driven organisations. For institutions seeking to diversify their WIL partnerships beyond corporate hosts, this session offers both a tested approach and an account of what remains unresolved.

**Scaling Meaningful WIL through WIL-CDL Integration:
Student-Driven and Industry-Informed Approach**

Elena Balcaite, The University of Melbourne

Co-Author:

Tahlia Birnbaum, The University of Melbourne

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences give students opportunities to develop and apply skills in practice. To fully realise WIL benefits, these experiences must be captured and reflected upon (Kolb, 2014). But how can educators best embed opportunities for meaningful reflection at scale? Career Development Learning (CDL) can be a powerful vehicle for reflection, helping students to draw connections between their learnings and career aspirations (Dean, 2025). This presentation showcases a successful model of WIL-CDL integration, where an online CDL component supports students' placement experiences and prompts them to connect these experiences to planning and preparation for futures beyond graduation. The model, first implemented in an undergraduate WIL subject within the Humanities and Social Sciences, is now being expanded and rolled out across a range of Communications, Social Sciences, Architecture and Design WIL subjects at the postgraduate and undergraduate levels at the University of Melbourne. Student partners are leading the roll out as CDL co-designers and research assistants, who will engage with industry to source ideas for meaningful and industry-relevant CDL activities. This presentation will report on the first stage of the project, combining insights from the industry survey data and student focus groups with analysis undertaken by student partners to identify priority areas for CDL development. To demonstrate scalability and adaptability of the approach, the presentation will also share reflections from academic colleagues and show how they intend to embed these CDL elements within their WIL subjects to maximise learning through reflection.

Communities of Practices: Enabling Research, beyond WIL Practice

Rachael Baron, La Trobe University

Co-Author:

Felicity Blackstock, University of Sydney

Communities of Practice (CoPs) are widely recognised within Work Integrated Learning (WIL) as spaces for peer learning, collegial support and the sharing of practice. However, their potential as legitimate research-enabling spaces remains under-theorised and under-recognised in the context of WIL. This interactive presentation repositions WIL-focused Communities of Practice as active sites of knowledge production — places where practice-based insights can be theorised, evaluated, mobilised and translated into scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) outputs.

Drawing on contemporary COP theory and emerging evidence from healthcare and cross-disciplinary research contexts, the session explores how CoPs can intentionally move beyond professional development to foster research capability, confidence and identity. In particular, the discussion will examine the kinds of WIL knowledge that are routinely generated within CoPs but remain unrecognised as research, and how evidence-based design frameworks can enable CoPs to support collaborative inquiry, mentoring and research outputs. By bringing together diverse disciplinary perspectives, WIL and employability-focused CoPs are positioned as mechanisms for reducing structural silos and responding to complex, cross-cutting research challenges such as equity, sustainability, health and technology.

The interactive presentation includes short provocations focused on identifying innovative strategies, challenges and enablers for embedding a research culture within WIL CoPs. The session concludes with reflection on what might change institutionally if CoPs were recognised and supported as legitimate research spaces within WIL ecosystems.

Expanding WIL Beyond Internships: Responding to the Growing Demand for Employable Graduates. A Case Study of a Dual-Stream WIL Approach Shared by Two Master Programs at CQUniversity

Luc Bauwmans, CQUniversity

Co-Authors:

Ronny Veljanovski, CQUniversity

Ziyad Abunada, CQUniversity

The study extends on a longitudinal analysis of internship student performance within the Master of Project Management (MPM) course. Earlier research (Veljanovski et al., ACEN 2024) identified cultural differences and feelings of isolation (TEQSA, 2022) as significant inhibitors to the performance of international students within Australian host organisations.

These challenges were compounded in mid-2024 when internship applications surged fourfold following the inclusion of Master of Construction Management (MCM) students, rendering placement capacity a critical constraint. The existing practicum unit, the obvious alternative capstone unit, was added to the MCM course in 2025 but needed to be re-engineered to become a valid alternative to internship, and an authentic WIL experience for both courses.

To overcome isolation and cultural barriers, the redesigned practicum employs a collaborative model where students work in teams to engage with self-selected industry partners. Students analyse specific business processes and propose projects that embed sustainability through alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). Quality is maintained through a research-led framework, academic and industry panel assessments, and formal endorsement by the industry partner. The strategic validity of these concepts is frequently evidenced by partners proceeding to pilot implementations.

Learning outcomes are synthesised in a final self-reflection report, contextualising prior theory within a professional WIL environment.

The study suggests that the dual-stream approach to WIL effectively addresses the limitations of traditional internship, offers a scalable model across disciplines, and provides students with a more strategic pathway to professional employment.

Whole of Community Facilitators: Cross Sector Partnerships in Action

Elaine Bentley, University of Tasmania

Co-Author:

Alanna Cowley, Tasmanian Health Service

There are many challenges that impact the perception of placements for health care students in rural Tasmania, these include several factors outside of the actual placement. Students may be away from home, living with others in unfamiliar accommodation, they might be the only student in a particular area, or with students from other health disciplines. In Tasmania, the introduction of Whole of Community Facilitators (WOCFs) within rural townships has mitigated these challenges.

Whole of Community Facilitators (WOCFs) provide direction, guidance and mentorship to health students and their supervisors, across a range of disciplines, with a focus on building capability and capacity of organisations to host students, working within a geographic location, showcasing the benefits of working in the rural primary health sector. The 15 WOCFs based across the state are a key point of contact between the University and placement location, which could be a Tasmanian Health Service (THS) facility, or private organisation, such as General Practice or Residential Aged Care Facility.

Supported by Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program (RHMT), employed by THS and offered support and leadership by UTAS these positions has developed in role and number over the last decade.

WOCFs nurture a positive practice environment and foster student growth by strengthening supervisor capability and quality. By integrating professional knowledge and skills of supervisors with empathetic teaching practices, and the use of recognised, tested tools, WOCFs empower students to navigate challenges, build confidence, and excel in their roles in order to build the future rural health workforce.

Delivering WIL@Scale: Designing a Scalable and Sustainable University Approach to Multi-Disciplinary WIL

Fiona Bird, La Trobe University

Co-Author:

Jacquie Burnheim, La Trobe University

The La Trobe Strategic Plan 2025-2030 articulates a bold vision for employability as a distinctive feature of the student experience. Central to this vision is the systematic embedding of compulsory work integrated learning (WIL) and career development learning across courses to build career readiness and support students' transition from university study to graduate employment. Delivering this vision at scale requires a coherent, collaborative and sustainable institutional approach to WIL.

At La Trobe University, WIL is enabled through a model that combines centralised provision of WIL subjects, industry engagement, placement operations and employability programs with leadership distributed across central divisions and academic units. While this model supports scale and consistency, it also presents challenges related to coordination, accountability and sustainability. Successful implementation of WIL@Scale relies on a shared institutional vision, clear roles and responsibilities, and strong cross divisional collaboration underpinned by co design and continuous improvement.

This presentation outlines La Trobe's approach to designing and implementing a scalable and sustainable WIL model and showcases selected strategies that support a comprehensive yet streamlined end to end university approach to multi-disciplinary WIL. These include building trust and clarity with academic units through defined responsibilities, governance and collaborative leadership; connecting expertise across WIL academic and employability teams to deliver consistent student preparation; and harnessing AI to streamline the allocation of university sourced placements to students. Together, these strategies demonstrate how WIL can be implemented at scale while sustaining quality, consistency and responsiveness across diverse disciplinary contexts.

From Practice to Evidence: Building Institutional Capacity to Measure WIL Quality

Felicity Blackstock, The University of Sydney

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) continues to expand across higher education, and universities face increasing pressure to demonstrate consistent, comparable, and outcomes focused evidence of quality and impact. This presentation explores the development and implementation of an Institutional Quality in WIL Reporting Framework at the University of Sydney, designed to enable systematic measurement of WIL quality and impact at scale

The framework was developed through three phases: an environmental scan of established WIL quality frameworks, thematic analysis of literature and collegial consultation, and institutional benchmarking. Five key quality domains were identified: student experience, student progression, graduate outcomes, compliance with institutional and legislative requirements, and external partner experience. The framework aligns institutional practice with the WACE Global Quality Framework, the WIL Australia Quality Framework, and TEQSA Higher Education Standards, while integrating governance, risk management, and evaluation mechanisms into existing academic quality processes.

The institutional approach was piloted in 2025 across 323 placement units of study, encompassing more than 12,800 student enrolments and over 27,000 placement allocations. Core metrics included student feedback, partner quality and diversity, equity group participation, accessibility of placements, student progression, and post placement outcomes. Importantly, an institutional mechanism for cross faculty engagement with WIL data was established. The institutional performance is reviewed by both Academic Quality Committees and University Executive Education Committees.

The new process has enabled discussion across WIL operational levels and senior leadership, with further refinement of the framework now underway. The approach offers a scalable model for institutions seeking to embed WIL quality monitoring within institutional quality assurance systems.

Developing a Regional Pre Registration Nursing Competence Assessment Tool through Collaborative Partnership

Jo Borren, University of Otago

Co-Authors:

Desma Christie, University of Canterbury

Olivia Rogers, University of Canterbury

Rachel Burt, Ara Institute of Canterbury

Introduction/Background - Ensuring consistent, high-quality assessment of pre registration nursing competence is essential for preparing a safe and capable future workforce. Within Canterbury, three tertiary education providers deliver pre registration nursing programmes, each using distinct assessment tools. This variability has created challenges for clinical partners, students, and educators seeking clarity and comparability in competence expectations. In response, the three institutions formed a collaborative working group to co design a standardised regional assessment tool that reflects shared values, regulatory requirements, and contemporary nursing practice. The aim of this initiative was to strengthen assessment consistency, enhance student learning experiences, and support clinical partners through a unified approach.

Methods - This project used a co-design methodology grounded in partnership, consensus building, and iterative refinement. Draft versions of the tool were developed collaboratively and reviewed through structured stakeholder consultation with clinical partners. Feedback cycles informed successive revisions, with attention to cultural safety, clarity of language, and alignment with the Nursing Council of New Zealand standards of competence.

Results/Evaluation/Aims - A shared competence assessment tool was developed that integrates regional priorities and sector expectations. Planned evaluation includes piloting the tool with students across all three institutions and collecting feedback from students, academic assessors, and clinical preceptors. Indicators of success include improved clarity of competence expectations, enhanced inter provider alignment, and positive stakeholder perceptions of usability and fairness.

Discussion - Early collaboration has highlighted the value of shared language, transparent decision making, and collective ownership in developing assessment tools for diverse educational contexts. Findings have guided final refinements and inform a regional framework for ongoing quality assurance and future curriculum development.

A New WIL Model for Creative Fields in a New University

Kathryn Bowd, Adelaide University

Co-Author:

Sally Lewis, Adelaide University

A new university presents a valuable - and in many ways unique - opportunity to explore how WIL can be embedded in curriculum to support both traditional forms of WIL and the development of multi-disciplinary projects. The launch of Adelaide University - formed from the merger of the University of Adelaide and University of South Australia - has opened the door to a re-envisioning of WIL courses across undergraduate and postgraduate coursework in creative disciplines. WIL is one of the pillars of AU, with a WIL experience integral to every student's learning. With this as a foundation, a suite of capstone WIL courses was developed for the College of Creative Arts, Design and Humanities, utilising a hub-and-spoke model. At the centre is a set of resources to support students from all disciplines and all five Schools in the College, linking into central University supports. From the hub flow discipline-specific spokes, into which students enrol and which incorporate assessment, activities and seminar materials focused on each discipline. This innovative model takes a multi-layered approach to WIL - each discipline-specific course builds cohort as well as supporting students to engage with WIL, the hub provides a consistent experience for students across the College and the framework that underlies this opens up scope to conceptualise WIL in new and creative ways. It facilitates the development of projects across multiple disciplines, involving teams of students and reaching into other areas of the University as well as to industry partners, while providing a consistent benchmark for student achievement in WIL.

Bringing Order to the Wild West: Moving from a Scattergun WIL Admin Model to Cohesive Collaboration

Kathy Bradley, The University of Sydney

Co-Authors:

Felicity Blackstock, The University of Sydney

Kathryn Elliott, The University of Sydney

Like most institutes, WIL at the University of Sydney developed organically - starting as a core component of traditional accredited programs, then being adopted as elective components across our curriculum. While this organic spread ensured intimate engagement with curriculum and profession-based responsiveness, it also introduced a multitude of administration variation, functionally expressed as diversity in process, staff engagement, and reportability.

In 2023, USYD embarked on a project specifically intended to wholistically assess placement, where it occurred and how it was administered. Unsurprisingly, we discovered massive variation in recordkeeping practices, system utilisation, data quality and reporting capability.

In response to the project, we have spent the last 3 years working towards re-orientation of our approach to WIL administration, moving towards a cohesive whole-of-institute focus. Pivotal to this work was the creation of a central USYD Engaged and Work Integrated Learning Team aimed at providing leadership and expertise while supporting innovation. The team has focused on creating relationships across our placement staff networks by bridging the gaps between the faculty coal-face and peripheral support teams, building trust between ICT and placement stakeholders, co-designing insightful annual reporting models, developing institute-wide tools to align to various accreditation milestones that support administration consistency, and generally uplifting our placement administration landscape with real life benefits for our staff and compliance outcomes.

Join the University of Sydney Engaged and Work Integrated Learning Team as we share the approaches we adopted in order to improve practice, highlighting what worked well and what didn't go according to plan. We will also discuss how we measure success and the future directions in this audience interactive presentation.

Supporting Student Agency in Identifying and Navigating 'Stretch Zones' in Preparation for WIL Experiences

Anna Branford, RMIT University

Preparing students for WIL projects involves considering the inherent tension between supporting learners to seek accommodation for their needs and preferences and encouraging them to use WIL experiences to 'stretch', meaning to develop and practice new skills, strengths and strategies. Levin et al note, 'Although stress levels must not rise excessively, experiencing stress is perceived as a crucial part of learning, given that personal growth is dependent on the learner taking a risk, by facing a new situation' (2025, p.235). Some measure of stress is a likely component of the 'transformational experiences' central to Kolb's theory of experiential learning, from which WIL pedagogy draws (Jackson & Cook, 2023).

This showcase details an approach developed by a Careers Educator for RMIT's International Project Management course. The course requires students to undertake a range of simulated tasks to prepare for authentic WIL experiences, including development of an industry-facing contribution to their field and artefacts promoting an industry conference on social media. In keeping with principles of Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2024) students are offered multi-modal submission options, including writing, video content, and voice recordings. To support proactive agency, they prepare by reflecting on past experiences of using relevant skills to determine which of the given options are easiest and most comfortable, which they may find challenging, and which may offer the most value for their career preparation. The showcase presents the design of the preparatory tasks alongside feedback from educators trialling it to support students navigating 'stretch zones' associated with WIL.

Evaluating a Hybrid Telesupervision and F2F Placement Model in Speech Pathology for Aged Care

Stefanie Bucher, Adelaide University

Co-Author:

Kate Walker, Adelaide University

Background - Clinical placements are a mandatory component WIL for speech pathology programs and are essential for developing clinical competence (Davies et al., 2019; McInerney et al., 2025). As demand for speech pathology placements grows and barriers for traditional models of WIL increase, universities and healthcare providers are adopting hybrid supervision models that combine face-to-face (F2F) and telesupervision (remote) models to support student placements (Walters et al., 2024). The integration of telehealth technologies into clinical supervision has expanded opportunities to support students across diverse placement contexts (Whitehead et al., 2023) including regional and remote WIL opportunities.

Telesupervision, defined as remote supervision through digital technologies, has been shown to support student independence, confidence, and increase access to diverse learning opportunities (Dudding & Justice, 2004; Nagarajan et al., 2016). Hybrid supervision builds on this by integrating the strengths of both remote and onsite approaches to support observation, feedback, and clinical skill development (Walters et al., 2024).

Recent literature positions hybrid supervision as a high-quality and evolving approach becoming embedded within contemporary WIL, with similar models being explored across multiple healthcare disciplines (Whitehead et al., 2023; Hildebrand et al., 2023). However, there remains limited evidence of speech pathology student and practice educator views and best practice guidelines within speech pathology WIL.

Aim - The aim of this project was to evaluate student and practice educator views on a hybrid telesupervision/F2F WIL (speech pathology placement) model in regional South Australia via qualitative study design. The results are combined with current best practice evidence and aims to build a current set of recommendations for the development of WIL via hybrid supervision models.

Delivering International Experiences at Scale in the New NCP Environment

Matthew Cameron, Deakin University

Co-Authors:

Wayne Read, Deakin University

Chris Pozzebon, Deakin University

Belinda Sapuppo, Deakin University

Amanda McPherson, Deakin University

The international mobility landscape is ever challenging and always changing. In less than a decade, WIL teams have navigated natural disasters, international pandemics, global political unrest and increasing travel costs. Recent changes to New Colombo Plan (NCP) funding have added yet another challenge.

Business School accreditation often explicitly outlines expectations for internationalisation of curriculum and student experiences. A lot of these fall to the WIL teams, who often shoulder the responsibility for international opportunities, balancing program locations, delivery models, curriculum frameworks, international partner management, university and faculty strategic goals, student wants and expectations and of course, doing all of this at scale.

This showcase explores the work of the Faculty of Business & Law WIL team, who have created sound strategies to provide balanced international offerings at scale alongside our domestic WIL programs. This presentation will focus on learnings and outcomes post changes to the 2-week NCP requirements, how we've adjusted the balance of our faculty offerings, how we collaborate with our central exchange team to ensure shared use of exchange partners and third-party providers, as well as some challenges and hard learnings we've had over the last few years. As part of our WIL unit suite and international study tours, we've continued to offer short, medium and long-term options for our students in a range of locations. So, while the use of New Colombo Plan (NCP) funding will still play a role in our offerings, it will be a much smaller piece from 2026 and beyond.

Breaking Barriers: Digital Improvements for Quality and Equity in WIL

Stacey Carter, Curtin University

Co-Authors:

Simi Bhullar, Curtin University

Simon Warwick, Curtin University

Enhancing the quality and inclusivity of work-integrated learning (WIL) in higher education demands innovative, evidence-based approaches that address persistent barriers to student engagement and success. At Curtin University, Bachelor of Agribusiness students have a compulsory 60-day co-curricular WIL component. To address systemic barriers to WIL in this program, two complementary interventions were trialled: bespoke WIL onboarding modules, and GenAI-powered chatbots for student support. Drawing on student feedback and cohort surveys, the GenAI chatbot provided real-time academic and administrative support and personalised guidance. Simultaneously, onboarding modules were designed and evaluated to improve access, equity, and professional identity development, targeting logistical and administrative challenges that often impede WIL completion. Both initiatives were grounded in evidence from program-wide student surveys, ensuring that solutions were responsive to the lived experiences of diverse student cohorts, particularly for students from regional, remote, first-in-family and low socioeconomic backgrounds. Preliminary findings indicate that digital support tools and tailored onboarding resources can significantly enhance student engagement, placement understanding, and administrative efficiency, while fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. These innovations not only reduce practical and emotional barriers for students, but also alleviate administrative burdens for staff, contributing to improved outcomes across the program. This presentation will share actionable recommendations for educators and administrators seeking to implement evidence-based practices that drive quality, inclusion, and innovation in WIL.

Articulating the Transformative Impact of WIL through Critical Reflection

Joanne Castelli, Curtin University

Co-Author:

Tania McKiernan, Curtin University

Work-integrated learning experiences offer unique opportunities for transformative learning, particularly when students expectations, assumptions and biases are challenged. Reflective practice plays a critical role in helping students make sense of these experiences and understand how they shape their future practice or career and professional identity.

Articulating the impact of an experience through reflective writing is crucial for making the learning explicit and enabling the student to make the connection between their experiential learning and what it will mean for their future. Purposeful scaffolding using reflective practice models and guided questions that are tailored to individual WIL experiences can strengthen students' confidence and capacity to communicate and make visible the impact of what they have learned. Structured reflection can also support progression from descriptive reflection towards critical reflection and critical thinking, while helping students connect their experiences to professional competencies, employability, industry expectations and professional standards.

This Pecha Kucha presentation explores the impact of scaffolded reflective practice and writing across two WIL contexts: a global learning experience for science and engineering students, and a program in which engineering students reflect on their Engagement with Professional Practice requirements and attainment of professional competencies. Guiding questions will be posed to prompt the audience to consider how the reflective practice models and strategies presented may be adapted within their own disciplinary and WIL contexts, so that both students and practitioners can articulate the transformative impacts of WIL experiences.

Seeing Agency and Self-Efficacy Emerge: A Social Cognitive Career Theory Lens on Business Students' Observations and Reflections during Work Integrated Learning

Sonja Coetzee, Edith Cowan University

Co-Authors:

Mahan Poorhosseinzadeh, Edith Cowan University

Kim Feddema, Edith Cowan University

Denise Jackson, Edith Cowan University

This showcase presentation highlights how reflective pedagogy, in combination with structured opportunities for self-assessment and observation, enables students to express their emerging professional identities. Agency in career development rests on students' self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent, 2013, p. 18). When students feel challenged and overwhelmed, agency in career development can manifest as motivation and effort grounded in their personal beliefs about their capabilities and performance (Brown & Lent, 2019).

In a professional practice unit for business students, reflective tasks are primarily used as assessment tools. Following ethical clearance, data were collected from student reflections and self-assessment surveys for a larger project focused on professional identity formation the process by which individuals come to see themselves as legitimate and capable professionals within their chosen fields (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021; Trede et al., 2012).

In this presentation, applying a Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) lens reveals that reflection is also a tool for professional and personal development, supporting WIL students in expressing their growing sense of agency and confidence. Students' reflections expose how they interpret challenges, recognise their strengths, and make sense of their own vulnerability as part of the learning process. Capturing reflective observations early on, as well as pre- and post-work-integrated learning (WIL) experience self-assessments, provides additional insight into how students' beliefs about their capabilities evolve through workplace immersion. The session offers practical insights for WIL academics seeking to design learning activities with programmatic learning in mind (Torre et al., 2020).

**Motivational Beliefs and Engagement in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL):
A Mixed-Methods Study of International Students in UniSA Business**

Jin Cui, Adelaide University

Work-integrated learning (WIL) plays a critical role in enhancing students' employability; however, limited research has examined how international students engage in WIL and the factors that shape their engagement. This study adopts a mixed-method approach to investigate the relationships between motivational beliefs and engagement in WIL, as well as the influence of cultural and contextual factors. Quantitative data were collected through a survey of 57 international students enrolled in a WIL course, and qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews with five mentors.

The quantitative findings indicate that task value and self-efficacy are significant predictors of students' engagement across multiple dimensions, while perceived cost negatively influences engagement. Cultural and demographic factors were also found to have varying effects on engagement. The qualitative findings further explain these relationships, revealing that students who perceive WIL as valuable for gaining local work experience are more likely to actively engage. Confidence and attitude emerged as critical factors shaping students' participation, with mentors emphasising that a proactive attitude can compensate for language and cultural challenges. Additionally, competing commitments and time pressure were identified as key barriers to engagement.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of international students' engagement in WIL. The findings highlight the importance of motivational beliefs, contextual factors, and support systems in shaping engagement, and underscore the need for universities and host organisations to provide targeted support. This study contributes to the literature by explaining engagement in WIL and identifying the role of non-cognitive factors, such as confidence and attitude, in international students' learning experiences.

A Reimagined Model for Scalable, Embedded WIL

Clare Dannenberg, University of Canterbury

Co-Authors:

Clare Murray, University of Canterbury

Freddie Jefferd, University of Canterbury

Samara Hodges, University of Canterbury

Grant Ritchie, University of Canterbury

Kylie Taffard, University of Canterbury

Universities face increasing pressure to develop graduates' workforce readiness, yet implementing comprehensive career development and workplace learning programmes at scale presents significant challenges. This paper proposes a reconceptualised model, with an accompanying heuristic, that positions career development learning (CDL) and work-integrated learning (WIL) as interconnected pedagogies united by their shared goal of enhancing graduate employability.

This model maps CDL and WIL experiences across two critical dimensions: complexity and intensity. Complexity encompasses the multifaceted design, coordination, and stakeholder requirements of activities, whilst intensity reflects the depth of student engagement and institutional resource concentration demanded. These dimensions reveal an inverse relationship between institutional capacity to deliver programmes broadly and the transformative potential of individual learning experiences.

The model identifies three progressive developmental stages: exploration, engagement, and immersion—each characterised by increasing complexity and intensity. By articulating this scalability-impact tension explicitly, the model provides educators and administrators with a strategic tool for designing equitable, progressive employability experiences that balance broad access with meaningful depth across students' university journeys.

LIS Work Placements in the Eyes of Accrediting Bodies: A Study of Australian Context

Anita Dewi, Charles Sturt University

Co-Authors:

Diane Velasquez, Adelaide University

Jo Kaeding, Adelaide University

Kirsten Wahlstrom, Adelaide University

The paper explores perceptions of accrediting bodies about work placements in the Library and Information Studies (LIS) in Australia. It aims to address five areas: 1) what they see as benefits of placements for students; 2) what they see as benefits of placements for relevant stakeholders; 3) what they see as challenges in organising placements; 4) how they see COVID-19 has impacted placements; and 5) what they think can be done to improve placements. The research adds value as it analyses relevant stakeholders' perspectives on LIS work placements, in addition to the commonly found studies on students and host supervisors' perceptions. Data were collected through individual interviews with five key personnel of accrediting bodies. The findings revealed that placements are seen as mutually beneficial for both students and stakeholders, including host organisations, universities, and accrediting bodies themselves. The accrediting bodies see benefits of placements for students, both academically and personally. The participants also see host organisations benefiting from the contemporary knowledge and fresh perspectives that students bring from their classroom learning. Despite these benefits, several challenges were identified, including administrative and IT barriers, inconsistencies across universities in placement models and support levels, student engagement, workload and time constraints, and availability of hosts. COVID-19 is also seen as significantly disrupted placements, prompting universities to seek alternatives to ensure student graduation. To improve placement practices, accrediting bodies suggest matching between students and host organisations based on interests, and enhanced communication between accrediting bodies and universities.

Conversations on the Move-Parkinson's: Co-Designing an Interprofessional Program to Address Workforce Development and Community Need in Parkinson's

Nahid Divandari, University of Tasmania

Co-Authors:

Mindy Hu, University of Tasmania

Michelle Mortensen, Launceston Alliedhealth

Marie-Louise Bird, Federation University

Helen Titmuss, University of Tasmania

Harley Stanton, Codesigner

David Hill, Codesigner

Peter Longman, Codesigner

Jennifer Stacy, Holistic Allied Health Australia

Gemma Roach, University of Tasmania

Emily Lack, University of Tasmania

Rutger De Ozette, University of Tasmania

Jade Cartwright, University of Tasmania

The National Parkinson's Action Plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2026) emphasises integrated, multidisciplinary care, workforce capability, and person-centred approaches informed by lived experience. In response to these workforce and care priorities, innovative interprofessional educational approaches that engage people living with Parkinson's may support collaborative practice and workforce preparedness.

This project adapted an existing Conversations on the Move Stroke program to co-design and pilot the feasibility of an interprofessional, student-led program for people with Parkinson's and their care partners, while providing an authentic interprofessional WIL experience for Allied Health students of Physiotherapy and Speech Pathology students.

Using a Participatory Action Research approach, people with Parkinson's, care partners, students, clinicians, and researchers co-designed and piloted a five-week Conversations on the Move-Parkinson's program combining one hour of exercise and one hour of co-design discussion per session. Field notes and reflective journals informed program refinement and evaluation.

Participants valued the combined exercise, communication, and co-design format, particularly the interprofessional and reciprocal learning environment. Feedback informed refinements to exercise pacing, communication and voice activities, functional relevance, and student-supported participation. Participants also reported perceived benefits including increased confidence, motivation, social connection, and engagement.

Preliminary findings suggest the program is a feasible co-designed model with reciprocal benefits for students and participants. Students reported opportunities to develop interprofessional WIL

capabilities through collaborative delivery alongside clinicians and people with Parkinson's and their care partners. This project highlights the potential for embedding co-designed, community-engaged interprofessional WIL experiences within allied health curricula to support workforce capability and community outcomes.

A Co Design Approach to Scaffolding Online WIL for Social Impact

Alice Dodd, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Kim Burley, Adelaide University

Rebecca Godwin, Adelaide University Online and Learning Futures

Simon Howson, Adelaide University Online and Learning Futures

Rebecca Somerfield, Adelaide University

This presentation reports on a WIL Australia funded project that investigated how co designed, scaffolded Work Integrated Learning (WIL) can be embedded within online creative degrees to strengthen social impact and build partnership relationships.

The project adopted a four phase, action research approach. Phase one involved a review of an antecedent WIL project involving the original Yellow Wiggle. The review identified effective processes for co creating curriculum with community partners. Phase two focused on co-creating scaffolded online WIL activities, initiated through a facilitated workshop with the community organisations, followed by individual partner and academic meetings to refine project briefs, assessment design, and expectations. Phase three involved the implementation of these scaffolded WIL activities across multiple year levels in online courses within two degrees. These activities enabled students to engage with authentic communication and digital media challenges that generated social value. Phase four centred on evaluation, analysing the semi structured interviews with community partners and surveys of online students to examine experiences, outcomes, and perceptions of impact.

The paper will outline how this phased co design process supported sustained partner engagement, built shared understanding of online WIL pedagogy, and enabled curriculum embedded opportunities for students to develop professional capability and social awareness.

This case study offers a practical framework for institutions seeking to embed WIL in online courses and engage with community partners in that space. The presentation will demonstrate how structured co design can deliver tangible benefits for students, community partners, and scalable, impactful, online curriculum.

Building Reciprocal Community-University Partnerships: Lessons from 30 Years of UTS Shopfront

Grace Dulawan, University of Technology Sydney

Co-Author:

Oudai Tozan, University of Technology Sydney

UTS Shopfront is Australia's longest running service-learning program, celebrating 30 years of impact this year. From its inception, Shopfront was designed around the idea that reciprocity between community and students enhanced student learning and maximised community impact.

Drawing on 30 years of partnership experience and interviews with Shopfront community partners that formed the basis of a recent Shopfront evaluation, this paper reflects on lessons from long-term practice to offer six principles that guide how Shopfront forms, supports and sustains successful partnerships and offers these as a framework that can be adapted in other programs. In doing so, the paper contributes a practice-based model for partnership design and evaluation in community-university contexts.

These principles include focusing on the needs of community, adopting a critical pedagogy, teaching for co-design and reciprocity, assessing process and not just outcome, embedding and teaching reflection and managing community and student expectations.

This paper also considers the challenge of measuring and reporting impact in community-engaged learning contexts, where resources are limited, and partnerships are bound by semester timeframes. It argues for an approach that attends to the relational, process-based and reciprocal forms of impact, including trust-building, partner experience and the quality of collaboration, offering insights for others seeking to build realistic evaluation into community-university partnerships.

Immersive Learning Practices (ILPs) as Enhancers of High-Quality Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in Higher Education Ethics

Michelle J. Eady, University of Wollongong

Work-integrated learning is widely recognised as a powerful pedagogy for developing graduate readiness, professional confidence and career identity. However, the mechanisms that make some WIL experiences transformative remain less clearly articulated. This presentation explores how Immersive Learning Practices offer a useful lens for understanding and strengthening high-quality WIL design.

Drawing on qualitative questionnaire and interview data from faculty, staff and administrators across 14 institutions in Australia, New Zealand and the United States, this study examined how educators conceptualise immersive learning in higher education. Although participants were not specifically asked about WIL, examples from placements, practicums and practice-based learning emerged frequently, suggesting a strong connection between immersion and impactful WIL experiences. Six interrelated components were identified: authentic and situated learning, autonomy and agency, time and focus, cognitive dissonance, reflection, and the teacher as facilitator.

Findings suggest that these components help explain how students move from uncertainty toward confidence, professional judgement and identity formation. Authentic tasks positioned students within consequential practice contexts, while cognitive dissonance prompted them to reconsider assumptions and make sense of complex workplace realities. Structured reflection and facilitation were especially important in supporting students to process uncertainty and connect theory with practice.

The presentation argues that an ILPs lens can help educators design more intentional, inclusive and scalable WIL experiences by deliberately scaffolding authenticity, autonomy, reflection, dissonance and facilitation.

Successful International WIL Experience

Samantha Fien, CQUniversity

Co-Authors:

Clancy Conlon, CQUniversity

Johanna Scully, CQUniversity

Joshua Guy, CQUniversity

Tanya Palmer, CQUniversity

International placements offer transformative learning, yet many remain observational and discipline-specific with limited long-term impact. Since 2017, this program has intentionally moved beyond these models by embedding multidisciplinary, capacity-building practice within clinical placements in Nonthaburi, Thailand.

Students from Exercise Science, Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy work in integrated teams, co-assessing and co-delivering interventions for individuals with developmental and acquired disabilities in under-resourced centres. Rather than short-term service provision, students engage in co-designed, locally relevant solutions, addressing language barriers and outdated practices through low-cost tools, training resources, and context-specific strategies developed alongside local staff.

Over the past three years, three features have defined the program's difference:

- (1) Authentic multidisciplinary integration, mirroring real-world team-based care rather than siloed placements;
- (2) A focus on capacity-building over service delivery, ensuring resources and training remain beyond each placement cycle;
- (3) Explicit career development integration, linking WIL to employability through reflective practice, student-led innovation, and peer learning.

Outcomes extend beyond confidence to include enhanced student agency, cross-cultural clinical reasoning, and adaptability, alongside sustained improvements in local practice. Technology-enabled supervision and iterative program design support scalability without losing contextual relevance.

Attendees will gain a replicable model for shifting international placements from exposure to impact, demonstrating how integrated teams, reciprocal partnerships, and capacity-focused design can generate sustainable benefits for both students and host communities. This session reframes WIL as a platform for co-creation and long-term global health impact, rather than a one-off international experience.

Understanding Quality WIL Supervision: Insights from Industry Supervisors

Nicola Fish, Swinburne University of Technology

Co-Authors:

Wayne Read, Deakin University

Matalena Tofa, UNSW Sydney

Melissa Connor, Department for Health and Wellbeing

Work-integrated learning continues to be viewed as an important driver for students' career readiness. While WIL incorporates a wide spectrum of activities, internships/placements are often seen as the gold standard. These experiences place students within an industry setting where they can apply their university-developed discipline knowledge and skills in practical ways. While on an internship, universities often need to pass the baton of mentoring and supervision and 'teaching' to an external partner within the host organisation. For this reason, quality industry supervision can significantly enhance the student experience and learning.

In 2024 we presented a literature review of WIL research into internship supervision and highlighted the key trends and factors associated with quality supervision. In 2026, we will present the next stage of this project in which we interviewed a range of experienced industry supervisors. In this presentation we will unpack the key factors identified within the literature, present the key themes and insights from interviews with industry supervisors, and highlight practical ways that universities and internship partners can work towards quality internship supervision.

From Participation to Agency: A Longitudinal Study of Professional Identity Development in a Student-Led Enterprise WIL Model

José Gomes Sakakibara, The University of Notre Dame Australia

Co-Authors:

Maria Vakafua, The University of Notre Dame Australia

Lucas Mitchell, The University of Notre Dame Australia

Louise St Guillaume, The University of Notre Dame Australia

This paper introduces NextUS, the first Junior Enterprise (JE) implemented in Australia, as a student-led alternative to current Work Integrated Learning (WIL) models. Drawing on longitudinal qualitative data, findings suggest a deeper transformation that extends beyond skill development, with students enacting professional identity through ownership, client accountability, peer-led decision-making, and the development of entrepreneurial and international networking capabilities within authentic organisational contexts.

Junior Enterprises are not-for-profit organisations created and managed by students, linked to universities, and delivering consulting services to a range of organisations, including small and medium enterprises (SME), larger firms, and community organisations. While literature suggests JEs enhance employability and entrepreneurial and international networking capabilities, empirical research examining developmental impact over time remains limited.

Using semi-structured interviews conducted before and after participation in the Junior Enterprise Project (JEP), this study explores shifts in student agency, capability development, and professional identity formation. Preliminary thematic analysis indicates a consistent movement from anticipated skill acquisition towards enacted professional identity, characterised by increased ownership, responsibility for outcomes, and relational forms of leadership. Participants describe moving beyond hypothetical learning towards delivering value in authentic organisational settings, while developing confidence through high-stakes international exposure and embedded networking practices.

Importantly, findings suggest that structured student governance and mentored peer collaboration may broaden access to high-impact WIL, enabling participation from a diverse range of students, including those who may not typically access competitive placement-based WIL opportunities. The study discusses implications for designing agency-driven, inclusive, and scalable WIL ecosystems.

An Evidence-Based Review Tool for Strengthening Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Partnerships and Outcomes

Jenni Graves, UNSW Sydney

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is widely posited as essential for preparing practice-ready graduates and strengthening university-industry partnerships. But, ensuring consistently high-quality, inclusive, and meaningful WIL experiences can be challenging, including access issues, competing expectations, effective supervision, and sufficient support for industry partners. This paper presents an evidence-based WIL Success Factors Review Tool designed to support reflective, collaborative and action-oriented enhancements of WIL with in-agency placements. The tool is informed by a narrative review of WIL success factors drawn from literature published between 2010 and 2025, summarising key findings. It translates research evidence into a practical, strengths-focused framework encompassing students, universities, and industry partners. Implemented within a university setting and shared with WIL teams and industry partners, the tool enables users to systematically assess current practice, identify critical gaps, and prioritise targeted improvements. It supports both individual reflections to prepare for student placements or review approaches (e.g., by placement industry supervisors or coordinators) and collective, team-based evaluation, fostering shared ownership of WIL quality. By embedding continuous, evidence-based reflection and actions into WIL processes it contributes to more inclusive, responsive and successful placement experiences. This presentation will introduce the tool and provide participants with an opportunity to apply it, reflecting on their own programs and how WIL quality can be enhanced to deliver lasting benefits for students, industry partners, and Universities, and ultimately to benefit the communities we serve.

WIL by Design: From Toolkit to Transformative Thinking for Quality, Inclusion and Capability

M. Sarah-Jane Gregory, Central Queensland University

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is widely recognised as a cornerstone of graduate employability; however, ensuring consistent quality, equitable access, and meaningful capability development across diverse contexts remains a persistent challenge. This presentation shares outcomes from an Australian Council of Deans of Science WIL Fellowship that advances a whole-of-lifecycle, evidence-informed approach to WIL design from early conception through to implementation, assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

At the centre of this work is a suite of practice-based resources, including a WIL implementation toolkit and an AI-enhanced WIL guide, designed to support educators, professional staff, and industry and community partners in co-designing WIL experiences. Grounded in contemporary scholarship and national standards, these resources provide structured guidance for planning, partnership alignment, and the integration of learning outcomes, assessment, and feedback processes across diverse WIL models.

A key contribution is the integration of scalable and equitable design principles, including Universal Design for Learning (UDL), flexible delivery models, and virtual and AI-supported WIL opportunities. This approach supports more equitable access while maintaining authentic engagement and clear stakeholder expectations

The resources have been disseminated through a national program of workshops, with strong sector engagement and positive participant feedback informing iterative refinement and demonstrating relevance across institutional contexts. Rather than presenting formal evaluation outcomes, this work offers a practice-informed, transferable framework that supports design partners to move beyond ad hoc approaches towards more deliberate, aligned, and sustainable WIL design.

Collectively, the Fellowship contributes both practical tools and a shift in design thinking, positioning WIL as a coherent, supported system for enhancing quality, inclusion, and innovation across disciplines.



Beyond Transactional: Building WIL Partnerships that Deliver Mutual Value at Scale

Katrina Greig, Practera

Panellists:

Katrina Greig, Practera

Emma Lee, Adelaide University

Jo Lines, Edith Cowan University

Client representative

Student representative

One of the key conference themes is “Partnering for Impact: Collaborating with purpose”; it is what we all want to do, right? But how can we do it efficiently and at scale, with tangible outcomes for all participants?

In line with the conference theme, this panel brings together three diverse Higher Education institutions, along with industry, student and external partner perspectives to engage attendees with this question.

Adelaide University, Edith Cowan University, and The Australian Institute of Higher Education will share their WIL context and the design & outcomes of three different implementations of student-industry project models co-designed and being delivered at large scale with edtech Practera.

An industry client and student participant will also share their experience, and perspectives on benefits and challenges. Practera will share how their technology enabled models aim to support quality outcomes and mutual value at scale, while remaining adaptable to different contexts, disciplines and requirements.

The conversation will explore what educators, industry & students really value from WIL engagement and where traditional models can be practically augmented by digital delivery to extend participation and access.

Attendees will be invited to pose questions to the panel and share their own examples of leading practice in delivering mutual value through WIL partnerships at scale.

The session will offer practical insights for WIL practitioners looking to;

1. Design and implement WIL experiences at greater scale while retaining a focus on industry & student benefit
2. Consider the use of technology to scale WIL delivery; its benefits, challenges and relationship with traditional models
3. Understand benchmark quality outcomes.

Embedding Quality and Risk Management at Scale: Codesigning a Compliant, Transparent and Sustainable WIL Procedure

Fran Gullaci, Swinburne University

Co-Author:

Louise Gravina, Swinburne University

Work integrated learning (WIL) is central to preparing students for meaningful workforce participation, yet institutions face persistent challenges delivering WIL at scale while assuring quality, compliance and risk management. This presentation outlines the codesign, development and institutional rollout of the Swinburne WIL Procedure: a comprehensive framework embedding consistent expectations and transparent processes across centrally delivered internships and placements, and school based project WIL. Developed with academic staff, professional services and governance stakeholders, the Procedure supports regulatory compliance, quality assurance and risk management while remaining adaptable across disciplines and delivery contexts. It is grounded in evidence based practice, including sector benchmarking, shared stakeholder language, clearer roles and responsibilities, and streamlined processes that reduce administrative burden and support sustainable growth. Implementation required careful navigation of academic practice change, cross institutional coordination, and alignment with teaching and assessment models. Securing executive and institutional buy in was critical, particularly where the Procedure balanced compliance requirements with academic autonomy, resourcing constraints and partner capacity. Despite these challenges, the rollout has improved transparency, reduced duplication, strengthened confidence in decision making, and clarified support structures for staff and students. The session demonstrates how a codesigned, evidence based WIL Procedure can strengthen institutional capability to scale and sustain WIL while assuring quality and managing risk. Attendees will gain practical insights into governance, partnership, and the use of data to maximise outcomes



Making WIL Work: Harnessing the Role of Industry in Successful WIL

Brett Hall, Australian Industry Group Centre for Education and Training

Across Australia there are many quality and innovative pockets of work-integrated learning (WIL) where formal education and training is combined with real workplace experience. However, links between Australia's education and training system and industry are generally under-developed by international standards.

Australian Industry Group has been a longstanding advocate for strengthened engagement between universities and industry that maximises the opportunities for WIL in real workplaces aligned to real workplace challenges. Through its Centre for Education and Training, a proactive research, policy and advocacy agenda strives to ensure Australia's skill development outcomes are in line with current and emerging economic needs, including through successful and scalable WIL.

This session will explore the industry perspective to making WIL work, drawing upon deep engagement with businesses across industries and longstanding experience in WIL policy and practice. It will highlight the critical success factors for WIL for businesses, key barriers from the business perspective and how they can be overcome, and steps that can be undertaken by both education and training providers and industry to maximise WIL opportunities.

It will also showcase key examples of successful WIL that Australian Industry Group has delivered or supported in recent years across a variety of contexts, ranging from internships to degree apprenticeships.

**The Sixth Team Member:
Building Career-Ready AI Capability through WIL**

Jared Harrison, UNSW Sydney

This showcase presentation will explore how AI has been embedded into compulsory undergraduate WIL courses at UNSW Business School to strengthen career readiness, lifelong learning, and ethical professional practice for over 1,800 students each year. It aligns directly with the conference theme, Mobilising Students for Lifelong Learning and Career Development, and the sub-theme, Use of AI in WIL curriculum for lifelong learning and sustainability.

The presentation will address a key challenge for WIL educators: how to maintain academic integrity while also preparing students to use AI confidently, critically, and responsibly in future workplaces. Rather than framing AI as a threat to learning or a simple productivity tool, our curriculum positions AI as a creative partner, or “AI teammate”, within project-based WIL. In this model, each student project team effectively gains a “sixth team member” to support problem exploration, research, ideation and communication.

The session will present emerging quantitative and qualitative data on students’ confidence, perceived AI capability, critical judgement, and sense of career readiness stemming from these innovations in learning. We will also share the curriculum design approach, including how AI activities have been embedded into workshops to help students practise prompt crafting, critique AI-generated outputs, identify appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI, and reflect on how these capabilities connect to career development. It will conclude by discussing future directions for sustaining and strengthening this work in WIL courses, in response to student feedback, academic integrity considerations, and changing industry expectations.

Aligning Ambitions: Perspectives on Employability in Nursing Curricula

Tash Herman, Torrens University

Co-Authors:

Sharon Peut, Torrens University

Asrath Usman, Torrens University

Michelle Griffin, Torrens University

Belinda Giordano, Torrens University

Focus: This study explores the perceptions of nursing students, academics, and employers regarding employability skills in Australia to evaluate how effectively nursing curricula prepare students for workforce readiness and professional success.

Background/context: As healthcare systems become increasingly complex, nursing graduates must possess not only clinical expertise but also key employability skills to ensure workforce readiness and professional success. This study examines the perceptions of nursing students, academics, and employers in Australia regarding the effectiveness of nursing curricula in embedding employability competencies, including communication, adaptability, and teamwork.

Methodology: This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from an online survey with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. Participants represent diverse healthcare sectors, offering a comprehensive view of stakeholder expectations. Preliminary findings reveal a significant gap between academic preparation and employer needs, with many students prioritizing theoretical achievement over workplace preparedness due to inconsistent integration of employability skills in curricula.

**Students Immersed in Industry:
What Works Well and how Long is Enough?**

David Hobbs, Flinders University

Co-Authors:

Thomas Vincent, Flinders University

Robert Trott, Flinders University

The 20-week Flinders University Engineering WIL program is one of the longest immersive industry placement programs available for STEM students in Australia. This unique program has received significant success, recently earning multiple national awards and Engineers Australia labelling it the gold standard nationally. This session is designed to share the insights gained from this unique WIL program and to explore what works well and the pros and cons of a longer internship.

The program's success and ability to scale have arisen from meaningful and intentional collaboration and cooperation with industry. The benefit to students is immense, the longer time spent in industry allows for deeper and more meaningful projects and exposure to the nature of work and developing transferable skills. Students that complete longer WIL go on to find graduate employment at the highest level in the state and at higher levels than the Group of 8 average. The benefit to industry is also substantial as this longer immersion on placement allows students to engage in meaningful work and provides industry with a stronger return on their investment.

This session will explore how students and industry alike can plan for successful placements, how success is measured for industry and students alike, the merits of the different lengths and models, and how WIL programs can scale with increasing demand.

The GenAI Paradox in Clinical Placements: An Observational Mixed Methods Study of Academics and Supervisors of Health Students

Luise Hollmann, University of Canberra

Co-Authors:

Bernie Bissett, University of Canberra

D'Arcy Molan, University of Canberra

Tanya Lawlis, University of Canberra

Introduction - As Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) becomes increasingly integrated into health care practice, allied health and nursing students should be prepared for this rapidly evolving technological landscape. Little is known about how well contemporary university curriculum matches workplace realities for students on placements.

Aim - To explore the alignment between university curriculum and supervisor expectations regarding student use of GenAI during clinical placements in the Canberra Region.

Methods - Two surveys were conducted in December 2025: academics (n=20) at the University of Canberra capturing responses from 12/14 (86%) of health disciplines; and placement supervisors (n=86, representing 1818 placements annually). Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used to identify trends in GenAI integration, expectations, experiences, and concerns.

Results - Most academics (75%) reported embedding GenAI content in curriculum, yet 92% do not teach profession-specific GenAI tools, despite expecting students to use them during placement. In contrast, only 13.6% of all supervisors reported students use GenAI on placement (government/public sites 7%). Uncertainty is widespread: 66% of supervisors were unsure about student preparedness to use GenAI. Willingness to allow student GenAI use is low (24%), even among supervisors who use GenAI. Concerns included deskilling, privacy risks, and lack of policy guidance. Only 47.5% of sites reported having a GenAI policy.

Conclusion - A significant contradiction exists: Universities anticipate meaningful student GenAI use on clinical placement but don't teach real-world applications; meanwhile most supervisors neither observe nor readily permit students to use GenAI. Clarifying expectations and developing shared guidelines may strengthen student readiness for placement environments.

Beyond Stress: Reframing Student Placement Safety through a Psychosocial Hazards Lens

Kelly Hooper, The University of Queensland

Co-Authors:

Janine Rix, The University of Queensland

Tania Brooks, The University of Queensland

Professional placements are a cornerstone of health and social work education, yet students routinely encounter workplace experiences such as bullying, harassment, fatigue and traumatic events that are rarely named or addressed as psychosocial hazards. Most existing research frames these experiences through clinical stress or burnout lenses and focuses predominantly on nursing. This project took a different approach: applying a workplace health and safety (WHS) psychosocial hazard framework to placement experiences across four disciplines through a Student-Staff Partnership (SSP) that positioned students as co-investigators rather than subjects.

The SSP brought together staff from nursing, health safety and wellness, and student experience with student partners from nursing, social work and counselling at the University of Queensland. Emerging from real incidents logged by students, the partnership collaboratively designed and administered a survey across the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, generating 204 responses across the four disciplines.

Findings revealed that 54% of students did not feel adequately prepared prior to their first placement and 56% did not feel well supported following placement. Fatigue was the most prevalent hazard (36.3%), followed by traumatic event exposure (20.1%) and poor workplace relationships (13.7%). Disciplinary differences were significant, particularly in feelings of being valued and experiences of inadequate recognition. This points to the need for discipline-responsive rather than generic preparation.

This presentation shares findings, cross-disciplinary patterns, and the student-recommended solutions now informing targeted placement preparation workshops. It also reflects on the SSP model itself as a replicable approach to student-led, evidence-informed WIL improvement.

Scalable Professional Experiences for Diverse Pharmaceutical Science Student Cohorts

Stefan Huth, Monash University

Co-Authors:

Richard A. Hughes, Monash University

Karen J. Gregory, Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Christine Tolotchkov, Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Jennifer L. Short, Monash University

Monash University's Master degree in Pharmaceutical Science includes a mandatory 400-hour professional experience - usually an industry or academic placement - in its final year, a feature that is highly valued by students. Rapid growth in student numbers has made it challenging to source a sufficient number of placements. In addition, the student cohort has become increasingly diverse in skill levels, prior experience, expectations and needs, requiring differentiation in the types of placements on offer.

In response, the faculty is developing scaffolded professional experience programs to complement conventional placements with external partners or the university's research groups. They include:

- A structured placement program (20 students) at the Monash University Medicine Manufacturing Innovation Centre (MMIC), an industry-facing research services platform;
- An on-campus cosmetics formulation program (40 students), including projects and training workshops provided by industry partners (Cosmetics Hub);
- A team-based drug discovery research program (28 students), conducted in research and teaching labs on-campus, which uses cutting-edge high-throughput techniques to provide workplace-relevant experience and ensure efficient use of staff and space resources.

These modular programs offer both technical and professional skills training to build student confidence and bridge the gap between course-based learning and workplace or research settings that require a greater level of independence. In 2026, the programs will run for the first (research program) and second (MMIC, Cosmetics Hub) time, respectively. Program evaluation is in preparation and will focus on both student learning and sustainability in regard to staff impact and resource use.

Employer Perspectives on the Role and Development of Graduates' Professional Identity

Denise Jackson, Edith Cowan University

Co-Author:

Michael Tomlinson, University of Southampton

Literature and practice are increasingly recognising professional identity (PI) as a critical element of graduate employability. Research on the development of PI and its role in graduates' transition to work is typically explored from the perspective of students, graduates and/or academics. Instead, this study investigated the perceptions of employers on the meaning of PI, its value for graduates' integration into workplaces, and how formed graduates' PI is at different timepoints after recruitment. It gathered survey data from 339 Australian-based employers closely involved in recruiting, developing, supervising and performance managing graduates. Findings reveal how employers understand four different conceptual dimensions of PI and each dimension's importance for early career graduates' performance, wellbeing and learning at work. The study explores what PI can signal during recruitment and how it can help graduates in negotiating their transition to employment and career success. Differences between occupationally oriented and generalist degrees are examined, as well as personal, organisational and external factors which may influence identity formation. Insights from the study could help careers professionals and educators in designing targeted strategies to support students' progression from higher education into professional practice.

Work-Integrated Learning Partnerships and Shared Responsibility in Australia's Teacher Education Professional Experience Guidelines

Stacey E. Jones, Charles Sturt University

Driven by a need for workforce readiness, work-integrated learning (WIL) has become a vital and expanding element of higher education (Zegwaard et al., 2019). In initial teacher education (ITE), professional experience (PEX) placements in schools are a central WIL feature. High-quality PEX placements for pre-service teachers (PSTs) require effective partnerships between universities and schools. However, a persistent challenge of quality remains, as stakeholders often lack a shared understanding of how to operationalise these partnerships effectively. Recognising this challenge, the Australian Government endorsed a national approach to ITE reform, identifying the enhancement of PEX placements as a key recommendation (TEMAG, 2014; Department of Education, 2023). To translate this recommendation into practice, the Australian Professional Experience Guidelines (2024) were released. The guidelines provide a framework to shape and guide school-university partnerships, specifically seeking to clarify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders (AITSL, 2024, p. 5) and move partnerships beyond logistical coordination towards intentional collaboration. Building on this foundation, this research examines how the newly released guidelines strategically frame partnerships through a lens of mutual stakeholder accountability. Using qualitative document analysis and thematic mapping of the framework, this study identifies areas where stakeholder responsibility intersects. Mapping of shared responsibilities in areas such as wellbeing and theory-practice connections provides a practical entry point for partnership activity between stakeholders, highlighting where partners can begin to co-construct their PEX practice, leveraging shared responsibilities as a starting point for deeper and ongoing collaboration. This focus on shared responsibility is highly transferrable to a diverse array of WIL disciplines, effectively leveraging mutual accountability as a practical platform for collaboration between industry and universities.

Science Connect: Non-Placement WIL for all Science Students

Ingo Koeper, Flinders University

Work integrated learning (WIL) is widely recognised as critical for graduate employability, yet in science disciplines it remains constrained by limited placements, inequitable access, and poor scalability. We have developed and implemented a degree wide, non placement WIL model that has been designed to overcome these structural challenges while delivering authentic, high quality outcomes for students, industry, and the wider community.

The Science Connect model is a simulated professional science consultancy embedded as the capstone of a deliberately scaffolded Bachelor of Science curriculum. Rather than relying on traditional placements, Science Connect engages large student cohorts in real projects co designed with industry, government, schools, and community partners. Students apply for projects using professional CVs, work in multidisciplinary teams, manage real world constraints, and deliver professional reports and presentations to external stakeholders. This approach maintains authenticity while remaining scalable, sustainable, and inclusive.

Crucially, Science Connect does not operate in isolation. It forms part of a whole of degree WIL framework in which career development, professional identity formation, and reflective practice are embedded from first year through to graduation. This design supports equity by ensuring all students - not only those able to access placements - develop professional capability, confidence, and career clarity.

Evidence of impact is drawn from validated student surveys, longitudinal evaluation, graduate trajectories, and sustained industry re engagement. Results demonstrate significant gains in students' preparedness for work, professional confidence, and employability outcomes, alongside tangible benefits for partners, including research informed contributions to industry and local government practices.

This work contributes an evidence based, transferable model for scalable WIL in science, demonstrating how curriculum embedded, micro WIL and simulated consultancy approaches can deliver meaningful, equitable, and sustainable outcomes at scale.

Making WIL Visible Institutionally: Moving from Static Reporting to Embedded Analytics to Enable Transparency of WIL Quality, Impact and Risk Management at Scale

Yuki Kojima, Swinburne University

Co-Author:

Louise Gravina, Swinburne University

As Work Integrated Learning (WIL) expands across higher education, institutions face growing pressure to demonstrate impact, assure quality, meet compliance requirements, manage risk, and support equitable access—often without consistent or timely data. Common challenges include immature evaluation approaches, inconsistent data capture, fragmented systems, and unclear governance.

This presentation outlines the co-design, development and institutional rollout of a WIL Evaluation Framework, supported by automated WIL and Employability Power BI dashboards that enable evidence-based decision-making and strategic oversight at scale. Developed in partnership with academic staff, professional services, governance teams and industry stakeholders, the Framework and dashboards provide near real-time visibility of WIL activity and establish a shared data language aligned with policy and practice.

The approach supports monitoring of student participation, partner engagement, placement and project modalities, compliance status, and key equity indicators. This enables teams to identify trends, surface risks early, target support, and reduce manual reporting burden. The session explores core design principles usability, transparency and governance alignment alongside implementation challenges such as integrating multiple data sources, assuring data quality, and driving adoption across diverse faculties.

The presentation demonstrates how embedded analytics can shift WIL reporting from retrospective compliance to proactive planning, continuous improvement and risk mitigation, supporting sustainable growth of WIL opportunities. Attendees will gain practical insights into moving from static reporting to embedded analytics that inform operational, strategic and equity-focused decisions.

Linking Students to the Future of Agriculture through Multidisciplinary Team Placements

Karli Kollegger, The University of Queensland

Co-Authors:

Nidhi Bansal, The University of Queensland

Suresh Krishnasamy, The University of Queensland

This abstract introduces AgriSkills (AgConnections AGRC3060) course as a scalable, multidisciplinary Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) model addressing workforce and capability gaps in the agrifood sector. The initiative connects students from diverse disciplines including agribusiness, economics, biotechnology, engineering and science with industry through team-based, real-world placement projects. Unlike traditional individual placements, this model reflects contemporary workplace practice by embedding collaboration, systems thinking and cross-discipline problem-solving into authentic industry challenges.

Delivered as a credit-bearing course, the program integrates structured employability training, academic mentoring, and industry supervision, supported by dedicated industry liaison roles to ensure quality and consistency. Early outcomes demonstrate increased student confidence, clearer career pathways, and enhanced job readiness, alongside strong industry satisfaction and repeat engagement.

A key innovation lies in its accessibility and scalability including equity-focused supports (stipends, travel assistance, and inclusive participation frameworks) reduce barriers to WIL participation, while a reusable governance and delivery model enables expansion across cohorts and institutions.

The initiative also shifts employer perceptions of talent by highlighting the value of multidisciplinary teams rather than discipline-specific placements, strengthening workforce pipelines for a critical national industry. Designed for sustainability through curriculum integration and strong industry demand, this model offers a transferable framework for other sectors seeking to embed impactful, scalable WIL.

AgriSkills is not simply improving employability outcomes, it is redefining how universities build workforce pipelines for critical industries through scalable, equity-driven, work integrated learning.

**Building Professional Capabilities through Research-Based, Work-Integrated Learning:
The JCU Undergraduate Research Internship**

Amanda Krause, James Cook University

The James Cook University Undergraduate Research Internship (URI) is a research-based Work-Integrated Learning program designed to equip students with the capabilities required of healthcare professionals. The annual program pairs undergraduate students with staff-researchers based on their skill development and research area preferences. Paired samples t-tests performed pre-post program survey data indicated that URI participants rated their perceived confidence, communication skills, self-direction abilities, and critical thinking skills significantly higher after their participation compared to before taking part in the URI. Further, qualitative data indicates that the mentor-mentee relationship is fundamental to the observed growth in professional identity and confidence: students expressed that the URI provided a relationship that broadened their network and made future possibilities real, with confidence transferring from mentors to students. By engaging in real-world research, the URI breaks down discipline participation hurdles and shifts students' perceptions about the value of research skills to their professional careers. The student-participants gain not only an appreciation for research but also the skills and identity needed to work as a healthcare professional. The URI offers a template for designing research-based WIL programs, with implications to improve practices in the broader, tertiary healthcare sciences education space designed to support developing undergraduate students' graduate competencies and professional identities.

Evaluating Scalable WIL: Insights from a Centralised Multidisciplinary Subject

Clare Lade, La Trobe University

Delivering a successful Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experience requires the coordinated involvement of multiple stakeholders and is underpinned by effective collaboration and communication, shared responsibility, robust curriculum design, and efficient operational processes (Ferns et al., 2025). However, scaling WIL programs introduces additional complexities, including constraints in staff resourcing, challenges in sourcing and matching placements, risk management and compliance requirements, and the need for adaptable and sustainable curriculum design. In response to these challenges, and as part of a broader university employability strategy, a centralised undergraduate industry placement subject was designed and delivered for the first time in Semester 1, 2026. This subject aims to extend students' formal academic learning by integrating a work placement experience with self-reflection academic activities which focus on developing self-efficacy and enabling the application and enhancement of employability skills. The ongoing success of WIL programs depends on systematic processes of review, evaluation, and improvement. This subject incorporates an evaluation framework that spans the pre-placement, during-placement, and post-placement phases to ensure both immediate effectiveness and long-term relevance (Billet, 2011; Campbell et al., 2014). Consideration is also made to the differing levels of educational outcomes within this evaluation (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2007). This paper presents key insights and lessons learned from the initial implementation of the subject, alongside preliminary findings from its evaluation, contributing to emerging knowledge on scalable and sustainable WIL practice.

UK Case Studies: Towards Guaranteed Industry Experience

Beau Leese, Practera

Co-Author:

Katrina Greig, Practera

Increasing numbers of UK Universities have high profile strategic goals to make industry experience for all a reality. Careers Registration data from UK universities over more than a decade shows that work experience within the curriculum significantly increases the likelihood of graduate employment.

So, a key question is: how are institutions moving from strategic goals to reality? Rather than considering work-based learning (WBL) as a blanket approach, how can we create differentiated - yet scalable- institutional work-based learning strategies rooted in the benefits we aim to provide?

Practera works with >30 UK Universities on delivering customised, authentic industry experience to a greater proportion of students within curriculum through online projects. In this session, Practera will give insights on 6 case studies illustrating approaches operating at large scale;

1. University of Leeds 8-week capstone projects for Engineering & Physical Sciences postgraduate students
2. University of Roehampton 24-week “Professional Year” postgraduate offer featuring skills modules, simulated and authentic industry projects
3. University of East London embedding transdisciplinary 2-week industry projects as part of UEL’s ‘Work-based learning for All’ strategy.
4. University of Greenwich embedding faculty aligned undergraduate 4-week group challenge projects for final year undergraduate and first year postgraduate students in a new common module
5. City St-Georges University offering industry projects + related independent research as alternatives for 60-credit research dissertations
6. SOAS University of London offering 8-week international policy & sustainable development projects as dissertation alternatives

Supporting the Whole Learner: Relational and Psychological Considerations in WIL Pedagogy

Luella Leon, RMIT University

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) offers students the invaluable opportunity to develop skills and apply learning while building a professional identity. However, WIL activities can also pose emotional and relational challenges that may compromise student safety and well-being. This presentation introduces an approach based on attachment theory and early maladaptive schemas (EMS) to explore how WIL pedagogy can support the whole learner, focusing on safety and well-being.

Attachment theory and EMS influence responses to various triggers and are associated with psychopathology. In Australia, almost 40% of people aged 16-24 experience mental health conditions (ABS, 2023), and dropout rates among undergraduate students are linked to mental health (40.9%) and stress (42.3%) (QILT, 2025). Thus, practices that support safety and well-being are essential.

This session explores how internalised beliefs and relational dynamics influence individuals' responses to factors such as feedback, autonomy, pressure, and supervision. The focus is on cultivating awareness of behavioural patterns and emotional responses to foster inclusive practices that create a secure learning environment.

By emphasising psychologically informed approaches, this session invites WIL coordinators, educators, and program designers to reimagine WIL not just as a space for skill development, but also as an environment for relational growth and psychological resilience in a supportive and safe manner.

A Scalable Industry-Integrated Work-Integrated Learning Model

Faisal Lodi, La Trobe University

Co-Authors:

Clare Lade, La Trobe University

Kerry Nixon, La Trobe University

Dean Merlino, La Trobe University

Rachael Baron, La Trobe University

Presented is the design and implementation of industry project-based learning subject, a multidisciplinary work-integrated learning (WIL) curriculum model developed to strengthen employability, career readiness, and lifelong learning capabilities through professional industry engagement. Positioned within the context of increasing demand for adaptable graduate capabilities, the subject responds to the urgent need for innovative WIL pedagogies that integrate disciplinary knowledge with professional practice in flexible but professional and scalable learning environments (Mabungela and Mtiki 2024).

In this subject, six to eight students from diverse disciplines work collaboratively in a team on industry-defined challenges provided by external organisations. Each project problem's scope is thoughtfully expanded and scaffolded, guided by academic supervisors. Project type ranges from inefficient workflow in a small to medium enterprises (SME)-to-artificial intelligence (AI) augmentation in a well-established organisation-to-sustainability challenges in a biodiversity/environmental organisation and many others.

Several pedagogical innovations included in the subject are skill assessment tool (SAT), SMART goal setting, reflective writing, pitch presentations, project report and sustained academic - industry partnerships. The subject combines asynchronous learning with interactive synchronous seminars, industry masterclasses, project management training, and structured industry engagement. Academics work closely with students having accessibility and inclusivity requirements. Students engage in professional communication, ethics, teamwork, and client-focused solution development while producing tangible deliverables for industry, ensuring strong alignment between learning outcomes and workplace expectations (Jackson 2024).

Using a Service-Learning Framework through a Community Internships Course to Cultivate Graduates Capable of Envisioning a Sustainable Future through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Charmaine Logan-Fleming, Griffith University

Co-Author:

Jennifer Boddy, Griffith University

This presentation explores how a service learning (SL) approach within a work integrated learning (WIL) internship course can mobilise students for lifelong learning and sustained career development. Drawing on the Community Internship and Partnerships for SDGs course at Griffith University, the presentation demonstrates how structured, purpose driven partnerships with non profit organisations (NFPs) create transformational learning experiences that extend students' professional capabilities, career readiness and ongoing civic engagement.

Grounded in Education for Sustainability and the GreenComp sustainability competence framework, the course embeds real world community engagement, critical reflection and future focused assessment design. These elements support students to develop transferable employability skills and problem solving, while deepening students understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

The presentation suggests that by analysing feedback from interviews with students and supervisors, higher education institutions (HEIs) can evaluate the influence of internship experiences on students' awareness of the UNSDGs. The framework proposed offers a comprehensive view of students' understanding of the UNSDGs at stages throughout their internship, highlighting changes in their awareness and engagement with sustainable practices. Integrating SL within a WIL framework in partnership with the NFP sector has proven transformative, enhancing both student learning and community impact with five key areas identified.

This case study offers a scalable model for universities seeking to embed UNSDG into curriculum through impactful community engaged partnerships

Was it Worth it?: A Four-Year Transition to a Centralised Placement Model

Adrian Low, James Cook University

As universities face increasing pressure to deliver high-quality, industry-aligned student experiences at scale, the need for a sustainable and centrally coordinated placements model has become increasingly clear. This presentation outlines the four-year operational journey of transitioning from a decentralised, college-based structure to a unified, university-wide placements ecosystem at James Cook University.

The session will reflect on the lessons learned throughout this transformation, including navigating cultural change, building trust with academic / college teams, and sustaining strong industry relationships during a period of significant structural shift. It will also explore the implementation of key operational initiatives such as developing a clear service catalogue, undertaking comprehensive process mapping and redesign, introducing robotic process automation, delivering systems enhancements, benchmarking against sector standards, and establishing robust measurement tools.

Measurable outcomes will be presented to demonstrate the impact of centralisation on cost efficiency, compliance, workload distribution, and overall service quality. Evidence highlights reduced administrative burden, increased consistency and compliance, improved risk management, and enhanced visibility across placement activity - ultimately enabling staff to redirect effort toward high-value activities and student support.

Participants will gain practical insights and key lessons learned from the process of transitioning to a central placements model. This session offers a candid reflection on what worked, what didn't, and what others can take forward in shaping their own decisions about the value of centralised placement services.

MBA Capstone Journey: Agency through AI-Led Innovation and Futureproofing

Milind Mandlik, Auckland University of Technology

Mobilising students to become lifelong learners more than anything else through this work-integrated learning pathway, the MBA capstone project at the university serves as the definitive benchmark for professional transformation. Positioned at the end of the degree pathway, this project enables students to gain a solid, high-impact experience that bridges the gap between senior-level study and the complexities of the global market (Gribble, Blackmore, & Rahimi, 2015). The experience shifts from a mere academic requirement to a profound narrative of personal agency, where students feel fully in control of their professional trajectory (Smith-Ruig, 2014).

As they spent six months embedded within key organisations, students were encouraged to move beyond traditional boundaries by adopting a sophisticated, critical engagement with artificial intelligence. Rather than being hamstrung by the technology or utilising it to produce conventional outcomes, these practitioners deconstruct the norms of how AI is applied (Tasneem, Azhar, & Ambatipudi, 2025). By resisting repetitive, status-quo responses, students learned to challenge the tool through iterative, narrative-driven prompting. This involved constructing complex stories and exploring outlandish or high-risk ideas to provoke the AI, eventually uncovering innovative solutions that neither the student nor the client might have considered during the project's initial briefing stages.

This pedagogical approach fostered a deep sense of entrepreneurial control and creative resilience. By constantly deconstructing and reconstructing narratives, students learned to navigate the uncertainty of modern markets. The capstone thus became a rigorous training ground for risk-taking and for disrupting the status quo. Ultimately, this culmination provided students with tangible evidence of their capacity for innovation, ensuring they emerge as agile learners and leaders ready to turn technological disruption into a strategic advantage (Kuchimanchi & Mahesh, 2025).

Can AI-Supported Patient Simulations Better Prepare EAL Students for Clinical Placements? Preliminary Findings from a Multi-Discipline Study

Amna C. Mazeh, Monash University

Co-Authors:

Emily Stokes, Monash University

Lisa Barker, Monash University

Joel Moore, Monash University

Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) face communication challenges when transitioning to work-integrated learning (WIL) placements. AI-supported patient simulations are a promising avenue for equitable preparation, providing low-stakes, repeatable practice. This study-in-progress evaluates the impact of ATLAS, an AI-supported patient simulation platform, on communication confidence and placement readiness across three healthcare disciplines.

A mixed-methods design was embedded across pharmacy, nutrition and physiotherapy units at Monash University. Students engaged in clinical conversations with educator-designed virtual patients and received real-time feedback. Scenarios were tailored to each discipline's clinical contexts. Pre- and post-simulation surveys measured communication confidence (13 items), placement readiness (10 items) and platform user experience (12 items), each rated on a 5-point scale (internal reliability $\alpha=0.82$ to 0.94). Paired pre- and post-survey change was analysed using t-tests and Cohen's d .

Of 203 pharmacy pre-survey respondents, 77 completed matched pre- and post-surveys, with nutrition and physiotherapy data collection ongoing. Free-text responses revealed distinct starting points where EAL students described concerns centred on language mechanics, while native English speakers focused on clinical content. Communication confidence rose significantly across all 13 items (mean $+0.34/5$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.47$), with the largest gains in professional introductions, handling difficult conversations and explaining complex information. Perceived placement readiness also improved ($+0.19$, $p=0.001$, $d=0.38$). EAL students showed larger confidence gains ($+0.49$, $d=0.54$) than native English speakers ($+0.21$, $d=0.44$), suggesting greater relative benefit. Students rated the platform positively (mean $3.68/5$), with three-quarters valuing it as a safe space to practise and make mistakes.

These early findings offer insight into how AI-supported simulation can support equitable, inclusive WIL preparation across healthcare disciplines, with particular benefit for linguistically diverse students.

Host Readiness Model: Improving Quality Partner Engagement in STEM

Sophie McKenzie, Deakin University

Co-Author:

Karen Young, Deakin University

A workplace-based placement (P-WIL) has become increasingly common in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), wherein the university and the educator(s) typically engage a host/supervisor to support a student as they learn-to-work and work-to-learn. The host-student-institutional partnership triad involves a complex set of roles, responsibilities and expectations for the educator to direct. Three independent (but related) research studies (Refreshed Quality WIL Standards, OER: STEM Host Guide and IT HOST Readiness Model) all observed a need to improve how hosts might effectively navigate the liminal learning-working partnership spaces where formal curricula and real-world professional experiences co-exist. To enhance the host engagement, this study focuses on the discipline of Information Technology, showcasing a set of resources (i.e. products and processes) necessary for both supporting, and reporting on, the quality of partnered P-WIL learning. In our collective, stakeholder-wide approach to the design of a Host Readiness Model, a co-design methodology became fundamental to the addressing the research frame: (a) What are IT educators' expectations for designing and enabling successful placement outcomes? (b) What are IT hosts' expectations for supporting students in demonstrating professional, personal and organisational goals? and (c) How is placement supervisor readiness for hosting a quality WIL placement best facilitated? This showcase presents the key findings which point to the need for a revised means for tackling host readiness - a concise and pragmatic model, guided by the university (educators) to enable alignment of expectations, requirements and outcomes related to the learning-working space where formal curricula and real-world professional experiences co-exist. While the study presents IT-centric data and IT expert insights, the findings relating to the co-design approach to the Host Readiness Model shine a light on the specific resources that attend to the paucity of practice-led STEM approaches to hosting.

**It's Not the Social Work Placement that Matters:
It's the WIL You Do that Counts**

Helen McLaren, Australian Catholic University

Co-Authors:

Emi Patmisari, Australian Catholic University

Sonia Martin, Australian Catholic University

Social work field education is governed by a stubborn discourse: that certain settings constitute "real" placements, and everything else is second-rate. This discourse is not only wrong, but actively harmful. It constrains innovation precisely when workforce pressures and placement scarcity demand bold responses.

We report on a WIL Australia-funded qualitative study involving five focus groups with 23 Australian social work academics and WIL coordinators. Participants shared experiences of placements in community gardens, men's sheds, funeral homes, food cooperatives, environmental justice organisations, animal rescue services, and beyond. The study examined what makes these placements succeed, fail, and what they offer in WIL that traditional settings often cannot.

Findings challenge the legitimacy of the traditional/non-traditional binary itself. Students in so-called unusual settings do not inherit a pre-built professional role, so they need to think, reflect, and actively construct one. This produces deeper theoretical integration and stronger professional identity formation than many conventional placements can achieve. Critically, the rigour required to justify non-traditional placements is simultaneously raising quality assurance standards across all placement types, which inverts the assumption these placements lower the bar.

The paper presents an evidence-informed qualitative success-measures framework alongside practical tools including dual supervision models and placement profiles. Applicable across disciplines and institutional contexts, these tools reframe the central question: not whether non-traditional placements are good enough, but whether the profession is ready to recognise the social work that has always been happening beyond its traditional walls.

Good WIL: Hunting for Purpose-Led Learning in a Local Government Case Study

Sue Meares, University of the Sunshine Coast

Co-Authors:

Anthony Bedford, University of the Sunshine Coast

Rania Shibl, University of the Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) Student Capstone Projects is a pilot program highlighting a regional council - university partnership embedding work-integrated learning (WIL) within a local government setting. Having mentored and supervised work experience students and interns over 25 years in corporate roles delivering various IT and business solutions, including a short period in local government, and now as a mature-age postgraduate student who also teaches business and IT subjects at university, this research offers a 360-degree opportunity to reflect on my experiences of WIL and how student skills development for the future workplace can be better supported.

The research primarily aims to observe and explore emergent themes from this specific WIL context while developing the scaffolding and learning structures that may enhance student career readiness and enthusiasm for purpose-led work supporting local and regional communities. SCC is a local government organisation focused on delivering community services and facilities to support regional sustainability and liveability priorities. Internally, SCC is restructuring its talent strategy to better support early-in-career hiring over the longer term in response to an increasingly digital service landscape. While this WIL context may not be entirely unique, this research and case study provide a novel perspective by focusing on the collaborative and co-designed nature of the program, analysed through Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as the initial theoretical framework to review student learning outcomes and perceived performance. The pilot's results thus far form a positive basis for expanding the WIL program across various council business functions through 2026, and create an opportunity for further research.

More Than a Placement: Co-Designing Reciprocal WIL Partnerships with Small Psychology Practices

Ellie Meissner, University of Southern Queensland

Co-Author:

Samantha Brown, University of Southern Queensland

Work-integrated learning (WIL) in postgraduate psychology depends on the sustained goodwill of host organisations. Yet the burden of supervision falls disproportionately on host practitioners, many of whom operate in small practices with limited time and capacity. When reciprocity is absent, when hosts give without receiving partnership sustainability is at risk.

This presentation introduces a co-design approach to WIL partnership development, grounded in the authors' dual roles as externship coordinator, organisational psychologist and clinician. Drawing on co-design methodology and WIL partnership literature, a conceptual framework is proposed that repositions the host organisation as a genuine co-designer of the placement experience, rather than a recipient of students.

The framework developed in the context of postgraduate psychology programs at the University of Southern Queensland attends specifically to the constraints of small practice settings. A co-design process is described that privileges the host voice without placing unreasonable demands on host time. Reciprocal value exchange is made explicit, including workforce pipeline benefits, access to current evidence-based practice, professional development through supervision, and strengthened university-practice relationships.

Implications for WIL coordinators and host organisations are discussed. The presentation argues that sustainable WIL in psychology requires a structural shift from placement coordination to genuine partnership design and that co-design methodology offers a practical and theoretically grounded pathway to achieve this.

Scaling Authentic WIL through Live Client Consulting Projects in Online Higher Education

Abd Moh'd, Swinburne University & Online Education Services

Co-Author:

Ruth Delagas, Online Education Services

As demand for online education grows, scaling authentic Work Integrated Learning (WIL) raises a critical question: how can institutions expand access to WIL without compromising quality in an increasingly AI-driven learning environment? Swinburne Online's Business Consulting Project capstone unit addresses this challenge by engaging final-year students in multidisciplinary teams to deliver solutions for industry clients. This learning model requires students to apply their disciplinary knowledge under industry constraints, building critical thinking and adaptability required in their careers.

The integration of Assurance of Learning (AoL) frameworks within the design and delivery of the unit is a key feature of the model. In an increasingly AI-enabled learning environment, the framework adopts a connected assurance approach combining pedagogical design and evidence-based evaluation of student performance to support quality assurance and academic judgement at scale. Through aligned assessment design, client engagement, and cumulative evidence of learning, student capability becomes visible over time rather than relying on isolated assessment artefacts. Professional identity development is further supported through client engagement, an Industry Discussion Panel facilitated by the Institute of Management Consultants (IMC), and the Consultancy Excellence Awards.

This model demonstrates how authentic online WIL can be scaled while supporting graduate employability, quality assurance, and confidence in student outcomes.

City of Newcastle's Future Fit Internship Program

Melissa Moore, Newcastle City Council

Co-Authors:

Andrea Cassin, University of Newcastle

John Schjenken, University of Newcastle

Kathy Mee, University of Newcastle

Lizette Olivier, University of Newcastle

Industry hosts are increasingly challenged to provide high quality Work Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences at scale, while balancing organisational capacity, supervisory load and student need. The City of Newcastle's Future Fit Internship Program is offering a scalable and sustainable, industry led WIL model that responds through authentic workplace experience and a multi-disciplinary learning program.

Developed to align with the University of Newcastle's Career-ready Placement requirements and the City's strategic workforce objectives, the program enables multidisciplinary cohorts of students to complete a 140 hour placement within a resource tight environment. A distinctive hybrid structure distributes learning responsibilities between discipline specific workplace hosts and the central Workforce Development Team, preserving authentic, work based learning outcomes while easing supervisory load.

From an industry perspective, scalability is achieved through shared onboarding processes and multi disciplinary group learning covering employability skills, corporate capability building and Human Centred Design. Central coordination strengthens sustainability by ensuring governance compliance, meeting quality assurance and providing support across intakes. The program also deepens industry-university engagement, broadens access to future workforce talent through strengthening employer brand, and positions embedded WIL workforce development as a shared civic responsibility.

Early insights from the 2025 and 2026 offerings indicate strong organizational value and positive student outcomes. The authors argue that the FutureFit Internship Program provides a replicable blueprint for employers seeking to embed WIL as a scalable, sustainable workforce development strategy rather than a series of isolated placements.

**From Concept to Cross-Disciplinary Practice:
A Scalable Blueprint for On-Campus Professional Clinics**

Annette Morgan, Curtin University

This presentation examines the development and impact of a scalable, discipline-embedded Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) model originating from Curtin University's early adoption of a practice-based clinic structure. Initially implemented within taxation, the key innovation lies in the creation of a robust pedagogical and operational blueprint that has since been successfully transferred across multiple business disciplines.

The model positions students as active practitioners within an on-campus professional service environment, supported by industry-qualified supervisors and authentic client engagements. It integrates reflective learning, ethical decision-making, and applied problem-solving, providing a richer learning experience than traditional classroom teaching or standalone internships.

The blueprint has been adapted to establish Accounting, Marketing, and Commerce Clinics, each tailored to its professional context while retaining a consistent architecture of authenticity, inclusion, and community impact. Core features include standardised client intake and case management processes, structured academic scaffolding around professional tasks, and sustained partnerships with industry and community stakeholders.

Drawing on outcomes across multiple clinics, the presentation demonstrates clear impact through increased student confidence, workplace readiness, and ethical reasoning, strengthened industry engagement, expanded access to WIL for equity and international cohorts, and the delivery of meaningful services to diverse community groups. Together, these outcomes position the clinic blueprint as a sustainable, replicable model for embedding high-impact, practice-based learning at scale while advancing universities' civic and educational missions.

Life and Career Design at UTS: A Design and Impact Study

Beate Mueller, University of Technology Sydney

This case study introduces a learning and teaching innovation in the form of a UTS-wide open undergraduate elective that focuses solely on students' employability learning. The subject, *Designing Your Future*, is based on the Stanford University Life Design principles, paired with a creative transdisciplinary approach. It guides students through activities that encourage them to reflect on their life and career goals and implement steps to turn these into actionable outcomes. The subject fills an important gap in the WIL curriculum for many students, as it is often taken either alongside placement WIL experiences or in preparation for internships or graduate roles. It helps students make greater sense of their WIL experiences by centring their voices and aspirations.

As a multidisciplinary, non-placement WIL subject, it incorporates various WIL elements such as career prototyping, internship simulations, networking, job boards, guest speakers and panels, and employability development reflections. It also introduces a research innovation in the form of ongoing career consultations with students that encourage WIL activities and reflective practice.

Results from a longitudinal study of former students show that the subject positively influenced their thinking about WIL and careers, as well as their confidence and action orientation. Consistent with the intentions of the Life Design approach, students continue to apply many of the activities and strategies learned in the subject into their futures.

The presentation will include a short Life Design demonstration in which participants are encouraged to take part.

Using an Escape Room to Prepare Students for Work Integrated Learning

Patricia Muncey, University of South Australia

Co-Authors:

Michele Jarldorn, Adelaide University

Sophia Booi, Adelaide University

Susie Emery, Adelaide University

Morgan Titherage, Adelaide University

Benjamin Bull, Adelaide University

Zahra Nairne, Adelaide University

While there is an established body of research about the benefits, challenges and innovations around WIL, less is known about how we prepare students for WIL, or innovative pedagogical approaches to do this. In our Bachelor of Social Work Course, Preparation for Field Placement, students are expected to learn and apply the 9 social work practice standards and complete a range of placement pre-requisites before they are eligible to start placement.

Some of the WIL pre-requisite information is technical, so we wondered if using a physical escape room could provide a challenging, cooperative and engaging method to support successful transitions into WIL. Escape rooms are live-action team-based games, where players encounter challenges to complete a mission in a limited amount of time. Escape rooms use a variety of puzzles and games, including hidden object searches, logic puzzles, word games, code puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, and more.

Physical escape rooms encourage and promote cooperation and teamwork. This way of learning has the potential to reduce students' anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed, while bringing an element of fun to their learning, while the process of working together to solve problems has the added benefit of developing students' soft skills. These soft skills transcend professional knowledge and demonstrate adaptability, improve communication and problem-solving abilities, all core aspects of social work practice. This interdisciplinary project was codesigned and co-delivered with students. In this session, we discuss the project development process, provide examples of feedback from students, and take attendees through one of the games.

**Co-Designing a Digital Partnership:
Using AI to Create a 24/7 Industry-Academia Collaboration**

Jeffrey Naqvi, The University of Sydney

Co-Authors:

Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl, The University of Sydney

Felicity Blackstock, The University of Sydney

As universities seek inclusive and authentic WIL, we present Ignatius - an AI-powered virtual industry partner co-designed by the University of Sydney and two non-profit organisations to extend industry engagement within university curricula.

Embedded in an interdisciplinary project-based WIL unit, Ignatius enabled 24/7 asynchronous collaboration between students, academia, and industry. The partnership model was designed to enhance participation and accessibility from content-building through to language usage to mirror the user base of undergraduate students. Rather than interact with industry only at synchronous intervals, students had a continual access to Ignatius to retrieve and analyse proprietary data, ideate potential solutions, obtain feedback, and interact with a virtual extension of an industry partner representative. Delivered as an online unit, students gained real-world exposure to remote working contexts in professional practice whilst also normalising AI as a learning scaffold.

Evidence from three stakeholder perspectives demonstrates tangible impact:

- * Industry partners observed: narrower, more targeted dialogue with students during scheduled touchpoints; a raised baseline knowledge about the organisation and its sector dynamics; and, noted an uplift in EAL student engagement in both AI and human interaction;
- * Student usage demonstrated sustained engagement, clearer understanding of project direction, increased receptiveness to interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as increased confidence interacting with industry representatives;
- * Academic educators defined the roles assumed by Ignatius by students, with AI augmenting real-time feedback loops, and enabling the possibility of mentorship at scale.

The case contributes an evidence-based model of a strategic, co-designed digital WIL partnership which strengthens industry-academia collaboration for improved stakeholder outcomes.

Supervisors to Super Coaches: Improving Learning in the Clinic

Bridget Naughton, Melbourne Polytechnic

Workplace learning is an important component of Veterinary Nursing education, with clinical supervisors playing a key role in supporting student learning experiences. The influence of supervising veterinarians and veterinary nurses on learning can vary significantly and be perceived by students as both positive and negative. This highlights the need for structured preparation and support for those in this role. Effective supervisors support the development of clinical skills and knowledge while also guiding students through less tangible aspects of practice, including professional socialisation and identity formation.

Evidence suggests that many clinical supervisors feel underprepared for the role and want more formal training and support. They also highlight a need for greater alignment and communication between educational institutions and clinical placement providers.

In response, Melbourne Polytechnic is developing a clinical coaching program designed to prepare veterinarians and veterinary nurses to effectively supervise students in clinical settings. This program focuses on building capability in communication, providing feedback and coaching strategies to support students develop clinical competencies. It also emphasises the role of supervisors in fostering professional identity formation through reflection and role modelling.

Importantly, the program incorporates strategies for early recognition and support of students experiencing challenges to their learning. Available to both veterinary nurses and veterinarians involved in student supervision, this initiative aims to enhance the quality and consistency of workplace learning, strengthening student outcomes in the clinical learning environment.

Designing Strategic WIL Partnerships for Sustainable Industry Engagement in STEM

Cynthia Nguyen, RMIT University

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is often framed as a discrete, placement based activity; however, when designed intentionally, it can function as the cornerstone of enduring, strategic industry partnerships. This case study presents a scalable partnership model in which WIL serves not as an endpoint, but as the entry point to a broader ecosystem of sustained engagement across STEM education and innovation.

Anchored in a structured yet adaptive engagement framework, the model enables industry partners to participate across a continuum of co designed activities, progressing from initial student projects or internships to deeper involvement in curriculum co development, mentoring, talent pipeline initiatives, and innovation focused collaborations. Central to the approach is a deliberate focus on mutual value, partner longevity, and equitable access, ensuring that engagement is responsive to varying organisational capacities while maintaining quality and consistency.

Practice based evidence highlights how this model strengthens employer pipelines, increases partner retention, and enhances curriculum relevance, while enabling students to engage with industry through multiple, authentic touchpoints. Importantly, it demonstrates how institutions can move beyond transactional interactions to build trusted, multi layered partnerships that evolve over time.

The presentation will outline key design principles, governance mechanisms, and partnership lifecycle strategies that support sustainable growth. It will also reflect on challenges in maintaining alignment, quality, and shared expectations at scale. Attendees will gain a practical, adaptable approach for repositioning WIL as strategic infrastructure for high impact, future focused industry collaboration.

Collaborating with Purpose: Creating Mutual Value for Students and Social Enterprises through Work-Integrated Learning

Linh Nguyen, UNSW Sydney

Co-Authors:

Estee Ch'ng, Western Sydney University

Seung Jung, UNSW Sydney

This presentation showcases a purpose-driven collaboration model demonstrating how intentionally designed Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) creates shared value for students and social enterprises within the Social Entrepreneurship Practicum at an Australian university. WIL integrates disciplinary theory with authentic, project-based experiences delivered in partnership with external organisations, enhancing student employability while addressing organisational needs (Ferns et al., 2025). Grounded in engaged scholarship (Van de Ven, 2007), the practicum embeds student teams in real-world challenges faced by social enterprises. Using an action research approach, students develop evidence-informed recommendations on issues such as social impact measurement, purpose-driven marketing, and social innovation. Through this process, students apply theory in practice while strengthening problem-solving, collaboration, and a social impact mindset. Course evaluation data demonstrates strong mutual value. Over 97% of surveyed students reported enhanced professional development through integrating academic knowledge with meaningful projects and community engagement. Social enterprises, in turn, value the students' practical recommendations for enhancing organisational performance and impact, as well as the opportunity to contribute to the development of future purpose-driven professionals.

**Partnering for Impact: A Transdisciplinary WIL
Model for International Collaboration in Higher Education**

Mark O'Dwyer, Torrens University

Co-Author:

Arianna Vignati, Torrens University

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) plays a vital role in enhancing the effectiveness of higher education curricula. Conventional WIL models are often discipline-specific, focusing on partnerships between educators and industry to provide workplace experience. This paper introduces a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) model that fuses transdisciplinary pedagogy with global collaboration, developed through a 2025 pilot between Torrens University Australia and the University of San Raffaele in Rome. Responding to the Taiwan International Student Design Competition (TISDC) theme of Diversity and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the initiative reframes WIL as a dynamic, cross-border digital learning ecosystem.

The study aims to critically reframe traditional practice-based WIL models within a transdisciplinary framework, emphasising the interconnected roles of students, lecturers, and industry partners. This model integrates Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) with an industry live brief, enabling students from multiple design disciplines to co-create solutions in a 12-week, three-phase process: design research, concept generation and iterative prototyping with user testing. The approach leverages synchronous international webinars, asynchronous team-based design sprints, and structured peer feedback loops to cultivate intercultural competence, creative inquiry, and real-world problem-solving.

This research posits a framework for conceptualising Work-integrated Learning (WIL) as a transdisciplinary model. It argues that the international digital learning ecosystem enhances student engagement, thereby strengthening lecturers' competencies.

Scaling WIL for All: Building a Multi-Stream Career-Ready Graduate Ecosystem in a Regional Business School

Lizette Olivier, The University of Newcastle

Co-Author:

Van Le, The University of Newcastle

Delivering credit-bearing Work Integrated Learning for every undergraduate student is an ambitious commitment, particularly in a large, discipline-diverse business school where many students are not attached to professionally accredited placement pathways. At Newcastle Business School, this commitment has driven a rapid scale-up from strategic intent to an evidence-informed Career-Ready Graduate ecosystem designed to preserve quality, equity, academic alignment and regional industry value.

The model integrates industry placements, external laboratories and clinics, industry-led project laboratories, recognition of prior professional experience, start-up placements and international work placements. It is supported by more than 490 student interviews, staged allocation processes, structured host recruitment, partner tiering, student surveys, industry feedback, teaching and learning review, common assessments, reflective practice and professional identity development.

This showcase presents the design, implementation and early impact of the model for students, industry partners, Newcastle Business School and the region. In 2026, the Industry-Led Project Laboratory recorded 168 enrolments, 100% completion, a Course Experience Survey quality of learning score of 4.8 compared with the University mean of 4.3, and 96.7% Excellent or Good responses. Student survey evidence showed 89.2% rated the experience Excellent or Very Good, 94.1% reported knowledge gain, 91.2% reported personal and professional development, and 86.3% felt more confident entering the workforce.

Participants will gain practical insights into scalable Work Integrated Learning design, regional partnership development and evidence-informed continuous improvement.

From AI Hesitation to WIL Integration

Lynda O'Sullivan, Deakin University

Co-Author:

Karen Young, Deakin University

The integration of generative AI into professional environments presents both opportunities and challenges for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). This case study examines a structured approach to embedding reflective AI literacy in two WIL models: a foundational WIL unit and a suite of placement-based WIL preparation modules. Both models aim to prepare students for successful WIL placements, including now the increasing need to prepare students with the use of and ethical applications for AI in the workplace.

The intervention includes three components: 1). The design of a fit for purpose AI agent (Cogniti) to support placement-related queries (i.e. FAQ content); 2) modelling and guidance of appropriate generative AI prompting to support students in the production of their career development assessments (i.e LinkedIn summaries); and 3). Use of an AI guide embedded in a task to promote ethical, regulatory, and professional considerations relevant to workplace contexts. The curricula was co-created with experts to ensure the emerging technology aligned with curriculum standards and workplace practices.

Early analyses reveal an increase in student confidence in engaging with AI in these WIL models. Students are articulating professional identity, enhancing their evaluative judgement, and strengthening their awareness of ethical and workplace accountability as a result of the intervention. By preparing students to engage responsibly in AI-mediated work environments, the intervention provides a scalable approach to embedding generative AI into WIL models so as to prepare and support students in their professional practices and judgements, thus enhancing their lifelong learning and their graduate employability.

Supporting Host Supervisors through Universal Design for Learning Informed WIL Resources

Anne Ozdowska, The Australian National University

Co-Author:

Penny Kyburz, The Australian National University

Host supervisors play a pivotal role in shaping the quality of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences, yet many hosts receive little structured guidance on how to support students, particularly those with diverse learning needs. This presentation introduces a practical resource developed to equip host supervisors with inclusive supervision strategies informed by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.

A one-page infographic and series timed host emails was developed to scaffold guidance for hosts across the three phases of the placement lifecycle: before (setting the stage), during (scaffolding and support), and after (building and reflecting). Rather than requiring supervisors to identify or diagnose student needs, the scaffolds reframe inclusion as simply good supervisory practice, enabling hosts to proactively communicate expectations, offer environmental flexibility, value diverse contributions, and create psychological safety for students to ask questions and engage fully.

Grounded in UDL's commitment to reducing barriers through design rather than individual accommodation, this resources are intended to be low-burden and immediately actionable for business, government, and community hosts across sectors. These resources position inclusive supervision not as an add-on, but as a quality baseline for all placements.

This pecha kucha presentation will share the development rationale, walk through the infographic's key guidance and implementation considerations, and invite reflection on how universities can better equip host partners to support diverse student cohorts, ultimately improving access, equity, and meaningful participation in WIL.

Transforming Pharmacy Student Placements through Mystery Shopping: A Mixed Methods Retrospective Evaluation of Student Experiences and Perspectives

Jessica Pace, The University of Sydney

Co-Authors:

Michael Nguyen, The University of Sydney

Claire L. O'Reilly, The University of Sydney

Jocelyn Bussing, The University of Sydney

Jack C. Collins, The University of Sydney

Rebekah J. Moles, The University of Sydney

Carl Schneider, The University of Sydney

Irene S. Um, The University of Sydney

Background: Mystery shopping is an innovative form of WIL where students play the role of a patient or carer and actively engage with pharmacy staff to support their learning. This study aimed to explore mystery shopping as an educational tool for pharmacy students by analysing the activities and experiences of second year undergraduate pharmacy students completing a compulsory mystery shopping activity (MYSSA).

Method: Working in pairs, students developed a plan outlining the main health topic alongside a script to converse with the pharmacist and undertook two mystery shopping visits in two different pharmacies of their choosing. They submitted a video log (VLOG) discussing their experiences after each visit and a written reflection on their experiences after completing both visits.

A mixed method approach was used to analyse student assignments for the 2025 cohort. Student plans (n=298) for each mystery shopping visit were obtained, de-identified, and data extracted to characterise student activities such as pharmacy location, condition and type of requests. A 30% sample (n=86) of post-visit reflective statements were analysed via reflexive thematic analysis to provide an in-depth exploration of students' experiences of the mystery shopping activity.

Results: Four key themes were identified: (i) The Gap Between Ideal and Real Pharmacy Practice, (ii) Environmental and Systemic Pressures, (iii) Importance of Structured Frameworks in Patient-Centred Communication, and (iv) Development of Professional Identity.

Conclusion: Our results show that mystery shopping provides students with a new perspective on pharmacy practice, experiencing healthcare from a patient perspective, and learning from pharmacist-patient interactions; students find mystery shopping valuable for their future professional development. We provide a case study to inform the development of feasible, scalable, and innovative WIL activities which allow students to view interactions with health professionals from the perspective of the consumer, across a range of disciplines.

This work was funded by a WIL Australia ECR Research Grant.



Design Considerations to Support Students' First Time Experiences on Placement

Nicola Parkin, Flinders University

Co-Author:

Kim Pearce, Flinders University

A student's first time experience is one that carries a special charge for the student and influences their future practice decisions. In this presentation, we report on a qualitative study which examined the phenomenon of the "first time experience" as an important feature of a complex rural clinical student placement. The setting for the study was a student-led allied health clinic within an Aboriginal Wellbeing Centre: the Riverland Interprofessional Student Placement Program (RISPP), located in rural South Australia.

In this study we examined students' exit interviews using reflexive thematic analysis to identify themes that pertained to new cultural and clinical realities, new integrative practices, and new personal insights. We then applied a secondary phenomenological analysis to the findings to identify the underlying conceptual structures of these experiences, unlocking fresh new possibilities for rural clinical placement design. Anchoring these concepts in the literature, we highlighted the simple yet powerful qualities of humility, possibility, imagination, invitation and insight as design doorways supporting openness and the "beautiful risk" of education (Biesta, 2015).

These findings are starting places for bigger conversations that educators, placement program managers, students and community can have about how we might best support students' personal and professional first time experiences, so that the first time is supported, and has a "next time".

Interaction, Engagement and Purpose: Building a Better World through Interdisciplinary Community-Based WIL

Heather Pate, Edith Cowan University

In response to government requirements to meet the employability needs of graduating students, Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of social and cultural capital have been employed as a useful lens to help improve individual students' opportunities to be accepted as peripheral members of their professional community. Tomlinson's (2017) model of employability capital being particularly influential. Although frequently overlooked, Bourdieu's (1977) linguistic capital can also be added to the personal capital a student can develop to help gain access, mobility and legitimacy (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021). While this focus on developing students' capital is important, so too is ensuring that students build capacity to collaborate with others to generate ideas and share unique perspectives for continued growth in society and industry (Ling & Livingston, 2024). Likewise, UNESCO (2016) has called for universities to work with others to build capacity to help solve complex global problems locally, nationally and internationally. This presentation will discuss findings and recommendations from a longitudinal study of undergraduate students majoring in biology. While students in this study built linguistic capital throughout their degree, particularly after having completed a WIL placement, so did they develop a sense of in-group/out-group with other students from other disciplines (Hogg & Reid, 2006). To improve student interaction and engagement with groups of people outside the discipline community, this presentation will discuss how taking an interdisciplinary inquiry-based approach with opportunities to work with members of the community, may help students build collaboration skills beyond their own discipline.

Designing Whole-of-Community Infrastructure for Sustainable Rural Placements

Larissa Pearce, DVE Business Solutions

Co-Author:

Mellissa Kruger, Adelaide University

Rural connection, governance, data visibility and the relationships that hold these elements together. placements are often described as agreements between universities and placement providers. In practice, sustainable rural WIL depends on a much broader, place-based infrastructure: accommodation, local services, supervision, student support, digital access, travel, community.

This work-in-progress case study explores Adelaide University Rural Health's approach to strengthening the infrastructure that enables sustainable rural placements across dispersed sites, disciplines and communities. Following the creation of Adelaide University, AURH is bringing together previously separate rural health teams, systems and ways of working while continuing to support students across medicine, nursing, allied health and other rural learning contexts.

Early discovery work has highlighted that student experience and workforce outcomes are shaped by far more than placement allocation alone. Students need safe accommodation, reliable technology, timely local support, clear orientation, access to community, responsive escalation pathways and staff who understand the realities of each rural location. At the same time, staff need consistent processes, role clarity, governance and systems that support local delivery while preserving the place-based knowledge, relationships and flexibility that rural placements depend on.

The presentation will share emerging lessons from AURH's operating model work, including how rural placement infrastructure can be made visible, coordinated and scalable without losing the local relationships that make rural placements meaningful. It will invite participants to consider how institutions can design rural WIL models that support students, communities, staff and future workforce outcomes as an interconnected system.

**The Healthy Choices Health Coaching Service:
Developing the Skills of Future Health Professionals**

Dannielle Post, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Caroline Fryer, Adelaide University

Kate Redden, Adelaide University

Susan Hillier, Adelaide University

Adelaide University's Healthy Choices Program is a student-delivered health coaching service that develops the professional skills of future health professionals, in a multidisciplinary, community-facing environment. Underpinned by a critical enabling pedagogical approach, students receive online and in-person training that incorporates motivational interviewing, goal setting, and behaviour change techniques, and is intended to develop students' skills in communication and health education.

Students work in interdisciplinary pairs, supporting positive health-related behaviour change for individual clients, who are community members living with, or at risk of, chronic disease. Students work alongside clients, applying health coaching, care navigation, and social prescription to support clients' increased knowledge of their chronic conditions; to set and achieve attainable health-related and behaviour change goals; to increase health literacy and build capacity to access relevant services and supports; and to improve health outcomes. Weekly sessions with clients are 45 minutes long, over a 12-week period, delivered in person, online or by phone.

Since 2021, 1,618 sessions have been delivered to 185 clients. 150 students have completed placements of up to 150 hours duration in the program, representing disciplines including Public Health, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Nutrition, and Human Movement. Statistically significant results have been identified for clients' activation and quality of life, with more than 90% client satisfaction - reflective of the positive impact of the students delivering this program. Evaluation of students' experiences suggests placement in the program strongly contributes to skill development and increased confidence, as well as a sense of value through contributing to clients' health and wellbeing.

Designing a Scalable Multidisciplinary WIL Model for Interprofessional Clinical Education: Challenges and Insights from a Case Study

Kalpana Raghunathan, La Trobe University

Co-Authors:

Lisa McKenna, La Trobe University

Jenny Davis, La Trobe University

Natalie Blinman, La Trobe University

Gabrielle Hurren, Northern Health

Annabel Milonas, Northern Health

Penny Ramsden, Northern Health

Sarah Hart, La Trobe University

Matthew Oates, La Trobe University

Regina Belski, La Trobe University

Sharon Bourke, La Trobe University

Peter Brack, Northern Health

Background: Preparing health students for collaborative, team-based care requires more than simulated learning, it requires authentic, situated learning experiences in clinical environments. Yet, most interprofessional practice education (IPE) often remains confined to discipline-specific academic settings. This pilot project responds to that gap by co-designing a work-integrated learning (WIL) model that embeds structured interprofessional engagement and learning into clinical placements.

Aim: To develop and trial a scalable, multidisciplinary WIL model that promotes authentic interprofessional engagement among final-year nursing and allied health students, and to explore the design and implementation challenges of IPE clinical placement model.

Methods: Students from nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and social work participated during a scheduled WIL rotation. Structured IPE activities were designed to promote cross-disciplinary engagement. Pre- and post-placement surveys using validated interprofessional competency tools were administered. Observations during implementation provided additional insight into coordination and engagement challenges.

Insights: Students entered with mixed prior exposure to IPE. Discipline specific placement models and expectations presented logistical and pedagogical challenges, highlighting complexity of cross-disciplinary IPE in authentic clinical settings. Students showed notable shifts in self-assessed interprofessional competencies, suggesting a deeper awareness of the complexities of collaborative practice gained through real-world experience.

Conclusion: This case study offers a realistic, evidence-informed guidance for embedding multidisciplinary WIL into clinical education, which requires deliberate design.

Scalability via Project-Based WIL: Training Wheels, Mentoring, Reputation, and Pitfalls

Wayne Read, Deakin University

Co-Authors:

Leanne Bilinski, Deakin University

Matthew Cameron, Deakin University

Belinda Sapuppo, Deakin University

Amanda McPherson, Deakin University

As a space that brings industry, universities, and students together, work-integrated learning (WIL) remains a critical component of contemporary curriculum design. Driven by diverse institutional, pedagogical, accreditation, and employability motivations, many programs now embed compulsory WIL experiences, resulting in large cohorts of students requiring access to high-quality, industry-engaged learning each year. While placement-based internships are often viewed as the ‘gold’ standard for WIL, structural constraints often limit the scalability of these traditional programs. Consequently, project-based WIL has emerged as a viable and increasingly necessary alternative, enabling authentic engagement with industry while accommodating larger student numbers.

Over the past decade, Deakin Business School (DBS) has developed and refined a suite of industry-focused, project-based WIL programs designed to balance scalability with educational quality. This showcase traces the evolution of these programs, highlighting key design principles, operational structures, and partnership models that underpin their delivery. It also critically examines their alignment with the WIL Quality Standards framework, identifying both strengths and areas for ongoing development.

The presentation demonstrates how project-based WIL can be scaled through deliberate program design, including scaffolded learning experiences, structured mentoring, and the strategic development of industry relationships. It will also address the practical realities of implementation, including budget considerations and workforce requirements needed to sustain quality at scale. Importantly, the showcase highlights how these models support students to build capability, confidence, and professional readiness, equipping them with the skills and experiences needed to transition more independently into internships and future careers.

**Student-Centred, Industry-Powered:
Over a Decade of Authentic Advertising WIL in Australasia**

David Reid, Swinburne University of Technology

Co-Authors:

John Greig, Western Sydney University

Harry Dugmore, University of the Sunshine Coast

Daniel Fastnedge, Auckland University of Technology

Daniel McKeating, Curtin University

Bridging the gap between advertising education and professional practice remains a persistent challenge in higher education. Scholarly literature demonstrates that students develop deeper professional competencies through real-world contexts, genuine industry stakeholders, and consequential tasks (Zegwaard et al., 2023; Sokhanvar et al., 2021; McArthur, 2023). At Swinburne University of Technology, capstone units prior to 2014 relied on invented briefs and simulated clients, leaving graduates underprepared for professional practice. From 2014, industry briefs were progressively embedded, culminating in the Advertising Capstone Challenge (ACC) in 2016.

Co-founded by Swinburne and the University of Queensland Business School, the ACC expanded to include Western Sydney University in 2019 and has since grown to five universities across Australia and New Zealand, now in its eleventh year. Each cycle is anchored by a live brief from a leading agency (such as DDB, M&C Saatchi, TBWA, Special Group) and clients including McDonald's Australia, Nestle and NAB.

Over a decade, the ACC has engaged over 1,188 students, produced over 228 finalists, and facilitated over 41 internships and mentorships. Student reflections attest to its transformative impact - "it changes theory into practice and changes students into professionals" - while industry partners engage voluntarily, describing finals as among the most professionally energising experiences of their careers.

This presentation examines how the ACC's model was built, sustained and scaled - addressing institutional agreements, relationship management, and inter-university coordination that make authentic WIL viable at scale. It proposes a replicable framework for educators seeking demand-led industry integration in creative discipline education.

Regional Co Design in Action: Strengthening Participation, Impact, and Industry Capability through a Partnership with Crooked River Estate

Laura Rook, University of Wollongong

Co-Authors:

Kanchana Wijayawardena, University of Wollongong

Joel Walsh, Crooked River Estate

This presentation showcases a regional industry partnership between the University and Crooked River Estate, led by Joel, an alumnus who has re-engaged with the institution as a co-designer of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). This collaboration demonstrates how purposeful, regionally grounded industry partnerships can generate tangible benefits for students, employers, and the broader community. Operating within a context where SMEs face capability, capacity, and resourcing constraints, the partnership was intentionally structured to increase participation and embed authentic industry voice directly into curriculum design.

Through collaborative planning meetings, iterative scoping, and shared decision-making, Crooked River Estate and the University co-designed a suite of real-world WIL projects that aligned business priorities with subject learning outcomes. This approach produced meaningful outcomes: students developed industry-ready skills by engaging with authentic challenges rooted in regional economic, social, and environmental realities; the employer gained research-informed insights and practical frameworks supporting business development; and the community benefited from knowledge translation that directly supports regional tourism, environmental stewardship, and sustainable local industry.

The partnership also expanded participation by enabling a regional SME, typically under-resourced for WIL, to confidently host multiple student projects with scalable impact. The alumni dimension added continuity and legitimacy, demonstrating the long-term value of WIL relationships and the potential for graduates to return as industry collaborators shaping curriculum relevance.

The presentation concludes by identifying transferable principles for regional WIL partnerships, demonstrating how intentional alumni-industry co-design can create equitable, high-impact learning environments while generating real value for employers and communities.

Embedding Career Development Learning in WIL: Institutional Factors that Facilitate Integration

Jennifer Ruskin, Macquarie University

Co-Author:

Chloe-Jane Clarke, Macquarie University

WIL is a curricular strategy for developing employability, with students exploring career paths, developing professional identity and practicing professional skills (Jackson & Cook 2023). Graduates' perceived employability varies with type of WIL, such as non-workplace, work-based and global WIL (Jackson & Dean 2022), which can be scaffolded throughout degrees (Dean et al. 2024) and include iterative experiences (Fannon 2023). Some elements of career readiness are naturally integrated in WIL curriculum, but career development learning (CDL) could be better integrated with WIL (Healy 2023) in curriculum (Glover-Chambers et al., 2024). With increased attention on the integration of CDL with WIL, improving our understanding of institutional enablers is critical.

This multiple case study explores institutional strategies and structures that impact the integration of CDL with WIL in curriculum. Cases include institutions that offer high-quality: non-workplace WIL, a single work-based WIL experience or iterative work-based WIL experiences. With ethics approval (17024), one author approached a primary contact at three institutions who invited colleagues to participate in 45-minute, semi-structured interviews. This snowball approach led to 29 participants from seven institutions in Australia, Canada and Thailand.

Results explore context, such as employer engagement, government guidance and funding environment, that influence integration of CDL with WIL. Findings reveal differences in policies, leadership and staffing that impact integration of CDL and WIL. For example, institutional priorities influence the relative weight of CDL and WIL voices, while institutional structures impact how well CDL-WIL and central-faculty teams communicate, coordinate and collaborate to integrate CDL with WIL in curriculum.



Utilising the Quality WIL Standards Framework (2026) to Design Impactful WIL

Leoni Russell, RMIT University

Co-Authors:

Karen Young, Deakin University

Ricky Tunny, Queensland University of Technology

Felicity Blackstock, The University of Sydney

Assuring quality in Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is critical to delivering equitable, authentic, and impactful learning experiences for an increasingly diverse student cohort. As WIL expands across disciplines, modalities, and partnership models, institutions require structured yet flexible approaches to quality assurance that balance student experience, curriculum integrity, and partner engagement. The refreshed WIL Australia Quality Standards Framework (2026) responds to these needs by providing a contemporary, evidence-informed framework for embedding quality across the full WIL lifecycle - before, during, and after the experience.

This roundtable explores how educators, professional staff, and institutional leaders can apply the Framework's four interconnected domains - Student Experience, Curriculum Design and Delivery, Partnership Engagement, and Institutional Requirements - to design, review, and continuously improve WIL practice. Particular attention is given to the Framework's strengthened focus on inclusivity, student well-being, digital transformation, and strategic partner engagement.

Drawing on practical examples, participants will examine how quality can be evidenced through indicators and measures such as student preparation and support data, curriculum mapping and assessment alignment, partner engagement strategies, risk and wellbeing protocols, and governance and decision-making documentation. Rather than positioning the Standards as compliance-driven, the roundtable will emphasise their role as a shared language for critical reflection, benchmarking, and enhancement across diverse WIL models.

Participants will develop a deeper appreciation of how the Quality Standards Framework can be used as both a strategic and practical tool to support high-quality, future-focused WIL that delivers value for students, partners, and institutions alike.

Mobilising Employability at Scale: A Program-Level Approach to Integrating Career Development Learning and Work Integrated Learning

Nicky Scarvelis, The University of Queensland

Co-Authors:

Carrie Beddis, The University of Queensland

Louise Shaw, The University of Queensland

This showcase presentation outlines an innovative, program-level approach to enhance employability, embedding Career Development Learning (CDL), and Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) within the Business, Economics and Law (BEL) programs at The University of Queensland (UQ). Addressing the challenge of scaling employability beyond individual courses, the BEL WIL Team has embedded employability analysis and reporting within the formal academic program review process. This approach positions employability as a shared responsibility rather than a standalone activity or capstone experience.

Through this model, the BEL WIL Team collaborate with program leaders and academic staff to systematically map and evaluate employability development across whole programs. This process incorporates a structured employability metric, analysis of course profiles and assessment, and includes student and industry feedback to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for enhancement.

The employability reports provide program leaders and teaching teams with program specific insights, targeted recommendations, and examples of scaffolded WIL and employability learning experiences that strengthen student agency, capability development, and career readiness. Embedding employability within formal program review cycles has enabled consistent implementation across programs while strengthening alignment with institutional priorities. This approach reframes WIL not as a one-off experience but as a program-wide enabler of real-world mobility, supporting students to progressively develop, apply, and articulate their capabilities across the student lifecycle. The presentation will demonstrate how this structured review process can enhance graduate readiness within a scalable and sustainable model.

Simulation-Based Learning: Innovative WIL Strategies for Enhancing Confidence in Recognising and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence

Krystal Schaffer, University of Southern Queensland

Co-Authors:

Dimitra Lattas, University of Sunshine Coast

Sera Harris, Western Sydney University

Domestic and family violence (DFV) competencies are a mandatory requirement for Australian Association of Social Workers-accredited programs; however, teaching often remains predominantly theoretical, leaving students underprepared for practice. This reflects a broader cross-disciplinary challenge in work-integrated learning (WIL): students frequently enter placement without exposure to complex, high-risk scenarios. Simulation-based WIL offers a scalable, practice-proximal approach to address this gap by enabling preparatory learning before placement.

Funded by a Work-Integrated Learning Australia (WILA) Grant (2024-2026), this project developed a simulation-based module to prepare social work students for placement by strengthening their confidence and capability in recognising and responding to DFV. The module includes four iterative, asynchronous web-based simulations following the experiences of a Maori woman encountering DFV. Co-designed with cultural advisors, practitioners, and lived-experience victim-survivors, the simulations prioritise authenticity, cultural safety, and relational complexity. Through shifting perspectives and character-centred storytelling, students engage with collusion, coercive control, cultural abuse, and systemic inequities.

As a preparatory WIL resource, the module supports students to rehearse decision-making, develop reflexivity, and engage critically with practice before entering field education. Interviews with 11 field educators highlighted strong support for simulation-based WIL, particularly where placement exposure to DFV is limited. This case study offers transferable insights for implementing simulation-based WIL across disciplines, including the value of co-design, narrative immersion, and alignment with placement readiness outcomes. It demonstrates how simulations can enhance equity, consistency, and depth in pre-placement learning and professional preparation.

WIL and ePortfolios: Implementing an Impactful and Meaningful Assessment Task in a Scaled Work-Integrated Learning Offering

Suzanne Schibeci, Macquarie University

A new-look work-integrated learning offering for all undergraduates at a university in Sydney, featuring interdisciplinary team projects, will provide a large-scale, uniform experience for students across the institution. Consistent learning outcomes and assessments will be a feature of this WIL, with an ePortfolio as the centrepiece of the new assessment suite.

This is an important shift in assessment thinking because, while ePortfolios (the Eleventh High Impact Practice) give students a tangible record of their learning and achievements from an experience, they are also adaptable and ideally suited to documenting the individual nature of the practicum of a participant and their creative inclination. However, while the task description and marking schemes can be consistent, individual submissions can look very different while still adhering to the required criteria, and experienced ePortfolio practitioners know this does not present a routine marking task nor a time saving strategy for assessors. The individual and creative nature of the task, therefore, is at odds with the reason for including this assessment in a team-based WIL model: scalability and uniformity.

This presentation will outline a road map for the implementation of ePortfolios in a scaled WIL offering, which considers the power of this learning task and its personalised nature, while adhering to the constraints imposed by the institution. The proposed approach will provide a way to keep this meaningful and individualised learning task for students, while simplifying assessment and evaluation for academics and administrators.



Care in Uncertain Times: Reflections on Applying a Feminist Ethics of Care to Work Integrated Learning

Bess Schnioffsky, RMIT University

While there is a growing body of literature on feminist pedagogies and feminist ethics of care within higher education, as well as research which considers student equity and inclusive practices within work-integrated learning (WIL), there has been limited research on feminist ethics of care within careers education and WIL courses. As a feminist researcher, new to the work-integrated learning space, this presentation draws on the author's experiences in pre-WIL and WIL courses to explore the opportunities and challenges of applying an ethics of care to work-integrated learning pedagogy and administration with Australian higher education. In focusing on care, this presentation highlights the importance of fostering healthy relationships (between students, teachers, workplace supervisors and peers) whilst being attuned to broader systems power differentials. With increasing economic precarity, social tensions and international conflict, this presentation proposes a turn towards feminist ethics of care to support a diverse student cohort in navigating these uncertain times.

“If I Can Teach This, I Can Teach Anything!”: Embedding Work Integrated Learning in Teacher Education through a Cyclical Model of Practice

Jessica Amy Sears, Charles Sturt University

Co-Author:

Stacey E. Jones, Charles Sturt University

Embedding WIL within coursework remains a key challenge in higher education, where experiences are often discrete placements rather than intentionally designed, integrated learning processes. This research proposes an innovative model that embeds WIL within a subject through cyclical integration of theory, practice, and reflection.

The initiative embeds WIL within a subject through a sustained school-university partnership. Rather than positioning WIL as a discrete placement, it is integrated into a weekly cycle where Teacher Education Students (TES) learn theory at university, enact it through school-based micro-teaching, and return for structured reflection and feedback and repeat.

The design is underpinned by three elements: integration of theory and practice across settings, structured peer learning, and cyclical reflective practice. The ongoing presence of both university staff and schoolteachers enables real-time feedback and strengthens coherence between academic and professional learning.

This longitudinal study draws on four semesters of data across three years, including student evaluation surveys, assessment tasks, and reflective artefacts. Thematic analysis shows that embedding WIL within the subject enhances TES - confidence, competence, and ability to translate theory into practice. Student feedback highlights the value of repeated, scaffolded opportunities to enact teaching in authentic contexts prior to formal placements.

This research contributes a transferable curriculum design model for embedding WIL within coursework. It demonstrates how integrating short, iterative, and supported authentic practice experiences within subjects can bridge the theory - practice divide, enhance student learning, and better prepare graduates for professional contexts. The model offers practical insights for disciplines seeking to move beyond traditional placement structures towards more integrated approaches to WIL.

Reframing Interprofessional WIL: A Scalable Student-Led Allied Health Model in Educational Contexts

Michael Sharp, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Judith Merritt, Adelaide University

Jordana Maio, Adelaide University

Traditional interprofessional learning (IPL) in allied health often relies on simulation, limiting opportunities for authentic collaboration, workforce readiness and meaningful community impact. Adelaide University's Orion Allied Health Student Service addresses this gap through a student-led work-integrated learning (WIL) model that embeds occupational therapy and speech pathology students within preschools and schools. This initiative enhances interprofessional capability, career readiness and self-efficacy while addressing unmet community needs, demonstrating how community-based WIL can move beyond simulated IPL to strengthen student agency and engagement with real-world practice.

The Orion model is grounded in an authentic, community-embedded interprofessional WIL pedagogy that integrates discipline-specific learning with shared interprofessional responsibilities. Students deliver services under a hybrid supervision model combining profession-specific and cross-disciplinary oversight, positioning them as active contributors to service delivery and collaborative decision-making. This approach mobilises students as emerging professionals, strengthening interprofessional reasoning, reflective capability, professional identity formation and preparedness for lifelong learning and future workforce mobility.

Evaluation data from university student surveys and student-led inquiry projects demonstrate increased confidence in teamwork, communication, clinical reasoning and shared goal development, alongside enhanced self-efficacy in applying skills across settings. Feedback from partner schools identifies improved coordination of services, stronger responsiveness to student needs, and reduced disruption to classroom learning, evidencing the value of long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.

Orion exemplifies an innovative, evidence-informed WIL model that is adaptable and scalable to meet workforce and community demands. By positioning students as active contributors within inclusive, school-based services, the model enhances career pathways, skill mobility, student agency, and engagement in lifelong learning.

**Work and Research Integrated Learning in Health Sciences:
Student and Supervisor Perspectives on Career Preparation**

Simran Sidhu, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Nichola Thompson, Adelaide University

Despite increasing emphasis on employability in higher education, limited empirical research exists on the role of undergraduate placement curriculum in fostering career readiness particularly within health and medical sciences. This work reports preliminary findings from a study investigating the impact of research-integrated learning (RIL) on student work readiness within the Bachelor of Biomedical and Health Sciences (BBHS) program at Adelaide University. The study examines how authentic research-based placements contribute to skill acquisition, professional identity formation, and motivation for further research pathways.

Using a mixed-methods cross sectional design, data were collected from students and supervisors via pre- and post-placement surveys, complemented by qualitative feedback. The RIL model predominantly involved placement experiences within research teams, supported by targeted skills development online modules and authentic assessments.

Preliminary quantitative findings suggest upward shifts in student competencies across key domains, including digital literacy, communication, professionalism, and leadership. While student self-perceptions of work-readiness showed modest gains, supervisor evaluations indicated stronger improvements, demonstrating enhanced external recognition of student preparedness. Qualitative insights showed the value of authentic assessment, structured support, and opportunities for independence, while also identifying areas for refinement, such as improved supervision structures, clearer assessment guidance, and expanded hands-on research opportunities.

Although limited by small sample sizes, current findings indicate that RIL approaches hold promise in bridging the gap between academic learning and workforce expectations. Future work will expand data collection, incorporate longitudinal tracking of graduate outcomes, develop opportunities for students to engage in experiential placements and further explore strategies to optimise student and supervisor experiences in research-based education.

Collaborative Impact through Purposeful Partnership: A Co-Designed Student-Led Telepractice Clinic Bridging Service Gaps and Placement Shortages in Speech Pathology

Jennifer Smith, Charles Darwin University

Co-Authors:

Kristy Logan, Charles Darwin University

Amy Southwood, Somerville Community Services

Nicole Loy, Charles Darwin University

Fiona Tipping, Charles Darwin University

Hamid Karimi, Charles Darwin University

This initiative addresses challenges in accessing timely speech pathology services for adults with disability in the Northern Territory. Many NDIS participants experience difficulties obtaining consistent support and face ongoing challenges with funding for allied health services. In partnership with Somerville Community Services and CDU Health Hub, Charles Darwin University established a student-led telepractice clinic to simultaneously tackle this service gap and critical placement shortages for speech pathology students in its online, geographically dispersed program.

Students deliver supervised, real-time assessment and intervention to adults with lifelong communication and swallowing needs across Darwin, Katherine, and Alice Springs. They are supported by CDU Health Hub staff, an external Certified Practising Speech Pathologist as telepractice educator, and academic staff. The model ensures equitable placement opportunities regardless of student location while improving service accessibility for underserved communities.

A 2025 pilot involving four students confirmed strong feasibility, safety, and positive outcomes, including high satisfaction from students, clients, and the partner organisation, increased confidence in adult disability and telepractice, and measurable clinical growth. In 2026, the program expanded to deliver 12 placements across intermediate, near-entry, and entry-level competencies.

Students also contributed to sector quality improvement through dysphagia and communication projects that reinforced NDIS practice standards and high intensity support requirements. These activities, combined with direct clinical work, enhanced student readiness for future roles in the disability sector.

This co-designed Work Integrated Learning (WIL) model delivers dual impact: enhanced communication and swallowing support for adults with disability, alongside scalable and inclusive practice education. The framework provides a replicable solution for institutions facing placement shortages and equity challenges.

Supervising Placement Students: Strengthening WIL through Supervisor Capability Development

Renee Smith, The University of Newcastle

Co-Author:

Monique Kassi, The University of Newcastle

High-quality supervision is central to effective Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), yet many workplace supervisors, particularly those new to supervision or to supervising university students, receive limited preparation for this role. This case study presents the design, implementation, and early impact of Supervising Placement Students: Cultivate Student Success and Boost Your Professional Growth, an online supervision program developed by The University of Newcastle's Careers and Employability team.

Designed for professionals overseeing placements, early-career staff, and aspiring supervisors, the program has a dual purpose: to enhance the quality of student WIL experiences and to support the professional development of supervisors as emerging or evolving leaders. The initiative was introduced in an interactive workshop with industry partners at the University's Industry Open Day, enabling direct engagement, feedback, and early sector buy-in. Informed by this and ongoing partner engagement, the program addresses challenges in supervision capability that affect student experience, equity, and workplace readiness.

The program provides a structured, practice-oriented approach, integrating mentoring and coaching strategies, inclusive and ethical practice, communication and feedback, and reflective leadership. Participants are supported to build confidence, navigate the distinct challenges of supervising students, as opposed to employees, and develop skills transferable to broader professional contexts.

Preliminary evaluation data indicate increased supervisor confidence, improved feedback practices, and stronger alignment between workplace and university expectations. Flexible digital delivery supports access for regional and time-constrained supervisors.

This case study offers a scalable model for strengthening supervisor capability, enhancing student success, and sustaining impactful WIL partnerships.

From 'Just a Final Grade' to Real Work: An Evidence-Based Evaluation of Quality, Inclusion and Authenticity in Industry-Partnered WIL

Bhavani Sridharan, Australian Catholic University

Co-Authors:

Jade McKay, Australian Catholic University

Marzena Baker, Australian Catholic University

As universities expand industry-partnered WIL to enhance employability and scale authentic learning experiences, questions remain about how inclusive and effective these models are for diverse student cohorts. This presentation reports on a qualitative evaluation of a university - industry WIL initiative developed with a national private health insurer (Medibank), in which business students addressed a live organisational challenge by developing strategic recommendations and implementation plans. Drawing on student focus group data, this showcase examines how authenticity, industry engagement and structured teamwork shaped students' work-readiness, professional identity and confidence.

Findings indicate that students experienced a shift from "just another assessment" to perceived real work when clear industry expectations and strong academic facilitation were present. The initiative supported development of professional communication, strategic thinking and adaptability. However, the evaluation also identified design tensions affecting quality and inclusion. Limited access to industry contacts, ambiguous feedback cycles and fully online delivery constrained workplace immersion and reduced efficiency. Intercultural collaboration did not consistently translate into intercultural learning, suggesting inclusive outcomes require intentional scaffolding rather than diversity alone. Workload pressures further highlighted the need for equity-informed curriculum design when embedding WIL within intensive study programs.

Foregrounding student voice, this presentation offers recommendations for designing authentic and inclusive industry-partnered WIL experiences and provides insights for educators seeking to scale WIL while maintaining quality and equity.

**Wellbeing for Australian Veterans and Emergency Services (WAVES):
Educating Future Allied Health Professionals**

Alice Standfield, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Henry Blake, Adelaide University

Alison Barrett, Adelaide University

Jason Bryant, Adelaide University

Max Nelson, Adelaide University

Claudia Caruso, Adelaide University

Dannielle Post, Adelaide University

Gaynor Parfitt, Adelaide University

Military personnel and first responders experience high rates of physical and psychological injury attributed to their unique service. Their presentations are potentially compounded by barriers to healthcare services, such as allied health (ALH) professionals having limited foundational understanding to meet their needs. These barriers could be alleviated by improving ALH student education, ensuring work-readiness and competency to support this ever-growing population.

The Invictus Pathways Program (IPP), within the Wellbeing for Australian Veterans and Emergency Services (WAVES) Program at Adelaide University, is a 24-month student-delivered, professionally supervised program providing tailored, one-to-one exercise training and support to veterans and first responder participants. Embedded within curriculum, the IPP offers students from exercise physiology, exercise science, physiotherapy and occupational therapy valuable and collaborative learning experiences.

To support student agency and preparation for working with participants, students complete tailored workshops, including 'occupational cultural awareness' and 'communicating with vulnerable populations', and receive regular debriefing and support. Ongoing evaluation with students and participants demonstrates the value of the Program as both a novel model for student education, strengthening clinical exercise skills, and an effective health service delivery, with participants reporting it 'saves lives'.

The Program was recognised for excellence, innovation and best practice in mental health services in the 2024 Mental Health Services Awards of Australia and New Zealand. It has also been recognised by international advocate Martin Colclough OBE, Programme Advisory Board Member, Invictus: Endeavour Programme as 'truly world leading', noting that 'including an occupational therapy capability is a great enhancement to this interdisciplinary student-led program'.

**Partnering for Impact: A Scalable and Sustainable Cross Sector Student Led Clinic Model
Enhancing Workforce Ready Learning and Community Wellbeing**

Angus Stead, Charles Darwin University

Co-Authors:

Genna Stiles, Charles Darwin University

Jennifer Smith, Charles Darwin University

Laura Callan, Charles Darwin University

This presentation showcases a multidisciplinary, student led clinic involving Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Dietetics and Speech Therapy students, developed to address persistent service gaps through strategic partnerships with government, private, and education providers. The model demonstrates how cross sector collaboration can expand community access to holistic care while preparing students for contemporary practice.

The clinic integrates simulation based training to enhance student preparedness and confidence before they transition into community based roles. This foundation supports a suite of innovative placement initiatives, including social work in schools, interprofessional assessment pathways, and targeted interventions for individuals with complex psychosocial needs. These initiatives broaden service reach while providing students with authentic, diverse learning environments that mirror real world practice.

A flexible, inclusive supervision framework - combining peer mentoring, interprofessional supervision, group based learning, and tailored support structures - ensures high quality learning while accommodating students' academic and personal responsibilities. The model's design enables scalability through adaptable placement structures and sustainability through shared governance, resource efficient supervision, and strong partner engagement.

This presentation will explore the development, implementation, and early outcomes of the student led clinic, highlighting its potential as a sustainable, scalable WIL model. By intentionally partnering for impact, the initiative demonstrates how universities and industry can co create innovative placement solutions that enhance community wellbeing and contribute to long term social benefit.

**Looking Back to Move Forward:
Digital Storytelling as Career Narrative in WIL**

Kylie Taffard, University of Canterbury

Co-Author:

Clare Dannenberg, University of Canterbury

How do students move from reflecting on work experience to actively authoring their professional futures? This presentation argues that digital storytelling, when embedded as a reflective assessment in work-integrated learning (WIL), does more than prompt reflection, it develops the narrative capacity students need for employability.

Building on an earlier study introducing digital storytelling within WIL (Dannenberg et al., 2024), this session draws on student narratives from an interdisciplinary internship programme to examine how structured creative reflection supports the construction of future-oriented career identities. Using guided prompts, students draw on a broader personal history of work, observed, inherited, and lived, tracing how family, community, and early encounters with labour have shaped their values, aspirations, and emerging sense of professional self. In doing so, they build a transferable capacity that extends well beyond the placement: the ability to make meaning from experience and communicate it with confidence (Adams & Jones, 2022).

Employability, in this framing, is not a fixed graduate attribute but a dynamic, ongoing developmental process. Digital storytelling is particularly well-suited to this work, combining text, visual, and auditory modes to communicate complex concepts, emotions, and feelings in ways that deepen reflection and creativity (Kim et al., 2021). Using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), written reflections accompanying the digital stories are analysed to understand how students experience this process as a meaning-making and career identity tool.

The presentation shares emerging themes alongside honest reflection on the design tensions of creative, technology-enhanced assessment. Participants will leave with practical strategies for embedding agency-centred career identity development into WIL curricula oriented toward long-term graduate mobility.

Partnering with Purpose: A Tiered Engagement Model Driving Measurable Outcomes

Shufen Lin, Deakin University

Co-Author:

Samantha Tennant, Deakin University

Purposeful, sustained partnerships are central to achieving impactful Work Integrated Learning (WIL) outcomes, yet many engagement models remain transactional and resource intensive, particularly as demand grows and both university and partner capacity is stretched. Deakin University's Faculty of Health WIL Team has reimagined this approach through the development and implementation of a strategic host tier model designed to strengthen industry partnerships and delivers sustained, measurable outcomes for students and hosts.

The Host Tier model segments placement partners based on capacity, capability and strategic alignment, providing a differentiated approach to engagement. Rather than a one-size-fits-all and ad hoc model, each tier is supported by tailored partnership strategies, structured communication and a clear value proposition, ensuring industry engagement is purposeful, and mutually beneficial.

This model reframes WIL engagement with hosts from a placement transactional model to a strategic partnership-focused framework grounded in human relationships, trust and shared outcomes. It is hoped that the model will deliver streamlined engagement, clearer pathways for involvement and opportunities to contribute to workforce pipeline development, co-design of placement experiences with WIL professionals, and broader collaboration.

This presentation will outline the design, implementation journey, and impact of the Host Tier Model with a focus on evidencing tangible benefits for both students and employers. Our aim is to provide attendees with practical insights and transferable strategies for building industry partnerships that move beyond ad hoc engagement towards sustainable industry partnerships that are meaningful, scalable and deliver long-term impact across diverse WIL contexts.

Work Integrated Learning in Digital Age: A Practical Risk Management Framework for Authentic Industry Placement Experiences in Australian Universities

Asha Thomas, La Trobe University

Technology is fundamentally reshaping how Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed in Australian universities. With artificial intelligence (AI) adoption projected to reach 79 percent of the Australian workforce by 2027 (Deloitte Access Economics, 2024), students undertaking industry placements are entering AI-augmented professional environments. Technology offers real opportunities to extend supervisory reach, scaffold reflective practice, and evidence professional competency at scale, yet it simultaneously introduces a complex and undertheorised risk landscape that most institutions are inadequately equipped to navigate (Dean et al. 2023; Sophos, 2024). These risks threaten not only pedagogical quality but the authentic professional formation that distinguishes industry placement from all other curriculum. This paper introduces CARVE Risk Framework: a theoretically grounded and practically deployable model for identifying, assessing, and managing five risk categories in technology-enhanced authentic WIL. The five domains are Curriculum authenticity, Access and equity, Relational quality, Validity and integrity, and Ethics and data governance. This framework can address the full risk spectrum starting from AI fabrication of professional learning evidence that compromises assessment integrity in regulated disciplines (Bearman et al., 2023; TEQSA, 2024), to digital equity gaps that amplify existing student disadvantage (Southgate, 2020), platformisation effects that displace the supervisory relationships central to professional identity formation (Weller, 2024; Williamson, 2019), and data governance breaches arising from third-party AI platform deployment (Kiteworks, 2026). Drawing on authentic learning theory, WIL pedagogy, and AI-in education research (Holmes et al., 2019; Zawacki et al., 2019), the framework is accompanied by a Risk Assessment Matrix, a Mitigation Strategy Register, and a three-stage implementation process designed to equip WIL academics and institutional leaders.

Addressing Variability in WIL: Industry-University Co-Design of Core Laboratory Training for Workforce Readiness

Lauren Thurgood, Flinders University

Co-Authors:

Voula Gaganis, Flinders University

Devika Thomas, Clinpath

Lara Escane, Flinders University

Work-integrated learning (WIL) in diagnostic pathology provides authentic immersion in professional practice; however, variability in placement experiences can limit equitable exposure to core laboratory competencies. This project describes a cross-sector collaboration to design and implement pre-placement training modules in chemical pathology, haematology, transfusion science and microtomy within a fourth-year Laboratory Medicine program.

The initiative was developed in response to accreditation requirements and industry-identified workforce needs, recognising that not all students encounter key diagnostic disciplines during placement, particularly in regional, remote, or multidisciplinary laboratory settings. Academic staff partnered with diagnostic pathology providers to co-design and deliver modules that reflect current laboratory workflows, instrumentation and competency expectations. Industry collaborators contributed to curriculum design, on-site training, and validation of competency standards, ensuring authenticity and relevance.

The modules are embedded within a broader WIL curriculum and aligned with assessment and career development learning, supporting students to translate technical training into professional capability. Early outcomes demonstrate improved student confidence, preparedness for placement and capacity to engage in diverse laboratory contexts. Graduates have demonstrated enhanced readiness for employment, including successful transition into roles within diagnostic laboratories and engagement in professional and research activities.

This project demonstrates how intentional collaboration between universities and industry can address variability in WIL experiences, strengthen workforce readiness, and support equitable access to core competencies. The model provides a scalable approach to embedding industry-aligned training within WIL, with particular relevance for disciplines requiring exposure to specialised or resource-dependent practices.

**From Simulation to Practice: Scaling a Climate Adaptation
Game to Strengthen Non-Placement Work-Integrated
Learning in Undergraduate Education**

Nooshin Torabi, RMIT University

Universities are under increasing pressure to provide meaningful Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) at scale, while traditional placement models remain constrained by availability, equity, and supervision capacity. In response, non-placement WIL approaches, such as simulations and authentic problem-based learning are gaining recognition as scalable and inclusive alternatives.

This paper presents a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) project that positions a climate adaptation simulation game as a structured non-placement WIL model in undergraduate education. The game immerses students in professional decision-making contexts shaped by climate risk, uncertainty, trade-offs, and stakeholder negotiation, reflecting the realities of contemporary adaptation practice.

The study examines how simulation-based WIL supports the development of employability capabilities, including systems thinking, collaboration, and decision-making under uncertainty, while also contributing to professional identity formation. Particular attention is given to the role of simulation in expanding equitable access to meaningful WIL experiences for students unable to participate in traditional placements.

By outlining the design, implementation, and evaluation of this approach, the paper contributes to sector discussions on scalable, evidence-informed, and inclusive WIL models applicable across disciplines.

Teaching on Shifting Grounds: Innovating Authentic WIL with GenAI

Franziska Trede, University of Technology Sydney

Co-Authors:

Simon Buckingham-Shum, University of Technology Sydney

Dimity Wehr, University of Technology Sydney

This study examines how academics are reshaping work-integrated learning (WIL) through technology-enhanced, authentic learning in response to the rapid uptake of Generative AI (GenAI). Using a critical hermeneutic approach, we conducted semi-structured interviews with nine educators teaching non-placement WIL to explore how GenAI informs pedagogical decision-making and conceptions of professional preparation.

Two research questions guided the study: how academics perceive the role of GenAI in WIL, and what changes they are making to their practices. Four themes characterise emerging practice: teaching on shifting technological grounds; cultivating intentional, critical and creative GenAI use; designing learning beyond AI literacy; and scaffolding confident AI practices. Educators described how GenAI expands possibilities for authentic WIL through richer simulations, iterative industry-aligned design processes, and transparent documentation of professional reasoning and decision-making. They recentred professional judgement, relational accountability and reflexive practice as key markers of quality in technology-enhanced WIL, while modelling ethical disclosure and conscientious AI use.

The findings also surface persistent tensions, including mismatches between the pace of professional AI adoption and slower institutional governance, uneven access to tools, and risks of cognitive offloading that challenge equity and the integrity of authentic learning. We argue that universities must enable WIL educators to lead this next phase of technology-enhanced professional learning so that GenAI strengthens rather than diminishes situated, relational and reflexive educational practice.

The Weird of WIL: Adopting Systems Thinking to Improve Student and Academic Management and Outcomes

Robert Trott, Flinders University

Co-Authors:

Thomas Vincent, Flinders University

David Hobbs, Flinders University

STEM students at Flinders University have some flexibility on when and how they complete their industry-based WIL. This flexibility includes timing that aligns with semester teaching periods and summer break, balancing other topics, full-time and part-time WIL, paid employment, illness, exceptional circumstance, access requirements, caring, and other personal commitments. This flexibility causes mess that needs to be accounted for within the WIL curriculum design.

Flinders University prospect, facilitate, and promote WIL opportunities, and allow students to source their own, providing flexibility to students and hosts. This results in students starting and ending their WIL at different times, which adds complexity for all stakeholders who manage, supervise and assess these students. Across 6, 12, and Flinders University's flagship 20-week placement, students complete 4-5 assessments and 2 experience surveys that also need to be timed correctly.

Adopting a systems approach, Flinders University have implemented processes and systems that integrate disparate systems to improve the tracking and management of students undertaking their WIL. These processes have resulted in improved assessment outcomes, improved Academic Supervisor management, and statistically significant improvements in feedback turnaround and subject completion times. The average overall subject grade increased 1.5% (n=277) not factoring late submission penalties, time to completion decreased 7 weeks ($p < 0.001$), and students had improved access to assessment management facilitated through the University's Learning Management System.

This work will present the rationale and methods for this undertaking and delve into the opportunities it has facilitated for stakeholders and the resulting benefits so that others might adopt these approaches.

**Extending Industry Mentorship in the Classroom in WIL at Scale:
Evaluating Student Use of an AI Virtual Partner**

Elisabeth Valiente-Riedl, The University of Sydney

Co-Authors:

Jeffrey Naqvi, The University of Sydney

Felicity Blackstock, The University of Sydney

A recent disruptor to higher education that is shaping design and delivery of work-integrated learning (WIL) is artificial intelligence (AI), which creates both challenges and opportunities for enabling “work ready” graduates. One such opportunity is addressing the challenge of WIL at scale through the development of AI co-supervisors that enable students to interact with industry partners both in the human and AI form.

In this study we explore if AI can be purposefully designed to enhance student engagement with an external partner in an online experiential learning classroom at scale. The University of Sydney has capstone interdisciplinary curriculum engaging over 3000 students in group-based, complex problem solving for a real-world challenge posed by an industry, government or community partner. An AI bot was created as an alias industry partner to supplement in person student and partner engagement. The Cogniti platform was used, programmed with specific industry organisation information, creating a “personality” that aligned with industry partner organisation culture through specific directions as recommended by the industry partners.

Examining 127 student participants’ interactions with a 24/7 AI virtual partner, we found the AI bot was a proxy educator, project collaborator and virtual assistant to answer questions, but also an industry guide and project mentor. Interestingly, interactions also revealed a trend toward “humanising” of AI across student interactions. Student usage revealed the criticality of AI design, to ensure appropriate bounds between the work of the student and the bot are maintained and that the bot is indeed facilitating learning, not just outputs.

Real-World Health Promotion: Building Workforce-Ready Graduates through WIL Partnerships

Rosa Virgara, Adelaide University

This presentation showcases a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) model embedded within a final-year physiotherapy course, Health Promotion, at Adelaide University. The model partners students with a diverse range of public and private organisations - across healthcare and non-health sectors, including community services, local councils, and arts organisations - to co-design and deliver authentic health promotion projects that address real-world needs.

Over a five-week clinical placement, students are embedded within host organisations and tasked with developing evidence-informed resources and interventions aligned with partner-identified priorities. Projects have included co-creating culturally responsive promotional materials with an Aboriginal health service to support virtual reality programs aimed at improving childhood immunisation uptake; developing updated patient education resources for individuals with lymphoedema and lipoedema; and evaluating the impact of new services at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

This model emphasises reciprocal value: students gain practical experience translating evidence into practice, while organisations receive tangible, context-specific outputs that support service delivery and community impact. The course scaffolds student capability in stakeholder engagement, project design, implementation, and adherence to ethical research principles. It also develops key skills required for contemporary health promotion practice, aligned with physiotherapy practice thresholds, including communication, professionalism, cultural responsiveness, and evidence-based decision-making. These capabilities prepare students for the realities of practice they will enter as new graduates within 6-12 months.

Feedback from host supervisors indicates high satisfaction with both project outcomes and the opportunity to engage in student learning. This presentation will highlight key impacts and provide insights into scaling and sustaining meaningful WIL partnerships.

DynamicWIL: A Scaffolded Model for Designing Scalable and Sustainable Work-Integrated Learning

Vy Anh Vu, RMIT Vietnam

Authentic work-integrated learning (WIL) is increasingly expected in higher education, yet implementation remains uneven when industry capacity, curriculum structures, and student readiness differ across courses and programs. This showcase presentation introduces DynamicWIL, a scaffolded framework developed in the Digital Media curriculum at RMIT Vietnam to support more inclusive, professionally aligned, and sustainable WIL design beyond a one-size-fits-all placement model.

DynamicWIL organises WIL into three levels: simulated WIL, small real-client online projects, and apprenticed WIL. Rather than treating WIL as a single experience, the framework enables educators to select, adapt, and sequence WIL activities according to course learning outcomes, learner capability, partner availability, and resourcing realities. To support implementation, the framework is accompanied by a board game-style planning toolkit that uses prompts, roles, and constraints to help academics, students, and partners co-design suitable WIL pathways.

Developed through practice-led educational research and iterative curriculum implementation, DynamicWIL was refined through stakeholder feedback and application across multiple course deliveries. Key insights highlighted the value of scaffolded WIL in strengthening learner confidence, reflective practice, and the feasibility of embedding industry engagement in more inclusive and sustainable ways. The presentation will share the design rationale, implementation journey, and practical lessons from applying the framework in curriculum contexts.

Participants will gain a transferable example of how WIL can be embedded as a staged curriculum strategy rather than treated as a single high-stakes experience. The session will be relevant to educators, program leaders, and WIL practitioners seeking scalable approaches that balance authenticity, educational quality, equity, and sustainability.

Scalable, Authentic, and Generalisable Design Features of Industry-Based Work-Integrated-Learning Projects

Ben JJ Walker, UNSW Sydney

Co-Author:

Bonnie Dean, UNSW Sydney

Leading concerns in the space of Work-Integrated-Learning surround issues of scalability, while also elevating student learning outcomes. One of the key strategies to address scalability is the identification of industry projects. Through industry projects, students engage in authentic work practices which include testing out their skills, exploring new knowledge, and interacting with an industry partner. Such work practices may be encountered for the first time in a student's degree or learning. However, if such strategies are to be scalable, how can facilitators and designers of industry-based projects work towards design features that are also scalable, adaptable, and generalisable? Designing industry projects often entails unique conversations with industry partners to ensure that partner and student needs are being met through authentic experience. But does authentic experience also require reimagining the design of industry projects every time? In this workshop, participants will be encouraged to think through the design characteristics of an industry project that are available, engaging, meet industry demands, and satisfy student learning outcomes. Participants will discuss in small groups ongoing provocations around industry-based projects. Participants will consider best-practice and case studies centred on - what makes an efficient project design, in collaboration with an industry partner? -, that accurately reflects real work and real outcomes for students and partners. By the end of the workshop, participants will walk away with an understanding of the design principles of industry-based learning, practical strategies for designing either generalisable or template-based design projects, and deeper knowledge of what makes industry projects an authentic WIL experience.

**Co-Designing Curricula with Industry:
Actionable Strategies to Close the AI Skills Gap**

Katie Wang, Torrens University

The rapid advancement of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is transforming creative design practices and redefining the competencies expected of emerging graduates. This research investigates how industry practitioners perceive these changes, focusing on identifying evolving skill gaps and the implications for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) curriculum design in higher education. Through semi-structured interviews with professionals across design sectors, the study examines how GenAI is reshaping creative workflows, collaboration models, and the attributes valued in graduate designers.

Grounded in an industry-university partnership approach, the research aims to co-develop responsive curriculum frameworks that bridge the widening gap between academic preparation and professional practice. Building on practitioner insights, the study aims to provide direct data and insights to support partnership models that enable continuous curriculum renewal through mechanisms such as rotating advisory boards, live project briefs with iterative feedback sprints, co-taught studio experiences, and AI tool sandboxes. These models are designed to institutionalise agile and ethical integration of digital innovation within creative education.

By translating industry expertise into actionable curriculum strategies, this work contributes to sustained collaboration between education and industry partners. It demonstrates how purposeful co-design can enhance graduate employability, strengthen supervisor capability, and ensure that creative design programs remain relevant, inclusive, and impactful in an AI-augmented professional landscape.

TITAN: A Scalable WIL Platform for Enhancing Student Engagement in ICT Projects

Amali Weerasinghe, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Simon Ratcliffe, Adelaide University

Will Reid, Maptek Pty Ltd

Final-year ICT projects have been widely used to provide a WIL experience as they provide an opportunity to solve an industry-led project in a team-based setting. Timely feedback from the industry partners is crucial for both enhancing student experience resulting in successful outcomes. Furthermore, client feedback is vital to maintain the project momentum while keeping all the stakeholders engaged. However, receiving timely feedback is a challenge due to the burden imposed on the industry professionals. If the burden is too large the industry participation will cease. This issue exacerbates with large student cohorts. We propose to overcome this issue using TITAN, that provides a scalable WIL experience to large cohorts of students while maintaining student engagement. TITAN provides on-demand feedback with high availability and scalability. On-demand feedback has shown to significantly increase engagement and learning. In addition, TITAN also facilitates a leader board, incorporating gamification which has also shown to have positive learning effects by maintaining engagement. Therefore, this project focuses on investigating the effectiveness of TITAN, a gamified leaderboard platform that provides on-demand feedback on student engagement. After a pilot study with one industry partner in a final year capstone project at University of Adelaide, TITAN was successfully deployed with five projects and 541 students during semester 2, 2025. Students kept engaging with TITAN throughout the semester improving their solutions resulting in more than 15,000 submissions from 71 groups. The next step is to deploy TITAN in a project course at RMIT, Australia.

Interprofessional Learning in Remote Australia

Robyn Westerman, Charles Darwin University

Co-Authors:

Anna Lennie, Alice Springs Hospital

Max Fleming, Charles Darwin University

Angela Teasdale, Charles Darwin University

The online Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) course at Charles Darwin University presents a unique opportunity to develop the rural and remote health workforce across Australia. With over 55% of enrolled students living in regional rural or remote Australia securing placements in their local area can be challenging. One model to address this is to partner with local organisations to develop an interprofessional placement experience. This presentation will cover the unique Work Integrated Learning issues of online learning, remoteness, interprofessional learning (IPL), collaboration, and dual supervision.

Using a case study approach, we will explore the project placement of two students residing in Alice Springs who undertook their placement at the local Hospital within the paediatric “Grow Us Strong” Clinic. The Grow us strong clinic is a multidisciplinary assessment and intervention service, for infants and children at high risk of neurodevelopmental delay. The placement objectives included an evaluation of the clinic through qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

The OT students were supervised locally by a Physiotherapist and received OT supervision remotely through the University. Through the case study, the concepts of IPL, project findings and the experiences of all parties, will be presented collaboratively by the host, students, and the University.

The placement provided the students with real life interprofessional collaborative team experiences, whilst developing their knowledge and awareness of the determinants of health, health service delivery in remote areas, cultural safety and treatment effectiveness in child development and the application to Occupational Therapy.



Paid For and Never Used: What Happens to a Placement After We Secure It

Guthrie White, InPlace Software

Co-Author:

Phalguni Kataria, InPlace Connect

Clinical placement is the narrowest point in the pipeline that turns students into health professionals. A university can accredit a new course quickly, but it cannot conjure the supervised clinical experience that course depends on. Capacity is limited, hosts are stretched, and one late cancellation can undo weeks of negotiation.

Australia once treated that capacity as a national investment: through Health Workforce Australia, the Commonwealth paid health services a daily rate for the clinical training they provided. When Health Workforce Australia was wound up in 2014 the funding went with it, and the cost moved to the universities. For an institution with large nursing, midwifery and allied health programs, buying placements is now one of its fastest-growing costs.

Paying for placements has one useful side effect: it makes them visible. Using three years of records from more than twenty Australian universities, cross-checked against host health services' own data, this session asks what happens to a placement once a university has secured it.

The answer should concern every placement office, and the differences between institutions are larger than size, discipline or state explain. Clinical placements are simply where the problem can be counted. Nothing about it is unique to health. Every work-integrated learning placement is a host's goodwill and capacity, paid for or not.

We treat placements as scarce when we ask for them. The question is whether we still treat them that way once they are ours.

Embedding Extended Internships in ICT Degrees: A Scalable and Accreditation Compliant WIL Model

Grant Wigley, Adelaide University

Adelaide University has introduced an opt in internship pathway across its Information Technology, Computer Science, Cyber Security, and Software Engineering degrees, enabling eligible final year students to replace the traditional capstone project with an extended industry placement. This presentation outlines the curriculum design, accreditation strategy, and quality assurance processes that enabled this flexible model to be fully accredited by both the Australian Computer Society (ACS) and Engineers Australia.

Students who secure an approved internship, either self sourced or arranged through the University may undertake a 30 to 60 day placement that substitutes for the capstone project and, where applicable, elective courses. All self sourced placements undergo compliance checks by the WIL professional team and academic staff to ensure alignment with accreditation requirements. A central design consideration was meeting ACS Criterion D, which requires students to complete a complex computing project within a collaborative environment. Accordingly, internship projects must involve substantial technical depth and be undertaken as part of a team, either with fellow students or industry colleagues. Parallel mapping ensured that Engineers Australia's expectations for professional practice, teamwork, and design oriented problem solving were also satisfied.

The internship pathway emphasises authentic workplace performance, reflective practice, and multi source assessment, including stakeholder presentations, progress reviews, supervisor evaluations, and a final portfolio of project work.

In the first half of 2026, more than 60 students completed internships across defence, government, small business, startups, and not for profit sectors, demonstrating strong industry uptake and the viability of this accreditation compliant alternative to traditional capstone projects.

Building Equity-Capable Practice: Developing Staff and Students through the FreelancingHUB Work-Integrated Learning Program

Michelle Wootton, Deakin University

Co-Authors:

Alyx Cole, Deakin University

Shehani De Mel, Deakin University

In 2024, Deakin University embedded universal design principles across all career support programs and services to better meet the needs of our diverse student cohort through the Equity-capable Careers Service (ECCS) project (Hansen et al., 2025).

As part of this initiative, FreelancingHUB Staff, positioned within the Graduate Employment Division, undertook structured professional development, focused on equity and inclusive practice. Over the past 2 years, this has influenced all FreelancingHUB operations - from recruitment to program design to physical space configuration.

The DeakinTALENT FreelancingHUB is an innovative 11-week Work Integrated Learning experience available through credit-bearing undergraduate and postgraduate units across all Faculties. Since 2018, the HUB has provided over 2,000 students with authentic freelance consulting experience in multidisciplinary teams, delivering over 250 projects for not-for-profit, social enterprise, community and government organisations. The program operates through hybrid co-working spaces at Burwood and Waurin Ponds campuses and online, reflecting contemporary workplace practices (Mustard et al., 2022).

The FreelancingHUB implements evidence-based inclusive practices for students: interview adjustments, flexible online and in-person engagement, universal design principles, free office clothing, and professional development sessions designed to incorporate equity and inclusion practices.

The cultivation of equity-capable graduates is increasingly important in contemporary work environments. FreelancingHUB operationalises this through embedded service-learning opportunities, exposing students to social issues within the context of their projects - including mental health, food insecurity, and environmental sustainability.

Comprehensive evaluation frameworks, including Work Readiness Scale assessment (Caballero, Walker, & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, 2011), student surveys, formal client feedback and post-project reviews, confirm mutual benefit.

**When Universities Partner with SMEs:
Creating Impact for Business and Students through WIL**

Seung Jung (SJ) Yang, UNSW Sydney

As the value of high-quality Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in enhancing student employability, industry engagement, and social impact becomes increasingly recognised, universities are prioritising WIL models that deliver meaningful and scalable outcomes. This abstract presents an industry-co-designed 10-week international business consulting practicum embedded within the Master of International Business program at an Australian university, developed through a partnership with an Australian food manufacturing SME.

The partnership addressed a real organisational challenge by evaluating international expansion opportunities across five Southeast Asian markets (Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore). Academic staff and the industry partner designed a scalable consulting model involving ten student teams, each tasked with assessing the desirability and feasibility of a target market. Students applied structured analytical frameworks to analyse consumer trends, competitive dynamics, regulatory environments, and operational considerations, producing evidence-based market entry recommendations.

Scalability was supported through shared project scoping, standardised assessment criteria, and structured industry engagement. Five industry professionals contributed as guest speakers, while three partner-company representatives provided ongoing mentorship. This model enabled high-quality workplace interaction without intensive one-to-one supervision and ensured consistency across teams.

The partnership generated tangible outcomes for all stakeholders. Students developed employability capabilities in consulting practice, teamwork, cross-cultural analysis, and professional communication. The industry partner received actionable insights across multiple markets.

**Enhancing Equity in Education Placements:
Building an Accessibility Database for Inclusive Practice**

Hayley Yates, Queensland University of Technology

QUT coordinates placements for over 2,800 education students annually across 500 early childhood centres and schools throughout Queensland.

With growing emphasis on disability, equity and inclusion, our placement team faces increasing demand to accommodate diverse student needs by facilitating adjustments on placement. Eg. sourcing wheelchair accessible sites, or tailored supports for cognitive, social-emotional and sensory disabilities. In 2025, QUT developed Equity Plans for 116 education students requiring adjustments on placement.

Finding suitable sites to accommodate individual adjustments was unsustainable for the placement team. To streamline this process, I explored online resources for a centralised source of information identifying accessibility data of schools and early childhood centres, however, no publicly available resource existed. To address this gap, I developed and distributed a comprehensive survey to over 2,000 partner sites, requesting detailed information on the accessibility of their site. The response was significant, with more than 800 sites contributing data.

The collected data has been consolidated into a dedicated database and integrated with QUT's placement management system, InPlace. This enhancement now enables staff to make informed decisions when sourcing placements and empowers students to access accessibility information via self-placements. The initiative has now been rolled out university-wide, and I have presented this work to the Department of Education, with plans underway to expand the project further.

Future work will focus on updating accessibility data in collaboration with the Department of Education, exploring public access to assist families, and extending the survey to capture additional equity-related features in WIL.

**From Classroom to Newsroom:
Co-Designed WIL Partnership Enhancing Graduate Employment**

Ada Yeung, The University of Sydney

Partner co-designed Work Integrated Learning (WIL) initiatives are increasingly essential for preparing students for a rapidly evolving professional landscape. This presentation shares a two-year case study of a co-designed WIL partnership between the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney and Nine Publishing, illustrating how purposeful collaboration can drive employment outcomes and enable students to develop a professional identity and industry confidence.

Co-designed from inception, the partnership centred on shared priorities: enabling Nine to identify and nurture emerging journalism talent, while embedding authentic, industry-aligned learning into the University's curriculum. Activities were shaped collaboratively, including a five-week summer internship program with The Sydney Morning Herald, recruiter-led career and employability masterclasses, on-campus panels with senior editors, and curated newsroom visits that immersed students in professional practice.

Students gained real newsroom experience, published bylines, and developed professional confidence-culminating in successful graduate employment. Nine benefitted from early engagement with potential cadets and insights into emerging graduate capabilities. The University strengthened curriculum relevance by integrating contemporary industry perspectives and authentic newsroom materials into teaching.

This presentation will share practical, transferable strategies for co-designing and sustaining industry partnerships that create meaningful WIL experiences. Attendees will gain actionable insights into co-designing WIL initiatives with partners to maximise impact and outcomes for all stakeholders.



“Ready123GO”: Moving the Needle on Student Engagement and Reporting on Employability Learning Gains

Karen Young, Deakin University

Co-Authors:

Sophie McKenzie, Deakin University

Michael Wright, Deakin University

Lynda O'Sullivan, Deakin University

The workshop presents data from an ethics-approved action-research project, highlighting where student confidence in employability skills sits across their program-wide learning journey. This intervention provides concrete evidence for how our approach to enhancing employability and evaluating often nebulous outcomes is shifting how we innovate and report on employability learning locally. The workshop balances theory, practice, and evidence, showcasing a tested intervention readily transferrable across disciplines and institutions. Our reverse-engineering approach to light-touch assessment re-design will appeal to those keen to also pilot at-scale innovations capable of integrating existing WIL approaches to enhance employability learning. The “Ready123GO” model is adaptable across institutional contexts delivering scalable and sustainable WIL.

Shaping STEM Futures: An Inclusive and Evidence-Based Co-Curricular Model Advancing Quality and Innovation in WIL

Bitu Zaferanloo, Swinburne University of Technology

Co-Authors:

Caslon Chua, Swinburne University of Technology

Irine Henry, Swinburne University of Technology

Carolyn Beasley, Swinburne University of Technology

Preparing students for the future of work requires inclusive, evidence-based models that strengthen student confidence, communication, and professional identity. Shaping STEM Futures, a multi-award-winning co-curricular WIL program at Swinburne University of Technology, empowers students across STEM disciplines to communicate complex ideas, collaborate across sectors, and lead sustainable change. Through scaffolded activities such as the Start Talking science communication challenge, industry-aligned innovation sprints, interdisciplinary teamwork, digital storytelling, and GenAI-enabled communication tools students build capabilities that are directly transferable to workplace contexts.

Drawing on five years of evaluation data ($n > 2,000$ students), the program demonstrates significant improvements in student confidence, engagement, and readiness for WIL and employment. Over 90% of students report increased ability to communicate STEM concepts to industry and community audiences, and over 80% report greater understanding of professional expectations. The program's inclusive design ensures accessibility for diverse cohorts and strengthens cultural relevance by engaging industry, government, Indigenous, community, and alumni partners.

This presentation will showcase an evidence-based, scalable model for inclusive WIL, sharing practical strategies, digital innovations, and partnership approaches that enhance student experiences and institutional capability. Findings offer actionable insights for educators and administrators seeking to embed inclusive, high-impact, and sustainable WIL practices.



Beyond the Ivory Tower: Enhancing Graduate Research Professional Development and Career Mobility through Applied WIL Principles

Christine Bilsland, Macquarie University

This poster demonstrates how WIL principles are applied at the Graduate Research Academy, Macquarie University to support research students' professional capability development and expand agentic career opportunities.

While doctoral candidates routinely develop and apply professional capabilities through authentic project work, their degrees often lack the intentional curricular structures typically associated with WIL (Zegwaard et al., 2023). As a result, employers may overlook the professional skills that Graduate Researchers develop and exercise over the course of their research projects (Mewburn et al., 2020; ACGR, 2025). Concurrently, Australian universities are increasingly adopting employability frameworks that explicitly recognise real-world skill mobility and expanded career pathways in response to increased PhD completion rates paired with an uncertain academic job markets and government funding incentives for universities to offer internships and Industry-partnered opportunities.

The Graduate Research Development Framework was launched in 2024 to support students to identify, plan, evidence, and reflect on professional capabilities advanced across candidature, cultivate agency in exploring career options, and making capability development visible and translatable through structured reflection and evidence capture. The poster will show the Graduate Research Development story so far, share the continuous evaluation and adaptation process to date, and prompt collaborative discussion on how WIL can be mobilised in graduate research to enhance employment outcomes.



Pragmatics in Practice: How Pragmatic Labelling can Improve Outcomes in Work-Integrated Learning

Jordan Box, Adelaide University

Linguistic pragmatics explains that the labels we use to refer to people, groups, objectives, and tasks determine the perceptions and understanding we have of that object, that is, they generate the prototype we perceive within that object's schema. This in turn shapes our perceptions of our abilities and responsibilities towards that prototype. Teachers' perceptions of their pedagogical abilities and responsibilities are affected by the labels applied to students, such as 'special needs', 'high demands', 'gifted and talented'. An understanding of this pragmatic effect is required in WIL so that language may be adapted, and participants may fully appreciate their position, roles, responsibilities, abilities, tasks and expectations, to efficiently and effectively achieve optimal outcomes. This systemic review reveals the ways that subtle changes in phraseology shifts an individual's prototype and effects their understanding of their abilities to act towards a task or goal. In applying these findings, WIL participants can more effectively apply pragmatics in their planning and teaching to best suit the needs of the learner and the organisation.



Work-Integrated Career Development Learning (WICDL): A Students-as-Partners Approach to Employability Development through Interdisciplinary Project-Based WIL

Adrian Buck, University of Wollongong

Work-integrated learning (WIL) and career development learning (CDL) are often treated separately: WIL enables students to learn through purposeful work tasks; CDL helps students orient themselves toward future careers. This poster introduces work-integrated career development learning (WICDL) and a students-as-partners approach to inclusive, meaningful, and impactful WIL experiences.

In an interdisciplinary undergraduate elective subject at the University of Wollongong (UOW), students identify employability skills they want to strengthen, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, and critical thinking, and employ them through a real-world university project. Following a successful UOW-based partnership with the Safe and Respectful Communities (SARC) team in 2025 to address gender-based violence in higher education, the subject is currently partnering with the Careers and Employability unit in 2026 to investigate students' expectations of university career services.

Student teams engage with existing data, research students' needs, explore perspectives on current services, and present recommendations for future initiatives, mirroring tasks traditionally undertaken by employees or interns. Upon completion, students gain real-world employability skills, and university-based partners turn student insights into real-world projects.

This poster proposes that authentic WICDL partnerships do not need to begin outside the university. Working with university services on familiar challenges creates shared grounding and can enable student participation without extensive industry knowledge or expertise, a barrier that has previously emerged when working with industry stakeholders outside the university.

To extend this work, WIL Australia Conference attendees are invited to collaborate on future WICDL initiatives and research.



Bridging the Engineering Professional Practice Gap through WIL

Joanne Castelli, Curtin University

Co-Authors:

Jenney Ngu Lim Song, Curtin University Malaysia

Lai Zhenyue, Curtin University Malaysia

The study presents the design and implementation of a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) initiative that bridges the gap between textbook knowledge and real-world engineering. This initiative aimed to develop both technical competencies and soft skills required in industry settings.

The WIL activity was embedded within the specialisation unit (Water and Wastewater Treatment Processes) and implemented through structured, industry-relevant learning tasks supported by a site visit to industry. During the visit, practicing engineers provided direct guidance to students by sharing operational insights, real process conditions, and constraints encountered in actual treatment systems. This industry engagement enabled students to contextualise theoretical concepts within actual engineering practice.

Co-creation was incorporated into this project, where students developed video-based learning resources that captured the authenticity of the site experience, operational practices, and engineering challenges observed during the visit. These student-generated resources were intended to support future cohorts, particularly students with limited travel opportunities, while simultaneously expanding the availability of authentic learning resources beyond chemical engineering disciplines. The learning design also incorporated problem identification, technical analysis, collaborative discussion, solution development, and reflective feedback to encourage active engagement and system-based thinking.

Evaluation based on student participation, submitted outputs, and feedback indicates increased engagement, stronger interest in wastewater treatment processes, and improved holistic understanding of engineering systems and operational constraints.

The findings suggest that structured WIL activities integrating direct industry exposure can enhance the authenticity and effectiveness of engineering education while demonstrating the important role students can play in the co-creation of learning resources.



Embedding Structured Teamwork as Work-Integrated Learning for Career Self-Efficacy

Estee Ch'ng, Western Sydney University

Co-Authors:

Linh Nguyen, The University of New South Wales

Seung Jung (SJ) Yang, The University of New South Wales

Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) is central to supporting students' career readiness by enabling authentic skill application, strengthening employment pathways, and fostering career self-efficacy. Yet teamwork, despite being one of the most consistently emphasised employability capabilities, remains insufficiently scaffolded in many business curricula.

This paper reports on an Australian SoTL pilot that reconceptualised teamwork as a structured form of WIL within a third-year business subject ($n = 80$). The intervention embedded the D.I.A. framework (Tregloan & Thompson, 2021), simulated workplace roleplay (Hains-Wesson et al., 2023), team charters, and iterative collaboration workshops. Although workplaces typically assign rather than self-select teams, topic-based formation scaffolded intrinsic motivation and student autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Grenier et al., 2024), reflecting emerging practice in innovation-driven industries where interest-driven collaboration is increasingly valued. This supported students' meaningful engagement with process training, reflective practice, and peer feedback, developing the collaborative confidence and professional self-efficacy central to career readiness.

A mixed methods evaluation incorporating reflective surveys ($n = 17$), peer review data, assessment outcomes, and complaint tracking revealed strong recognition of teamwork's employability value (100%), positive collaborative experiences (89%), and high peer review performance ($M = 4.5/5$). Dysfunction rates (12.5%) were notably lower than unstructured group contexts (20-30%). Educators' feedback ($n = 5$) confirmed the structured approach mitigated uneven participation and communication challenges.

Overall, this model demonstrates that structured teamwork, when intentionally designed as WIL, positions students for professional confidence and career readiness. It advances the case for embedding collaborative capability as a legitimate and assessable WIL practice in business education.



Embedding Career Development Learning in Clinical Laboratory Medicine Placements

Lara Escane, Flinders University

Co-Authors:

Voula Gaganis, Flinders University

Margaret Alexander, Flinders University

Nalini Klopp, Flinders University

Work integrated learning (WIL) in clinical diagnostic laboratories provides authentic professional immersion; however, career development learning is often implicit and inconsistently articulated by students. This project describes the redesign of fourth-year Laboratory Medicine placements to embed structured career development learning through an integrated assessment framework.

Elements of the framework have since been adopted within research-based placement topics, demonstrating transferability across disciplinary contexts and reinforcing the scalability of embedding career development learning within authentic workplace curricula.

Existing assessments were refined and aligned to nationally informed career learning capabilities (National Careers Institute, 2022), creating a sequenced pathway comprising scaffolded weekly reflections, a structured reflective synthesis report, and an option-based e-Portfolio evidencing professional capability. Reflection prompts are developmentally staged across placement, consistent with assessment design principles positioning feedback and reflection as central to learning (Boud & Molloy, 2013), enabling students to recognise progression in professional identity, judgement, and readiness for practice. The e-Portfolio provides professionally aligned artefact pathways, supporting diverse expressions of capability.

Outcomes demonstrate visible and measurable translation of WIL into professional mobility. Students have adapted assessed case studies for professional scientific communication bursaries, presented research at health network forums and secured graduate employment within the diagnostic pathology sector. Structured mentoring, delivered in partnership with alumni industry professionals, supports authentic networking, professional dialogue and confidence in workplace settings.

By making career capability explicit, assessable and developmental across placement, this approach enhances student agency, employability articulation and professional self-efficacy, contributing to real-world graduate mobility in biomedical education.



Ideas to Impact: The Achieving Improvement Masterclass (A_I_M) Program

Elizabeth (Lisa) Evans, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service / University of Tasmania

The Achieving Improvement Masterclass (A_I_M) is an interprofessional work-integrated learning (WIL) program designed to empower healthcare staff to embed continuous improvement and redesign into everyday practice. Locally developed the program is grounded in the evidence-based Healthcare Redesign methodology, providing a structured framework for leading sustainable improvement. A_I_M supports participants to lead real-world improvement projects aligned with organisational priorities, combining experiential project-based learning, targeted support, and interprofessional collaboration to give staff the agency and confidence to lead change. The program brings together staff from varied professions to learn with, from, and about each other, fostering shared understanding and collective problem-solving. Pivotal components include experiential learning through projects with structured workshops and milestones; expertise and leadership via mentorship, guest speakers, and feedback from local and state improvement leaders; interprofessional collaboration; and targeted support through tools, frameworks, and ongoing guidance. The program's cost-neutral design promotes equitable access. Evaluation of the 2024 pilot showed measurable increases in confidence, collaboration, and capability, with early 2025 results confirming sustained leadership growth and stronger interprofessional networks. Building on its success, the A_I_M Faculty now contributes to ongoing facilitation, supporting program sustainability and scalability.



From Uncertainty to Responsible Use: Simulating Professional Practice through Synthetic Users in WIL-Aligned Business Education

José Gomes Sakakibara, University of Notre Dame Australia

Co-Authors:

Valeria Pashkova, University of Notre-Dame Australia

Susan Sherringham, University of Notre-Dame Australia

Stacy-Lee Vanoska, University of Notre-Dame Australia

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is reshaping professional practice, yet universities face a challenge: how to develop students' AI work literacies at scale, within the curriculum, and without the resource demands of industry-engaged WIL. Students who receive no structured opportunity to critically engage with GenAI risk entering the workforce underprepared. This study presents a non-placement WIL model (Dean & Rook, 2023; Kay et al., 2019) in which GenAI-generated synthetic consumer profiles are embedded into assessment tasks informed by industry input across three undergraduate business units at an Australian university.

Drawing on the non-placement work-based learning typology (Dean & Rook, 2023), this simulation-based approach positions GenAI engagement as a work literacy scaffold, designed to build the critical judgement, ethical reasoning, and professional readiness for industry-engaged WIL and AI-augmented workplaces. Students completed applied tasks, including SWOT analysis, customer profiling, and research synthesis using synthetic consumers, followed by structured reflection on their use of GenAI.

Data were collected via online questionnaires at two stages: prior to the intervention (Stage 1, n=84) and upon completion (Stage 2, n=38). Stage 1 revealed that without structured engagement, students defaulted to avoidance or to uncritical use of GenAI, driven by fear of academic-integrity consequences rather than principled understanding. Stage 2 findings indicate a meaningful shift: students increasingly distinguished responsible, oversight-driven use from uncritical reliance, articulated verification strategies, and critically reflected on GenAI use in professional contexts.

These findings suggest that simulation-based non-placement WIL offers a scalable, inclusive pathway for developing the employability capabilities required in AI-augmented professional environments (Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017). The study contributes evidence-based innovation in WIL curriculum design, demonstrating how non-placement WIL can develop professional AI literacies that graduate employability increasingly demands.



Understanding the Needs of Disabled and Neurodiverse Students during University Coursework Studies and WIL Placements to Improve Graduate Employment Outcomes

Rosemarie Herbert, Monash University

Co-Author:

Natalie White-Wall, Western Sydney University

This project examines the pain-points of the transition to the graduate work-force following tertiary study by individuals with a neurodevelopmental condition (eg. ADHD, autism).

There are increasing numbers of university students identifying as neurodiverse (Hiller et al, 2018), yet neurodiverse graduates are the least employed group of higher education graduates (Vincent, 2019). Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and university arranged and/or evaluated internships can serve as important bridges between universities and industries, ideally benefiting students, companies, and universities alike. Yet alignment in expectations between the groups is difficult to achieve (Ajjawi et al, 2019).

A survey was distributed to all students registered with the relevant disability support services at three Australian universities and via an open call-out on LinkedIn. The survey addressed questions about satisfaction with their experiences as well as questions asking students to reflect on whether or not they received adequate support and training in their WIL placement and during their university studies. We conducted a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the survey data (n=187) and of semi-structured interviews with 24 students.

Key university supports identified as crucial to success during coursework studies included flexible attendance and assessment deadlines, access to assistive technologies and early access to class resources. Undertaking a WIL placement benefited students by demystifying future careers, facilitating practical application of theory, and professional networking. Barriers both at university and at placement included inaccessible environments, fear of discrimination, challenges balancing commitments, and social and communication difficulties.



Undergraduate Male International Nursing Students' Experiences of Living and Studying in Australia

Rupali Hinge, Western Sydney University

Co-Authors:

Kazem Razaghi, Western Sydney University

Gillian Murphy, Western Sydney University

Aileen Pamonag Lane, Western Sydney University

Aim - This study explores the lived experiences of male international undergraduate nursing students in Australia, focusing on how they navigate academic learning, clinical skill development, and professional identity within a gendered and cross-cultural context.

Background - International male nursing students often encounter cultural, academic, and social challenges when studying abroad (Linden et al., 2022; Noordien et al., 2020). There are social and political factors that lead to minimal participation of males in nursing, as it raises a question about their masculinity and sexuality (Teresa-Morales et al., 2022). While existing literature examines international student experiences broadly, there is limited focus on male nursing students' a minority within a female-dominated profession. Understanding their unique perspectives is essential for fostering inclusivity and improving retention in nursing.

Methods - A qualitative narrative inquiry approach was adopted (Clandinin, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2023). Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analysed using narrative analysis to identify recurring threads within participants' stories (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Findings - Four interconnected threads emerged: transitioning to a new country; being a male, which explained gender discrimination mainly in clinical settings; experiences of feeling supported and connected; and building resilience via peer and mentor support. These threads highlight the complexity of cultural and gendered transitions and the strategies students employ to overcome challenges.

Conclusion - This study underscores the intersecting cultural and gendered challenges faced by male international nursing students. Despite these barriers, supportive relationships foster resilience, self-efficacy, and professional growth. Inclusive, gender sensitive, and culturally responsive educational practices are essential to enhance belonging, retention, and equitable outcomes in nursing education.



Leveraging Data at Scale

Jun Kha, UNSW Sydney

Co-Author:

Naureen Shehzad, UNSW Sydney

Administering Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at scale presents significant operational and strategic challenges, particularly when managing student engagement, placement tracking, compliance, and progression across a cohort of more than 10,000 students. In the absence of a single system capable of capturing the full WIL journey and supporting accreditation and reporting requirements, flexible and innovative approaches are required. At UNSW Engineering, the Professional Engagement team has addressed this challenge by developing a suite of customised dashboards and reports using Microsoft Power Platform. These low-code solutions integrate data from multiple systems, transforming it into centralised, accessible, and actionable insights for both professional and academic staff. This has enhanced visibility across the WIL lifecycle, enabling more efficient monitoring of student progress, reducing manual administrative effort, and improving responsiveness to student and faculty needs.

The dashboards support key functions including tracking compliance, identifying at-risk cohorts, streamlining approvals, and enabling timely communication and decision-making. They also provide deeper insights into program outcomes, equity data, and placement trends, contributing to improved service delivery and a more seamless student experience. This poster showcases a practical approach to building scalable WIL data solutions, including examples of the dashboards, and highlights the ongoing challenges of managing data across multiple systems. It invites discussion on the most valuable data for WIL and the system capabilities required to support future-focused, sustainable program delivery.



Owning the First Two Stages: Adapting the UTS WIL Quality Framework for a Pathway College

Kwang Kim, UTS College

Co-Author:

Jasmine Cheng, UTS College

Pathway colleges occupy a distinctive position in Australian higher education. They prepare a predominantly international student cohort for university entry, and they do it in a short window of up to three trimesters. That compressed timeframe makes embedding Work Integrated Learning (WIL) genuinely difficult. Most established WIL models were developed for multi-year programs and assume horizons pathway colleges do not have (Zegwaard & Pretti, 2023).

This presentation reports how UTS College adapted the UTS WIL Quality Framework (Trede & Wehr, 2021) for the Diploma of Information Technology (IT). The adaptation rests on a deliberate scoping decision: the College owns the Foundational and Developmental stages of the WIL continuum, while UTS takes students through the Professional stage via its established Bachelor of Information Technology pathways. Rather than treating short tenure as a limitation, the model positions it as authentic alignment with the student journey.

The approach has three components. First, a stage-to-level mapping designed around the trimester structure. Second, an assessment audit method drawing on existing WIL typologies (KAIDER et al., 2017), using three-axis scoring against the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA Levels 1–3) as the IT-specific external benchmark. Third, a *reframe, don't rebuild* reform principle that aligns existing assessments with WIL without disrupting weighting, due dates, or learning outcomes.

The approach is being piloted in Web Systems in Trimester 3, 2026. The method is deliberately designed to be discipline-agnostic, with extension to other College programs planned from 2027.



Scaling Authentic WIL through Live Client Consulting Projects in Online Higher Education

Abd Moh'd, Swinburne University / Online Education Services

Co-Author:

Ruth Delagas, Online Education Services

As demand for online education grows, scaling authentic Work Integrated Learning (WIL) raises a critical question: how can institutions expand access to WIL without compromising quality in an increasingly AI-driven learning environment? Swinburne Online's Business Consulting Project capstone unit addresses this challenge by engaging final-year students in multidisciplinary teams to deliver solutions for industry clients. This learning model requires students to apply their disciplinary knowledge under industry constraints, building critical thinking and adaptability required in their careers.

The integration of Assurance of Learning (AoL) frameworks within the design and delivery of the unit is a key feature of the model. In an increasingly AI-enabled learning environment, the framework adopts a connected assurance approach combining pedagogical design and evidence-based evaluation of student performance to support quality assurance and academic judgement at scale. Through aligned assessment design, client engagement, and cumulative evidence of learning, student capability becomes visible over time rather than relying on isolated assessment artefacts. Professional identity development is further supported through client engagement, an Industry Discussion Panel facilitated by the Institute of Management Consultants (IMC), and the Consultancy Excellence Awards.

This model demonstrates how authentic online WIL can be scaled while supporting graduate employability, quality assurance, and confidence in student outcomes.



Pre-Service Teacher Placement Programs: Challenges to International Students and Suggested Solutions

Thi Phuong Lan Nguyen, The University of Newcastle

The internship and placement are crucial stages, which must be paid the highest attention by all the programs' stakeholders involved. To prepare students with sufficient knowledge and skills prior to commencement of the internship and placement requires efforts of not only the students but also the related training programs stakeholders. This task is more challenging when the students are international whose backgrounds are varied in both languages and cultures. Supervising and observing students' placement(s), I find concerns about insufficient preparation they are provided, especially with the online program students. A qualitative study with 8 individual interviews and policy documents was conducted to investigate the challenges that the Asian students who are taking higher education programs in 4 universities in Australia are suffering prior and during their placement in the education sector. The initial findings relate to the culture shocks, the ethical following insufficiency, the workplace policy (mis)understandings due to students' poor English proficiency, and the miscommunication with the educators/directors at the placement centres. Some potential recommendations to improve preparation of students' English language proficiency, cultural and socio-cultural knowledge and skills to make them more confident at placement are made. Other recommendations to the stakeholders involved in the WIL curriculum intention and enactment are also suggested with the aim of changes for quality improvement. This study is not only helpful to the pre-service international students but also to the WIL programs' managers, designers, and supervisors, which will be meaningful in improving the quality of the placement program(s) as well as the students' major training programs.



From Logbooks to Learning Systems: Systemic Design for Scalable WIL

Kyle Norton, Curtin University

Co-Authors:

Joanne Castelli, Curtin University

Tania McKiernan, Curtin University

Designing scalable and sustainable work-integrated learning (WIL) in large, accredited programs requires moving beyond fragmented, compliance-driven approaches toward intentional, program-wide learning design. At Curtin University, the Engagement with Professional Practice (EPP) Framework provides a model for integrating professional practice, career development learning, and reflective practice across undergraduate and postgraduate engineering and technology programs.

Developed through interdisciplinary co-design with academics, WIL advisors, careers practitioners, and students, the EPP Framework responds to systemic challenges in traditional WIL models: disconnected learning tasks, inconsistent feedback, limited visibility of capability development and inequitable access to authentic professional experiences. The redesigned approach embeds professional practice learning from first year through structured milestone units, scaffolded reflective practice, and programmatic assessment mapped to Engineers Australia Stage 1 Competencies.

A key enabler of scalability is the LabArchives ePortfolio. Adapted from infrastructure already proven at scale within Curtin's chemistry units, this digital platform supports consistent feedback loops, progression tracking, and constant visibility of and engagement with the EPP program over a student's degree. Together, these design choices reframe WIL as a pedagogical design challenge rather than a student deficit, shifting practice from a graduation requirement toward integrated, future-focused professional learning.

Our presentation will demonstrate how systems design, curriculum integration, and cross-functional partnership sustain implementation across large cohorts while strengthening equity, student agency, and career readiness.



DVE Business Solutions' 2025 Work Integrated Learning and Placements Sector Survey

Larissa Pearce, DVE Business Solutions

Work Integrated Learning is now expected to deliver more than individual student experience. It is increasingly tied to employability, equity, regional workforce development, industry engagement, institutional risk, and the broader student value proposition. As these expectations grow, so too does the need to understand the operating conditions that make WIL sustainable, scalable and safe.

This poster presents insights from DVE Business Solutions' 2025 Work Integrated Learning and Placements Sector Survey, a sector-informed scan of how providers are structuring, supporting and evolving WIL and placement activity across diverse institutional contexts.

Rather than focusing only on isolated challenges, the poster explores the patterns sitting beneath them: how governance arrangements shape visibility and consistency; how systems and workflows influence staff and student experience; how rural and remote delivery changes the nature of operational readiness; and how institutions are beginning to think about quality, risk, equity and innovation as connected design questions.

The poster will invite participants to consider what becomes visible when WIL is viewed as an operating ecosystem rather than a collection of local processes. It will translate sector feedback into a practical set of discussion points for leaders and practitioners, including where evidence can support better decision-making, more targeted improvement, and more defensible investment.

The intent is to contribute to a constructive sector conversation: not simply what is difficult about WIL, but what needs to be better understood, designed and supported if WIL is to deliver meaningful impact for students, partners, institutions and communities.



One Problem, Three Framings: Fourteen Years of Evidence on Work-Integrated Learning for Chinese International Students

Adeline Peh, University of Southern Queensland

Although work-integrated learning (WIL) research has expanded over two decades, it has paid limited attention to the difficulties facing Chinese international students (CIS), who make up 23% of international students.

Internships are pivotal to how Australian universities and international education marketers promote employability to CIS. However, universities market skills programmes, whereas Chinese students manage employability as careerists or ritualists. Little empirical evidence shows whether CIS experiences match these expectations. Unrealised expectations put satisfaction, reputation, enrolments and HE export income at risk.

This Master of Research project is a bilingual (English and Chinese) scoping review of peer-reviewed empirical studies (2005–2025) across pre-COVID, COVID, and post-COVID periods, using PRISMA-ScR, VOSviewer, NVivo and the Gioia methodology, validated by a survey of ten WIL coordinators.

Preliminary findings identify 15 first-order concepts: graduate employability, student wellbeing, mental health, trauma, WIL preparation, access, equity, inclusiveness, globalisation, Industry 4.0 and 5.0, integrated curriculum design, assessment strategies, digital technology, mobile technology and AI. The main finding is that CIS internship experiences depend on university support, students' motivation, and university–industry collaboration.

The findings help universities, marketers, and regulators design scalable, inclusive WIL that matches assurances with practice, protecting the A\$38.8 billion HE exports.



Reflection in Practice: Creating Lifelong Introspective Learners

Jake Port, Monash University

Reflective assessment is often retrospective, encouraging students to describe experiences rather than critically analyse personal growth and behavioural change. Similarly, feedback is frequently treated as a procedural task rather than a core part of learning. Through a rubric framework combining short and long-form reflection with peer feedback, I developed a model that supports students in building introspective analysis throughout their studies while learning collaboratively with peers.

Students identify assumptions and biases prior to reflection, encouraging deeper self-analysis and engagement with personal and professional growth. Using Gibbs Reflective Cycle alongside the FeedbackFruits platform, I created a framework that can be integrated into most subjects with minimal modification. The goal is to demonstrate to students that reflection and feedback are important tools for self-development. Students learn to apply a constructive but honest lens to their practices, integrate peer feedback, interrogate assumptions and build confidence in their capabilities. These skills are valuable beyond university, where feedback and adaptability are central to professional practice.

I apply this model with science students in the Bachelor of Science Global Challenges degree at Monash University, where students engage with unique topics including lean business methodology, political advocacy, strategic business innovation and pitching. These interdisciplinary topics often challenge students' existing beliefs and assumptions, with many initially questioning the relevance of the content and expressing a rejection of the related fields of work. The reflective model supports students in engaging more meaningfully with unfamiliar material, recognising transferable skills and reconsidering assumptions about their future professional direction.

This presentation will provide educators with a practical overview of the framework, demonstrate evidence of student growth through reflective excerpts and explore how the model supports individual assessment within group-based learning across disciplines and cohort sizes.



Embedding Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) in Capstone-Style Units: Case Study of Science Capstone Projects at the Queensland University of Technology

Lucy Reading, Queensland University of Technology

Co-Authors:

Gimhani Hemachandra, Queensland University of Technology

Sabrina Catania, Queensland University of Technology

Participation in WIL programs helps students build confidence in their professional abilities while gaining a clearer understanding of the skills and competencies expected in the workplace. Integrating WIL into capstone-style units presents a valuable strategy for bridging the gap between academic knowledge and industry expectations, particularly in science-related fields. Despite the clear potential benefits for students, there is very little published evidence available regarding student WIL experiences.

In this case study, a literature review of suitable WIL models and a targeted survey were used to gather information to inform the development of a new science capstone unit with integrated WIL. The targeted surveys focused on gathering information from current and previous capstone students about their experiences related to industry engagement, skill development and graduate outcomes for projects.

The student surveys provided insights into both the positive outcomes and the challenges experienced by the science capstone students. This presentation will share insights from our student surveys plus an overview of our current efforts to actively increase the number of projects that include direct engagement with an industry partner, with a target of 100% of projects including an industry partner within the next 2 years.



Expanding Access to Engineering WIL: A Scalable Intensive, Project-Based Model

Ilizel Retita, The University of New South Wales

In response to increasing challenges students face in securing industry engineering placements, UNSW Engineering developed the Engineering Practice Intensive (EPI), a structured, project-based intensive Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) model delivered during the summer term. Building on a 2025 pilot, the 2026 iteration demonstrates how intensive WIL can be scaled while maintaining authentic industry engagement and strong student outcomes. EPI is a six-week, full-time program equivalent to 30 days of recognised Professional Practice, where students work in multidisciplinary teams on industry co-designed engineering projects. The university leads academic supervision, learning design, and quality assurance, while industry partners contribute real-world challenges, mentoring, and feedback, reducing supervision burden while maintaining relevance. In 2026, the program expanded from 17 to 40 students and from three to seven industry partners, including repeat engagement and cross-institutional collaboration. Projects spanned renewable energy, infrastructure, digital systems, and product design, enabling students to apply technical knowledge in industry contexts. Evaluation data from surveys and stakeholder feedback indicate increased student confidence, teamwork capability, and readiness for professional practice, alongside strong industry satisfaction and emerging recruitment pathways. Iterative improvements between offerings enhanced project scoping, onboarding, and supervision structures. This poster presents EPI as a scalable, equitable alternative to placement-based WIL, highlighting key design principles, lessons learned, and practical strategies for expanding access to high-quality industry experiences while strengthening university-industry collaboration.



Impacts of NP and Simulated WIL Experiences Every Semester in Computer Science and IT

Nicole Ronald, Swinburne University

Non-placement work-integrated learning is part of most computer science and IT degrees, usually in the form of capstones and complementing internships and placements. Its appeal includes accessibility and scalability, ensuring all students get an industry-connected experience.

At Swinburne, NPWIL and simulated WIL is now embedded in all courses, with experiences in every semester for CS and IT students. These activities progressively build employability and advanced technical skills leading up to capstone projects.

There is limited research on the impact of these experiences across a course. Graduate and unit surveys consider entire courses or individual units, not a component.

The aim of the project is to understand the perception of alumni on their employability and professional readiness. The method involves undertaking a survey of graduates from 2024 and 2025, the first cohorts to undertake all NPWIL units in either CS or IT. The survey focuses on career outcomes, confidence, and perceived skills.

This study adds to understanding how NPWIL and simulated WIL can be effectively scaffolded across a course and provides a baseline for future research. This is relevant for CS and IT courses, where there are many potential options for WIL experiences and several technical and professional skills to be developed. With a dip in industry willingness for placement WIL in CS and IT, NPWIL becomes an important component of courses to ensure graduates are ready for the workforce.



Evidence-Based Micro-WIL at Scale: Embedding Responsible and Sustainable Practice through Assessment Design

Roslyn Sayers, RMIT University

Co-Authors:

Hamidreza Harati, RMIT University

Nilu Wijewardena, RMIT University

Universities face a persistent challenge: delivering high-quality work-integrated learning (WIL) at scale while maintaining equity, authenticity, and academic integrity in an AI-rich environment. This case study presents an assessment-based micro-WIL model embedded in the business capstone course Organisational Experience and co-designed with industry partner KPMG. Rather than relying on placements, the model offers structured, partner-informed WIL through sequenced assessments, industry-relevant problems, professional deliverables, and feedback touchpoints that connect academic learning with workplace expectations.

Two linked tasks simulate professional practice. In Task 1, students produce an individual business report evaluating socially responsible management actions using partner-relevant disclosures, including annual reporting, inclusion and diversity policies, and modern slavery reporting. They benchmark practices against the UN Sustainable Development Goals and relevant legislation, evaluate trade-offs through the Triple Bottom Line, and develop a stakeholder-centred problem statement explaining tensions between people, planet, and profit.

In Task 2, teams develop a five-minute video pitch and short report addressing a defined sustainability challenge. They conduct internal and external analysis, align recommendations with sustainability policy settings, justify proposals using management theory, and present an implementation plan with barriers and mitigation strategies. The video pitch builds employability-relevant communication skills while allowing flexible participation.

To mitigate over-reliance on AI tools, the model uses AI-resilient design principles: partner-specific problem framing, staged feedback, theory-to-practice justification, reflective reasoning, and deliverables requiring contextual judgement rather than generic report production. We outline the design principles, rubrics, industry engagement points, feedback processes, and evaluation framework capturing student learning and partner value through rubric analytics, reflection artefacts, and structured partner feedback.



Personalised and Targeted Career Development Approach in Engineering

Liz Smith, Adelaide University

Co-Authors:

Claire Curyer, Adelaide University

Michelle McKinnon, Adelaide University

For engineering programs to be accredited in Australia, students must complete 450 hours of Engagement with Professional Practice (EPP) across their program of study. While some hours may be achieved through in-curriculum activities, a significant portion should occur through in-industry experience. Traditionally, much of this requirement has been completed outside degree hours.

An initiative at Adelaide University embeds these EPP requirements more intentionally within the curriculum through a structured Professional Practice Program. This includes in-curriculum professional practice learning and two credit-bearing industry experience courses completed as part of the degree.

Within these courses, students complete and are supported through their in-industry experience. The focus is not to source placements for students. Instead, the courses are designed to develop the career management skills needed to identify suitable opportunities, prepare competitive applications, engage professionally with employers, and reflect on capability development. These skills support students not only to secure industry experience, but also to pursue graduate employment and navigate future career transitions.

The model integrates career development into a coordinated and assessable learning experience. A key innovation is the integration of scalable and personalised career development support. Students engage in group-based learning early in their program, followed by compulsory one-to-one consultations with career advisers during key transition points. This ensures all students receive tailored guidance, rather than only those who voluntarily access co-curricular career services.



Humanitarian Workforce Readiness through Immersive Humanitarian Education

Adriana Alana Stibral, Charles Darwin University

Man-made and natural-hazard-induced disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity around the world. There is a growing demand for formally trained humanitarian, emergency and disaster responders. Humanitarian aid organisations require graduates who can translate theory into practical skills and navigate complex operational environments. Despite growing use of simulation-based and experiential learning in disaster and emergency education, evidence remains limited on its systematic design, evaluation and transfer to professional practice, particularly in Humanitarian, Emergency and Disaster Management Studies.

This poster presents the design and delivery of 'HCS261 Fundamentals of Humanitarian Practice', a two-week undergraduate intensive as part of Charles Darwin University's Bachelor of Humanitarian Aid and Development. This uniquely designed unit applies a theory–practice–industry nexus approach, combining classroom learning, collaborative problem-solving, three humanitarian industry stakeholder engagement via one field visit, and two full-day, industry-supported humanitarian response simulations. This intentional integration of theory, experiential practice and industry exposure provides students with authentic exposure to operational humanitarian response practice and real-world challenges.

Drawing on formal and informal student feedback and reflective teaching practice, this poster highlights how an integrated theory–practice–industry approach to humanitarian pedagogy supports students' development of practical skills and knowledge, operational confidence, awareness of humanitarian sector career pathways, and professional identity through authentic industry exposure.

The initiative also contributes to the emerging evidence base for experiential, simulation-based learning in Humanitarian, Emergency and Disaster Management Studies, illustrating the potential of sustained industry collaboration and immersive pedagogy to strengthen the theory–practice–industry nexus in humanitarian education.



The Weird of WIL: Adopting Systems Thinking to Improve Student and Academic Management and Outcomes

Robert Trott, Flinders University

Co-Authors:

Thomas Vincent, Flinders University

David Hobbs, Flinders University

STEM students at Flinders University have some flexibility on when and how they complete their industry-based WIL. This flexibility includes timing that aligns with semester teaching periods and summer break, balancing other topics, full-time and part-time WIL, paid employment, illness, exceptional circumstance, access requirements, caring, and other personal commitments. This flexibility causes mess that needs to be accounted for within the WIL curriculum design.

Flinders University prospect, facilitate, and promote WIL opportunities, and allow students to source their own, providing flexibility to students and hosts. This results in students starting and ending their WIL at different times, which adds complexity for all stakeholders who manage, supervise and assess these students. Across 6, 12, and Flinders University's flagship 20-week placement, students complete 4-5 assessments and 2 experience surveys that also need to be timed correctly.

Adopting a systems approach, Flinders University have implemented processes and systems that integrate disparate systems to improve the tracking and management of students undertaking their WIL. These processes have resulted in improved assessment outcomes, improved Academic Supervisor management, and statistically significant improvements in feedback turnaround and subject completion times. The average overall subject grade increased 1.5% (n=277) not factoring late submission penalties, time to completion decreased 7 weeks ($p < 0.001$), and students had improved access to assessment management facilitated through the University's Learning Management System.

This work will present the rationale and methods for this undertaking and delve into the opportunities it has facilitated for stakeholders and the resulting benefits so that others might adopt these approaches.



Reframing WIL: Designing Programs Around Authentic Work and Career Development

Geetika Verma, RMIT University

Co-Authors:

Kerri Morgan, RMIT University

Asha Rao, RMIT University

Stephen Davis, RMIT University

Yan Wan, RMIT University

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and work-readiness are increasingly central to higher education policy and practice, yet many Australian WIL initiatives remain confined to standalone subjects and are under-explored in the mathematical sciences. Mathematics and statistics students, in particular, often struggle to articulate a professional identity and to recognise the breadth of career pathways available to them.

We reflect on how a program-wide approach to career readiness has been integrated across mathematics and statistics programs, rather than being confined to a single WIL subject. We focus on intentional curriculum design that (i) builds students' awareness of diverse and non-linear career trajectories, and (ii) supports the progressive development of professional identity, communication skills, and goal-directed behaviour. Through a reflective analysis, we demonstrate how assessment design, authentic tasks, industry-informed projects, and structured reflection can function collectively as a scaffold for lifelong learning and ongoing career development.

Our program-level perspective addresses a gap in WIL research and practice in the mathematical sciences by illustrating how distributed, embedded WIL experiences can better prepare students for transition into diverse professional contexts while cultivating reflective, self-directed learners. In doing so, we contribute to broader discourse on lifelong learning and employability in higher education.



Short or Long Industry-Based Placements? What do Students Choose and Why?

Thomas Vincent, Flinders University

Co-Authors:

David Hobbs, Flinders University

Robert Trott, Flinders University

At Flinders University in the College of Science and Engineering, our Computing and Information Technology students have the option of completing industry-based internships that are either 60 or 100 days, full- or part-time, paid or unpaid. A 2024 case study on the data collected from a cohort of over 100 students is analysed and presented.

Work-based WIL in STEM is a core contributor to enhancing a graduate's employability, level of understanding, motivation and skills leading to greater confidence in their readiness for the workplace (Kapareliotis et al., 2019; Hurley et al. 2021). Although, these positive outcomes are acknowledged, limited research has been conducted into the student's perspective and their preferred placement length, and the influence of contributing factors such as payment status or employment commitment level (full- or part-time).

University enrolment data alongside WIL specific data (payment status or employment commitment level) was collected and analysed from all third-year undergraduates studying Computing/IT within the College. Comprehensive student-based data was analysed to reveal emerging trends on contributing factors into why students selected either short (60 days) or long (100 days) WIL placements.

This case study provides an understanding of why students selected short or long WIL experiences. Do students prefer a short or long experience embedded in industry during their tertiary education? Are students more likely to select a longer placement when they are paid? Do students prefer full- or part-time WIL experiences? Are WIL grades higher for longer experiences?



Embedding Extended Internships in ICT Degrees: A Scalable and Accreditation Compliant WIL Model

Grant Wigley, Adelaide University

Adelaide University has introduced an opt in internship pathway across its Information Technology, Computer Science, Cyber Security, and Software Engineering degrees, enabling eligible final year students to replace the traditional capstone project with an extended industry placement. This presentation outlines the curriculum design, accreditation strategy, and quality assurance processes that enabled this flexible model to be fully accredited by both the Australian Computer Society (ACS) and Engineers Australia.

Students who secure an approved internship, either self sourced or arranged through the University may undertake a 30 to 60 day placement that substitutes for the capstone project and, where applicable, elective courses. All self sourced placements undergo compliance checks by the WIL professional team and academic staff to ensure alignment with accreditation requirements. A central design consideration was meeting ACS Criterion D, which requires students to complete a complex computing project within a collaborative environment. Accordingly, internship projects must involve substantial technical depth and be undertaken as part of a team, either with fellow students or industry colleagues. Parallel mapping ensured that Engineers Australia's expectations for professional practice, teamwork, and design oriented problem solving were also satisfied.

The internship pathway emphasises authentic workplace performance, reflective practice, and multi source assessment, including stakeholder presentations, progress reviews, supervisor evaluations, and a final portfolio of project work.

In the first half of 2026, more than 60 students completed internships across defence, government, small business, startups, and not for profit sectors, demonstrating strong industry uptake and the viability of this accreditation compliant alternative to traditional capstone projects.