

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in ICT Education

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Work Integrated Learning (WIL)



- Umbrella term for a variety of applied learning approaches that integrate theory with the practice of work
- Includes: industry placements (paid or unpaid), industry-linked final year projects, other forms of simulated work experience
- Wide acceptance of the potential benefits to students, universities and industry
 - National Strategy on WIL in University Education
 - Project by the Office of the Chief Scientist

WIL in ICT Education



- Employers and graduates have identified deficiencies in the workplace readiness of new graduates
- WIL is required for ACS accreditation
- ICT academic leaders recognise the value of WIL
- Industry recognises the value of WIL
- **ALTA has prioritised enhancing WIL**

Policy on an Introduction to Professional Practice (ACS, 2014)



*The program should provide students with an **authentic learning experience** in relation to its intended professional outcomes. It should enable students to understand, and preferably engage in, the type of professional experiences that they are likely to encounter following graduation from the program. This would include the application of their knowledge to complex computing problems.*

*In many cases, this will be achieved through **Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)**, which is very strongly encouraged, and / or an **industry project conducted in conjunction with an industry partner or client.***

ICT academic leaders recognise the value of WIL



ALTC project - survey of Heads of ICT / Associate Deans (2010)

- 63% regarded WIL as a key feature of their degrees
- 62% actively found and managed industry based learning
- 90% believed that successful WIL improved understanding of professional responsibility
- 58% believed that successful WIL led to new technical skills and competencies

But called for 'hard evidence' of the value

Industry recognises the value of WIL



ALTC project - survey of industry opinions on WIL (2011)

- 83% agreed that there were graduate recruitment benefits for them
- 84% felt that taking student placements was a service to the ICT industry in general
- Only 32% viewed it as a source of cheap labour for projects
- Industry placements were seen as most valuable form of WIL, followed by projects set by industry

ACDICT/ALTA



In recognition of the broad acceptance of the value of WIL in ICT education ALTA has prioritized enhancing WIL (along with benchmarking of learning outcomes) for 2014 – 2015

Strategies include:

Sharing best practices amongst the ICT academic community via the ALTA Forum



Best practices?

Before sharing best practices we need a better understanding of how WIL is handled and what the outcomes are.

Questions to consider include:

- What learning outcomes are established?
- How do learning outcomes compare across types of WIL, different institutions etc?
- How are learning outcomes assessed?