



Work-Integrated Learning at La Trobe



In the constantly evolving world of work, assisting students to develop adaptable and relevant work skills is critical. To support the delivery of diverse, scalable and sustainable WIL opportunities to greater student numbers, we have developed a university-wide strategy for WIL.

La Trobe WIL Framework

Enhancing student employability is one of the core objectives of the La Trobe University 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. We aim to position La Trobe in the top 12 in Australia and top in Victoria for graduates in full time employment through further enhancement and streamlining of our quality WIL offerings.

Objectives

To support this strategic goal, our objectives include:

- Development of a framework and associated definitions of WIL that align policies and procedures across La Trobe
- Establishment of a governance framework with defined monitoring and reporting of WIL across La Trobe
- Development of streamlined support and training resources for students, academics, and industry partners
- Design and implementation of effective evaluation tools to inform and monitor the experience of students and industry partners
- Implementation of effective communications strategies and a united web presence for WIL at La Trobe.

Deliverables

Our projected deliverables to enhance WIL at La Trobe include:

- An updated and reformed Educational Partnership Procedure (Work Based Learning)
- A set of agreement templates suitable for use across a range of placement models
- A review of support structures in place at La Trobe and subsequent recommendations to position WIL at La Trobe for greatest success
- Mapping of embedded WIL activities to the WIL framework
- A formalized process to support ongoing reporting of WIL through course management systems and placement software (i.e. InPlace)
- Design and expansion of scalable and innovative WIL models at La Trobe
- An evaluation framework to assess the quality of WIL from student, industry and academic perspectives
- A variety of comprehensive support resources (i.e. toolkits) for students, industry and academics
- A redesigned web presence for WIL at La Trobe that is clear and meaningful for students and industry partners.



Work-Integrated Learning

Definition



At La Trobe University we use a definition of work-integrated learning (WIL) that aligns to the National WIL Strategy to guide our practice:

“An umbrella term for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum”

(Patrick et al., 2008, p. iv)

During their time at La Trobe, students will engage in a range of WIL activities embedded in the curriculum that span professional awareness (through career development learning), industry connection (through professional engagement), and professional practice (through work-based learning).

To support adoption and clarification of our practice in WIL, we define these three different types of learning experiences as follows:

Work Integrated Learning

Career Development Learning

At La Trobe University, we support students' professional awareness through the design of industry-relevant and industry-informed curriculum that facilitates the development of personal awareness, career management and reflective skills.

Examples include:

- guest lectures by industry professionals
- career literacy and exploration activities
- in-class assignments or activities to prepare students for work, such as resume writing, development of professional profiles, elevator pitches and interview practice.

Professional Engagement

At La Trobe University, we support students' professional engagement through industry relevant learning opportunities undertaken within the curriculum where students are exposed to simulated and/or practice-based learning in a controlled setting.

Examples include:

- case studies and role play in class that reflect authentic work environments
- professional simulation and interprofessional learning (e.g. collaboration across professions)
- field trips and study tours to real-world contexts (domestic or international)
- industry projects that occur within the La Trobe educational environment, with primary supervision provided by a university academic.

Work-Based Learning

At La Trobe University, we support students' professional practice through a range of for-credit or course-required work-based learning opportunities. These activities involve practice-based projects or placements that take place within a workplace. Students not only observe, but are engaged in professional tasks, in most cases with industry supervision and oversight from a La Trobe academic coordinator.

In addition to what may be considered 'traditional placements', and work placements that meet the relevant standards as outlined in the Educational Partnerships Procedure, other examples that fall under this category include:

- placements undertaken by students who are enrolled under a third-party teaching arrangement with La Trobe
- placements undertaken as a hurdle, where the activity is a course requirement rather than a subject requirement
- placements undertaken at La Trobe where the university is the workplace
- placements undertaken 'remotely' where an online or home environment is considered to be the workplace.

La Trobe Work-Integrated Learning Framework

CAREER DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

Industry informed
curriculum and development
of career management skills

STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Practice-based projects
or placements within the
workplace

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Industry relevant learning
opportunities and
simulated/practice based
learning



Work-Integrated Learning Guiding Principles



The following Principles guide us in the design, establishment and operation of WIL activities for students at La Trobe University.

Safety and Compliance

We meet all internal and external compliance requirements and prioritise students' safety.

Student Employability

We ensure that all work integrated learning opportunities link theory to practice in authentic ways that help students understand the work environment and enhance their employability.

Accessibility and Support

We seek to provide inclusive and flexible opportunities for students across all our campuses and to deliver the support and resources required to maximize their success.

Evidence-Based Practice

We take an evidence-based approach to continuous improvement of the design of our curriculum, the management of our relationships with partners, and the supports provided to ensure a quality student experience.

Optimise Our Partnerships

We are committed to identifying opportunities to optimise all existing and future partnerships to increase access to authentic learning experiences for students across the university.

Showcase our Graduates

We seek to build La Trobe University's position as a partner of choice by showcasing the professional capabilities of our students to internal and industry stakeholders.

Patrick, C-J., Peach, D., Pocknee, C., Webb, F., Fletcher, M., Pretto, G. (2008) *The WIL (Work Integrated Learning) report: A national scoping study*, Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ALTC) Final Report. Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology. Available online at: www.altc.edu.au and www.acen.edu.au