# Workplace Learning Narrative

Introduction

Workplace learning (WPL) is a *powerful* pedagogical strategy that enhances *professional and occupational identity development,* employability and preparation of graduates for uncertain futures. The core purpose is preparing students to become future deliberate professionals and enhancing their employability skills.WPL is an outward facing learning and teaching strategy that purposefully exposes students to authentic professional contexts to enrich their university experience.

CSU Context for WPL

WPL is an educational partnership between industry partners/communities/clients, university and students. At its best this partnership provides authentic, transformative education that ensures industry- and profession-relevant courses and fosters students' agency to develop deliberate, professional practices.

Effective WPL programs then enable alignment with the CSU values: insightful, impactful, inspiring and inclusive, see Diagram.

WPL experiences are insightful and inclusive because students develop autonomy of practice while also engaging with professional settings, interacting with others, exploring issues of professional socialisation and developing a deeper understanding of self within professional communities. WPL is inspiring and imaginative because students problem solve and find solutions for unique practice situations while developing their practice knowledge and decision-making capabilities. WPL is impactful and practical because students make professional decisions and act in authentic, situated professional settings and experience and review the impact and consequences of their roles and activities in relation to others.
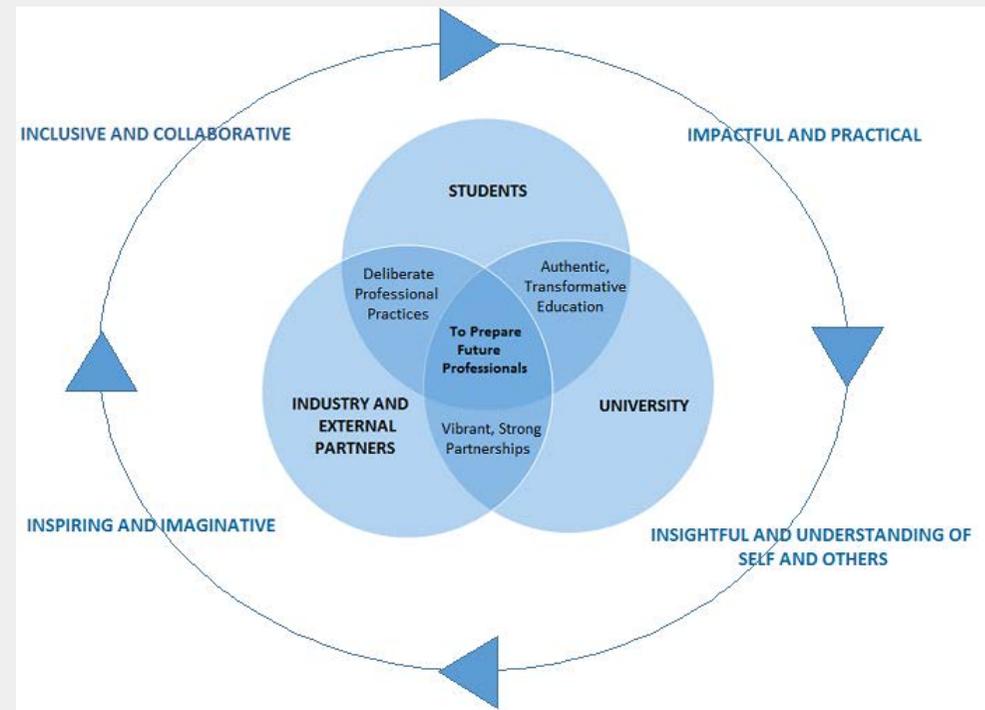
Purpose of WPL Narrative

The purpose of the WPL Narrative is to drive CSU's WPL Strategy, its scholarship and quality WPL processes at an institutional level through provision of good practice guidelines. It aligns with the University Strategy, CSU Values, CSU Research Narrative and strengthens the CSU Ethos of 'Yindyamarra Winhanganha" or 'For the public good".

Good WPL practices:

- Ensure purposeful, effective, safe WPL experiences for students
- Enable positive impacts for industry partners
- Ensure alignment with HE standards
- Manage risks
- Include meaningful WPL scaffolding and integration with course and curriculum design and purposeful use of WPL pedagogies.

Definition of Workplace Learning and its Core Features

Workplace learning (WPL) is defined as: supervised, purposeful, situated, contextual, collaborative learning that occurs in real world professional settings.

In order to be classified as Workplace learning (WPL) at CSU the following 3 elements must be present:

- students' active participation and purposeful engagement with professional roles and responsibilities in real world professional environments,
- WPL is supported by sound learning and teaching strategies and appropriate supervision,
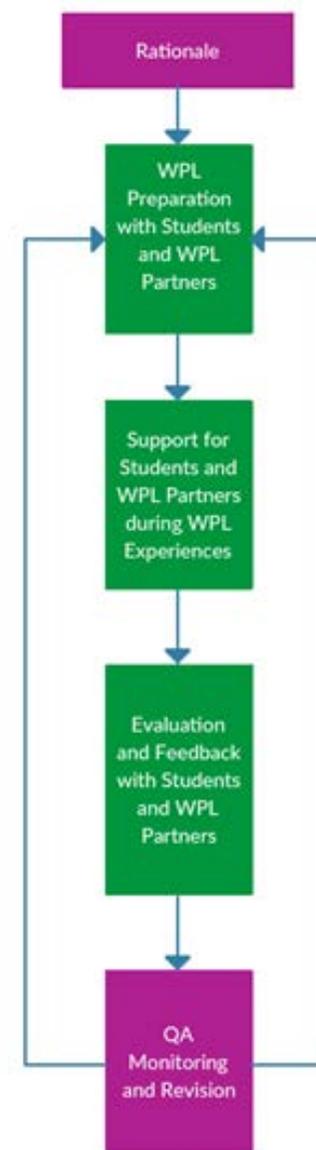- WPL counts towards academic credit as part of a compulsory component of the course.

WPL Good Practice Guidelines

The WPL good practice guidelines include eight principles. Each principle is fully explained and corresponding strategies are provided. There is also a column for courses to make notes. These guidelines are a generic compass to help course directors and teams navigate the WPL landscape and ensure quality WPL experiences.

The eight good practice principles are:

1. Create purposeful designs that align with learning outcomes
2. Select WPL experiences tailored to student and host needs
3. Establish and maintain collaborative, reciprocal partnerships
4. Ensure students are comprehensively prepared for WPL experiences
5. Provide constructive and timely support during WPL experiences
6. Facilitate constructive post-WPL reflection for students and WPL partners
7. Ensure rigorous and fair assessments of student performances and outcomes with WPL partners
8. Evaluate WPL program and revise systems and actions in consultation with WPL partners

Stages of a WPL Program

- Rationale
- WPL Preparation with Students and WPL Partners
- Support for Students and WPL Partners during WPL Experiences
- Evaluation and Feedback with Students and WPL Partners
- QA Monitoring and Revision

8 Principles of Good WPL Practices

This table includes the 8 principles, explanation by translating each principle into possible actions and a column to make notes about your own WPL practices against each principle. The principles have been developed based on the pertinent international scholarly literature, CSU WPL research and the new Higher Education standards.

Principles	Explanation: Translating the principle into action	Your Practices
1. Create purposeful designs that align with learning outcomes	Align with external requirements • Marketplace • Professional bodies • Australian Qualifications Framework Align with institution-wide requirements • CSU Professional Practice, Ethics, Lifelong Learning Graduate Learning Outcomes Align and integrate WPL with academic curricula	
	Align with learning and teaching goals at subject and course level • Learning professional roles • Learning collectively an in interprofessional contexts • Learning from experiences, critical thinking, reflective practice • Learning to question and think for self • Preparing for work and life • Understanding workplace cultures • Socialising into a community of practice • Developing agentic participants for the future world of work • Raise awareness of uncertainty and unpredictability in real practice situations • Learn to take complexity and diversity seriously and engage with it • Being curious and to search for other possibilities • Developing professional identity and firming up professional values	
	Intentionally select and align with curriculum and program structures including such possible features as multiple work experiences, capstones, project-based work, cadetships • Purposefully integrate WPL experiences into academic learning experiences on campus and online	
2. Select WPL experiences tailored to student and host needs	Consider the learning environment • Understand host organisations' core business and range of experiences that can be offered to students. • Know your students' educational, professional and personal needs (minimise risk to wellbeing during placements and maximise learning potential through good matching) • Augment place-based learning with online network-based learning and social media	

	• Provide mentorship for host supervisors ahead of placement time and sustain positive relations with the workplace • Manage risk - including managing expectations, defining lines of responsibility, and mitigating risk, by articulating the academic requirements and making known all obligations both in-person and online	
	Consider the special needs of students (WPL for students with disability form)	
	Consider how experiences are sourced (university selected or student selected) and ensuring quality measures are met	
3. Establish and maintain collaborative, reciprocal partnerships	Manage administrative issues before, during and after WPL activities (in consultation with Faculty WPL Teams) • Workplace agreements e.g. Memorandum of Understanding • Keep records e.g. time sheets • Manage payments • Organise visits to workplaces • Manage placement selection process (including advertising, interviewing and final decisions on allocating students to host workplaces)	
	Work in partnership with students and the host organisation, clients, etc. • Ensure that these supervised placements are fully understood by all counterparts • Advocate the shared responsibility of the student, workplace supervisors and the academic instructor/coordinator over student learning • Promote the shared responsibility of all stakeholders for integrating practice and theory • Ensure mutual respect and benefit • Support partnership sustainability with workplace organisations • Identify opportunities for host partners to contribute to curriculum renewal, perhaps teaching opportunities, research partnerships.	
	Practical considerations • Organisation set up including placement requirements and support • Confirm that regular support/mentoring/supervision meetings are organised with students and WPL supervisor • Consult the Work, Health and Safety Act for workplace placements • Ensure adequate communication plans to ensure students are aware of services available to them (e.g. counselling, disability needs). • Establish appropriate, timely procedures for students to communicate with relevant university WPL personnel, especially for crisis situations	
	Work in partnership with the WPL faculty team • Develop and share a communication strategy with workplace learning educators and partners – preferably ongoing throughout securing activities, student allocation/selection (as appropriate) • Establish clear critical incident procedures in line with current CRIG policy (e.g. experiencing discrimination). • Establish timely central communication point for elevation of student issues (e.g. illness, accidents).. • Provide professional development opportunities (where applicable) • Assist by providing information about facilitating and assessing student learning (where appropriate)	

4. Ensure students are comprehensively prepared for WPL experiences	Preparation for learning in professional contexts • Ensure WPL preparation activities sit within the curriculum and are supported by a range of resources • Assist students to develop appropriate learning goals for the placement that consider personal and host placement contexts and needs • Prepare students for workplace culture • Assist students understand appropriate professional conduct, language, self-presentation in the workplace • Establish clear lines of communication • Assist students to understand roles, responsibilities and expectations of all parties, including issues of using mobile technology and social media • Co-design with students and WPL Educator appropriate learning and teaching activities, including formative assessment to support effective WPL • Assist students to develop employability skills, e.g., communicating, observing, listening, questioning, discussing, decision-making, assessing, reflecting • Assist students to prepare for emotional and other challenges	
	Practical considerations • Prepare or update existing subject outline/student manual with all instructions needed by students • Establish support networks for students to access peers and university staff • Establish a process for informing students about necessary checks and paperwork	
5. Provide constructive and timely support during WPL experiences	Support for learning • Assist students in developing skills in reflection – as individuals and/or in a group • Ensure appropriate feedback is provided by both workplace learning educator and academic • Encourage, regularly elicit and respond to feedback from students	
	Enable learner autonomy • Promote opportunities for authentic experience • Encourage self and collective reflection • Facilitate students' determination of personal learning goals and documenting evidence of achievements • Encourage students to engage in self-assessment and receiving regular feedback • Enable students' self-directed learning (i.e., self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation with the structured work experience)	
	Monitor and adjust as needed workplace learning goals to meet graduate learning outcomes • Skills and attributes that are relevant to the workplace context: locally, nationally and/or globally • Knowledge of discipline of study and the workplace context: locally, nationally and/or globally • Capacity to contribute as a member of a workplace or as an entrepreneur • Develop professionalism and citizenship	

6. Facilitate constructive post-WPL reflection	Encourage meaningful reflection that is designed to facilitate students' deeper understanding of their skills, knowledge, attributes and capacity to contribute • Ensure that students have a structured space to debrief and reflect on workplace experiences with peers, the university (academic coordinators) and the workplace (workplace educators) • Consider methods of reflection (in person, online, in groups, individual) and actions for future WPL • Identify ideas gathered from WPL experiences to inform curricula revision and renewal to ensure industry-relevant curricula • Design reflective experiences so that they facilitate the integration of learning from the workplace and academic program and career transitions to workplace • Encourage debriefing opportunities that are structured and planned, confidential and allow for freedom of expression and are specifically focused on the WPL experience.	

7. Ensure rigorous and fair assessments of student performances and outcomes with WPL partner	Gather information and evidence about a student's performance to either support or accredit learning
	• Consult with industry partners (and students as appropriate), about the design of assessment
	• Communicate with students about the assessment design and clarify expectations.
	• Ensure continual assessment of student learning and that students receive ongoing and timely feedback in the structured work experience
	• When preparing performance evidence be cognizant of ethical considerations (e.g., privacy, confidentiality, informed consent)
	• Consider methods of assessment appropriate to learning tasks and learning outcomes
	    • Establish and regularly review/revise learning contract
	    • Reflective journal
	    • Mid placement visits and regular (online) check-ins with students and WPL partners
	    • Final report
	    • Oral presentations	

8. Evaluate WPL program and revise systems and actions	Establish processes to capture feedback from students, partners/workplace learning educators, university liaison staff • Clearly define the purpose of the program evaluation • Follow the program evaluation steps (i.e., develop an evaluation question, choose an evaluation paradigm, select an evaluation model, develop evaluation tools, collect and analyse data, present findings) • Establish procedures to reflect on, communicate feedback to host organisation/client etc. as appropriate • Act on feedback as appropriate to improve future planning of WPL activities	
	Update and revise future activities based on evaluation data	

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