Work Integrated Learning (HE) Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The Melbourne Polytechnic Work Integrated Learning (Higher Education) Policy defines principles and requirements that assure the quality, safety and educational effectiveness of applied workplace experiences, known as work integrated learning (WIL), offered through higher education (HE) courses. Its purpose is to ensure work-integrated learning meets the needs of students, staff and partner organisations and complies with relevant legislation and education standards.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This policy applies to all work integrated learning (WIL) experiences offered in conjunction with HE courses and units (subjects) offered by Melbourne Polytechnic. This includes internships, placements, volunteer roles, employment relationship and industry-based or community-based projects, as well as simulated, virtual and experiential learning approaches to work integrated learning (WIL).

(3) The audience for this policy includes all participants in WIL experiences. This includes students, teaching staff, employer and industry partners, and accrediting bodies. This policy is also relevant to student services support functions, including access and equity services. It applies to all stages of WIL, including planning, design, engagement, completion and assessment of the WIL experience.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) WIL principles and approaches outlined in this policy support a range of student experiences and outcomes. These include:

a. Improved employability outcomes for graduates
b. Improved ability to identify career options and industry pathways for graduates
c. Identification and development of transferrable professional skills
d. Identification and development of workplace behaviours and attributes
e. Opportunities to apply theoretical and practical learning in real-world contexts
f. Conformance with industry accreditation requirements for relevant courses.

(5) Melbourne Polytechnic will ensure that a flexible range of approaches to WIL are supported to ensure that student experiences are of a high quality. This means that WIL experiences will be:

a. Safe, equitable and inclusive
b. Flexible and adaptive
c. Planned and negotiated
d. Authentic, fair and transparent
e. Clearly defined, relevant and meaningful

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(6) WIL arrangements will be made collaboratively, involving the student, employers, industry and/or community partners, and teaching staff. The design of the WIL component of study will also be closely aligned to the intended learning outcomes and accreditation requirements of each course.

Section 4 - Principles

WIL is Safe, Equitable and Inclusive

(7) Student safety and equity is the highest priority for all WIL activities. Prior to all placements, internships or other forms of WIL experience:

a. A risk assessment that specifically assesses the risk profile of the intended workplace or site will be conducted and a record retained: this must include a verification of the WIL partner's workplace health and safety, and workplace bullying and harassment policies and measures
b. Students will complete health and safety training required by Melbourne Polytechnic and all health and safety and other onboarding requirements required by the WIL partner (e.g. White Card)
c. A designated staff member (WIL Officer, course co-ordinator or teacher) will appraise, monitor and manage any health, safety or well-being concerns or threats that are identified in the risk assessment or reported by the student or WIL partner.

(8) Students will have access to WIL experiences that take special needs and ability status into account. No student will be precluded or inhibited unreasonably from participation due to personal, social, physical or health status. In accordance with these principles, all WIL arrangements will therefore abide by the following Melbourne Polytechnic policies:

a. Student Code of Conduct Guidelines
b. Supporting Students with Disabilities Policy
c. Student Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy
d. Staff and Student Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Note: Students are included in Melbourne Polytechnic's insurance policies covering health and safety risk. However, wilful misconduct or gross negligence may contravene insurance policy conditions. Any such conduct will be reasonable cause for the employer and/or Melbourne Polytechnic to suspend any WIL arrangement without notice, and to terminate the arrangement if appropriate following an investigation.

WIL is Flexible and Adaptive

(9) Melbourne Polytechnic supports a flexible approach to WIL that includes:

a. Formal internships, placements and/or community-based volunteering roles that continue for a specified period in a workplace setting
b. Virtual internships and placements that involve students in a range of workplace activities without the requirement to be physically present
c. Industry or community-based projects that involve students in programs of work or applied research with specified and measurable outcomes
d. Learning experiences that involve real-world problem-solving, collaborative teamwork, participatory action research, field research, supervised practice, project-based learning and/or other experiential learning approaches that closely simulate workplace conditions
e. Inclusion of WIL in units that are normally delivered in other modes (e.g. online, in-class) by special arrangement between students, employers and teaching staff.

(10) Melbourne Polytechnic's preferred approach to WIL is through formal internships, placements and industry-based projects. These approaches are mandatory for capstone (final integrative) units of study, and where there is a specific requirement for WIL set by an accrediting body. Unless there is a mandatory workplace experience accreditation requirement, a virtual or remote placement or internship will be negotiated where a student:

a. Has access to a virtual or remote mediated WIL experience that provides the additional advantage of learning mobility (e.g. an international internship) or an exceptional experience that would otherwise not be available due to the remoteness of the workplace location, or
b. Where special personal or family requirements (e.g. childcare or carer commitments, health and physical ability status, access to transport or other costs of participation) significantly limit or preclude the student's onsite participation, or
c. Under other circumstances or conditions deemed appropriate by the WIL officer or course co-ordinator.

(11) To support practice-based learning and to support WIL where a placement or internship of suitable quality cannot be arranged, teaching staff will develop an experiential and applied learning approach for relevant units of study in collaboration with the student. The experiential learning approach needs to be designed and approved by the WIL officer or course co-ordinator where accreditation requirements are applicable.

WIL is Planned and Negotiated

(12) Melbourne Polytechnic supports a collaborative and transparent approach to WIL which involves all parties in the design, planning and evaluation of the WIL experience. This approach must balance the expectations and requirements of all parties to the WIL arrangement, including student, teacher, employer and/or accrediting industry partner (where relevant).

(13) Where a course requires a WIL approach, planning will occur in a timely manner to allow all parties to prepare adequately for the experience. This includes providing all parties with sufficient time to carry out risk assessments, health and safety training and other logistical arrangements such as arranging transportation, uniforms and equipment, induction and onboarding procedures, and any special arrangements that may be required.

(14) The process for setting up a WIL experience will follow Melbourne Polytechnic's Work Integrated Learning (HE) Procedure, including five main steps:

a. Identify learning outcomes and requirements
a. Identify WIL approach and options
a. Evaluate quality and risk of a proposed WIL experience
a. Co-design the WIL experience
a. Define support, monitoring, assessment and evaluation approach

(15) Appropriate records of all agreements and outcomes arising from this process will be made and kept until the student has completed the WIL experience and assessment has been finalized.

WIL is Authentic

(16) Melbourne Polytechnic will ensure that WIL experiences are authentic – i.e. that the internship, placement, industry-based project or other WIL approach:

a. Is directly relevant to the student's field of study
b. Involves a variety of workplace tasks that challenge and extend the student (i.e. that are not purely administrative in nature)

c. Is suitably overseen and supported by a practice supervisor, manager and/or mentor
d. Requires the students to participate in the workplace according to the same or similar conditions applicable to standard employees (e.g. Working with Children Check, first aid certificate, White Card)
e. Includes mechanisms supporting adequate performance management so that the student has an opportunity to reflect upon and adapt their performance based on balanced, fair and constructive feedback from the WIL partner.

(17) Authentic assessment approaches will also be used. This means that assessments will:

a. Include both formative and summative assessment approaches - see Melbourne Polytechnic's Assessment (HE) Policy.
b. Occur across all stages of the learning process (i.e. assessment for not of learning)
c. Use a predominantly practice-based approach that requires students to demonstrate rather than describe or explain capabilities
d. Be defined in terms that are equally relevant and meaningful for the student, teacher, and employer or industry partner
e. Include feedback from all participants, including the student's reflective practice where appropriate.

(18) At the same time, the assessment approach will be evidenced, clearly defined and transparent, using defined criteria and achievement levels (e.g. in the form of an assessment rubric or other pre-defined model).

WIL Curriculum Design Supports Development of the 'Practitioner'

(19) WIL curriculum will be designed to support the development of transferrable professional skills, behaviours and attributes that complement discipline-specific skills and practices.

(20) This combination of skills, behaviours and attributes is designed to support the development of an effective, professional and ethical 'practitioner' within their relevant discipline or field of inquiry.

(21) Commonly required transferrable professional skills include:

a. Digital and information literacy (IT Skills)
b. Personal and professional communication
c. Numeracy
d. Teamwork and collaboration
e. Leadership
f. Stakeholder engagement
g. Analytical and problem-solving skills
h. Project management skills
i. Design-thinking.

(22) Behaviours and attributes expected in the workplace commonly include:

a. Ethics and integrity
b. Respectfulness and empathy
c. Honesty and accountability
d. Civic and community duty in the context of global perspectives
e. Inclusiveness
f. Self-organisation, adaptability and motivation

g. Self-reflection.
h. Fit for work, where students must meet certain requirements or conditions (e.g. health and security checks, vaccination, language requirements)

(23) Curriculum design processes should be used to determine the specific balance of discipline-specific skills and practices, transferrable professional skills, behaviours and attributes that are appropriate to each WIL experience. Where possible, each of these aspects of the practitioner should also be assessable. Any learning resources that are provided in conjunction with WIL experiences should focus on defining, enabling, supporting and evaluating various aspects of the practitioner.

Section 5 - Responsibility and Accountability

Task	Responsibility	Timing
Overall responsibility for the approval and management of the WIL	Executive Director Academic Operations	Ongoing
Oversight of fit-for-purpose WIL Policy and Procedure	Executive Director Curriculum Innovation and Teaching Excellence	Ongoing
Design and delivery of curriculum	Higher Education Academic staff Curriculum Unit staff	Ongoing
Ensure WIL is aligned with MP's Education Strategy	Director Higher Education	Ongoing
Ensure students are appropriately prepared for and supported throughout their WIL	Higher Education Academic staff	Prior to and during WIL Placement
Monitoring and reporting of WIL activities as per HECC's Terms of Reference.	Higher Education Course Committee (HECC)	Each Semester
Ensure insurance responsibilities are in place as per MOU	WIL Officer or designated Academic staff member and Placement Provider	Prior to and during WIL Placement
Ensure formal and informal agreements are in place with all Placement Providers with reference to the Melbourne Polytechnic Partnering Framework for guidance regarding partner communication	WIL Officer or designated Academic staff member and Placement Provider	Prior to WIL Placement
Support participation by student in WIL as per MOU and this Policy	Placement Provider	Prior to and during WIL Placement
Enrol in program and participate in WIL as per this Policy, the Student Agreement and relevant Melbourne Polytechnic Policies & Procedures.	Student	Prior to and during WIL Placement
Comply with this Policy and any associated MOUs.	Third Party Providers	Prior to and during WIL Placement
Ensure WIL meets requirements of accrediting body	WIL Officer or designated Academic staff member	Prior to and during WIL Placement
Provide advice and guidance to Melbourne Polytechnic students and staff to ensure WIL experiences are provided that take special needs and ability status into account.	Melbourne Polytechnic Student Services	Prior to and during WIL Placement

Section 6 - Definitions

(24) For the purpose of this Policy the following definitions apply:

a. Employment Relationship: A relationship of employment between a student and their employer, in which the student is entitled to receive remuneration for work performed. When referenced here, it is assumed the student will be undertaking WIL.
b. Industry-based or Community-based projects: Projects, within industry and/or the community in a real or simulated work context, that involve students in programs of work or applied research with specified and measurable outcomes.
c. Internships: A carefully monitored work or volunteer experience in which an individual has intentional learning goals and reflects actively on what the student is learning throughout the experience.
d. Placement Provider (PP): Workplace providing work integrated learning practical placement learning environment to MP student(s).
e. Simulated, virtual and experiential placements: Involve students in a range of workplace activities without the requirement to be physically present.
f. Third-Party Provider: An organisation that identifies WIL and Work Experience opportunities with a Placement Provider that may be undertaken by students of Melbourne Polytechnic.
g. Volunteer roles: Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain. Volunteering should directly or indirectly benefit people outside a volunteer's family or household or else benefit a cause. Volunteer roles continue for a specified period in a workplace setting.
h. Work Integrated Learning Placement (WILP): An assessable component of a program, designed to provide students with the opportunity, and the means, to apply skills and knowledge obtained through the study of their qualification in a supervised and authentic environment. Examples include: internships, placements, volunteer roles, employment relationships and industry-based or community-based projects, as well as simulated, virtual and experiential learning.
i. Work Integrated Learning (WIL): WIL applies class-based learning to structured and supported workplace activities and provides opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and be provided with timely feedback on their performance. WIL immerses a student in a workplace related to their course, discipline or career goals, and enables them to interact with industry and/or the community in a real or simulated work context.

Section 7 - Supporting Documents and Templates

(25) Work Integrated Learning (HE) Procedure

(26) Work Integrated Learning (HE) Student Agreement

(27) Work Integrated Learning (HE) Partner Agreement

(28) Higher Education Course Committee Terms of Reference

(29) Course Development (HE) Policy

(30) Course Development (HE) Procedure

(31) Assessment (HE) Policy

(32) Assessment (HE) Procedure

(33) Student Code of Conduct Guidelines

(34) Supporting Students with Disabilities Policy

(35) Student Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy

(36) Staff and Student Diversity and Inclusion Policy

(37) TEQSA Guidance Note: Course Design (including learning outcomes and assessment)

(38) TEQSA Guidance Note: Work Integrated Learning.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	29th September 2020
Review Date	29th September 2025
Approval Authority	Chief Executive
Approval Date	29th September 2020
Expiry Date	7th August 2024
Policy Owner	Marc Blanks Executive Director Curriculum Innovation and Teaching Excellence
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