

## **Response to the Consultation: National Priorities and Industry Linkage Fund**

Innovative and creative work-integrated learning (WIL) models are being implemented across Australia to meet the challenges of a broad range of global and national contemporary factors. Due to recent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, this trend has been accelerated as institutions pivoted WIL to online environments and reframed WIL experiences and adapted curriculum to respond to this dynamic and rapidly changing context. This has resulted in many in the sector rethinking and recreating existing WIL practices.

There is the opportunity therefore to significantly accelerate innovation in WIL and to also expand and broaden organisations involved by supporting the sector in these changes. Implementing some of the strategies in the National WIL Strategy, which were identified through extensive consultation with tertiary sector and industry groups, and all remain current today would have a significant impact. In addition, the enablers and barriers to WIL innovation and engagement with SME's have been investigated and identified together with the features of innovative WIL models. This forms the basis for the implementation of impactful strategies that could result in benefit to the students undertaking WIL, organisations partnering with Universities and the development of the capabilities required to grow the Australian economy.

### **Priorities – WIL, STEM skills and Industry relationships**

#### **8. Definition of WIL**

The following definition of WIL is clearer and is consistent with many universities across Australia than the definitions in the report.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities for students should comprise all the following key components/features to constitute WIL.

- Integrates theory with the practice of work
- Engages students with industry and/or community partner
- Involves planned authentic activities for and with industry and/or community
- Involves assessment in relation to these authentic activities as part of the curriculum

#### **10. How does a University promote WIL and the benefits of WIL especially new, innovative or remote approaches) to SMES and large organisations and is there a role for Government.**

See National WIL Strategy Approaches: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 4.1. In addition, role for Government support:

- Resources to encourage and incentivise industry to become involved e.g. wage subsidies/ tax incentives such as are being successfully implemented in Canada
- Policies and mechanisms implemented to focus on particular industry sectors for example to promote opportunities and facilitate engagement
- Additional support for employers to take on Indigenous or Students with a disability

#### **11. How can universities best engage industry particularly SME's, with WIL**

See Approach 6.2 National WIL strategy .In addition:

- Broaden the breadth and quality of engagement with their stakeholder base
- Be open to co designing WIL experiences with industry / community

- Incorporate design features to enhance experiences for all stakeholders in the WIL programs
- Provide a range of flexible , short WIL opportunities that add benefit to the organisation
- Provide support to SME's to guide their involvement
- Focus on WIL approaches that are sustainable and scalable
- Resource, support and reward staff in universities implementing WIL programs

**13. Are there specific challenges for SME's in engaging with universities that need to be addressed in the framework?**

- Access to information to understand the opportunities and models they can participate in
- Streamlined, easy processes to engage with universities with access to Discipline immersed staff to guide them
- Resources to support their engagement in areas such as supervision of student's learning
- Universities processes that are flexible and timeframes for WIL that suite industry / Community partners
- Incentives to engage student's such as wage subsidies

**Existing Practice**

**15. Does your business or university have examples of good practice, or partnerships?**

There are a range National projects that have investigated and documented good and innovative practice in WIL from across the country:

- The Innovation In WIL Project <https://acen.edu.au/innovative-models/snapshots/>
- The Edge Project Snapshots <http://acen.edu.au/wil-edge/case-studies-of-enterprise-and-entrepreneurial-wil/>

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**Further information:**

Australian Collaborative Education Network [ACEN]. (2015). *The national WIL strategy*. <http://acen.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/National-WIL-Strategy-in-university-education-032015.pdf?x99824>

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