

## WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

### 1. Purpose

To outline the minimum risk management requirements related to Work Integrated Learning activities at ECU. The risk management guideline should be read in conjunction with the [Work Integrated Learning Policy](#) and works to support the operationalising of the Policy.

The Work Integrated Learning ('WIL') Policy recognises that there is no single approach to the delivery of WIL activities that meets the needs of all Schools, courses and units; however, the purpose of these guidelines is to provide a baseline expectation regarding the level of risk management required to support the achievement of WIL objectives.

### 2. Objective and scope

The objective of WIL risk management is to promote good practice in the management of WIL activities to ensure they are conducted in an appropriate manner to minimise the risk to students, the host organisations and ECU; and ultimately deliver a high-quality student experience.

These guidelines apply to all WIL activities, which is an umbrella term defined in the Work Integrated Learning Policy and includes internships; clinical or professional placements; virtual WIL; field experience; entrepreneurial WIL; project-based WIL; and service-learning activities.

### 3. Risk management

Effective risk management occurs before, during and after a WIL activity. There are three key levels at which risk management must be conducted:

#### 3.1. For each WIL program at a School-level

Each School should consider the risks associated with their overall WIL program and document relevant WIL program risks in the School's operational risk register. In addition, Work Health and Safety ('WHS') related hazards and risk should be assessed and documented in the School's WHS Hazard Risk Register, including the controls in place relating to engaging host organisations and preparing students for placements.

Further information and guidance can be found on the [Work Health and Safety Risk Management](#) page of the Safety & Employment relations Team.

#### 3.2. For each host organisation / placement opportunity

A suitability review should be conducted for each host organisation, prior to finalising the placement of students at the host for the first time. The review should be refreshed when the host agreement is renewed (if relevant) or when the placement conditions change.

The suitability review should include making reasonable enquiries of the following risk factors:

- The nature of the industry of the host organisation (e.g. high-risk industries such as mining, manufacturing).
- The conditions of the placement, including whether it is paid or unpaid; and if paid, whether the host is proposing to employ the student or purporting to pay a stipend or scholarship.

- The nature of the activities required to be undertaken, including the level of physical risks and WHS hazards involved. A Health and Safety Hazard and Risk Factor prompt sheet to assist with identifying hazards is available [here](#).
- The location of the host organisation, including the need for students to travel and accessibility of the location. Where reasonable and practical, Schools should consider conducting a site visit or gathering alternative evidence to verify a safe working environment for the students.
- The work environment, including considerations such as remote working/working from home.
- Prior incidents, interactions and/or reputation of the host organisation.

The outcomes of the suitability review should be documented and retained at a School-level. If the suitability review indicates any potential concerns regarding suitability, a further risk assessment may be required.

Where reasonable and practicable, a written WIL agreement must be established with the host organisation. The agreement should cover:

- The nature and purpose of the placement and of the work to be carried out;
- The conditions imposed by the host, such as hours of work and dress requirements;
- If the host is proposing to employ the student, this must be made clear in the agreement;
- If the host is proposing to pay the student a stipend or scholarship, advice must be sought from Legal & Integrity to ensure the agreement is appropriately structured;
- The supervision and assessment responsibilities of host and ECU staff;
- The host and ECU's obligations regarding work health and safety, induction; and insurance requirements;
- The respective intellectual property rights of the host, ECU and student; and
- The student's responsibilities during the activity.

Further information, guidance and templates can be found on the [External Placement Agreement Process](#) page of the Legal & Integrity Team.

### 3.3. For each WIL activity

Where there is no agreement in place between the University and the host organisation, each student must have a completed [WIL Risk Management Checklist](#) in place prior to commencing their placement.

Where there is an agreement in place between the University and the host organisation, and the agreement appropriately outlines the risk management responsibilities of all parties, Schools are still encouraged to complete the WIL Risk Management Checklist (or similar) as an additional risk management tool.

The WIL Risk Management Checklist ensures there is a mutual understanding of the risk management responsibilities of the student, host organisation and ECU supervisor.

Schools may adapt the form of the checklist to meet their needs but must approve and retain a copy of each student's checklist before the placement can commence.

If the specific WIL activity differs significantly from other placements usually undertaken at the same host, then the suitability review (refer 3.1 above), including WHS risk assessment, must be reconsidered in light of the specific WIL activity.

## 4. Insurance

Maintaining adequate insurance policies protects ECU staff and students against financial loss resulting from an incident relating to a WIL activity.

### 4.1. Insurance coverage

ECU holds the following forms of insurance for student WIL activities:

- Public liability insurance
- Professional indemnity insurance (including medical treatment liability if relevant)
- Personal accident insurance (unpaid WIL activities only)
- Worker's compensation insurance (only for ECU staff supervising students whilst at host site)

This cover automatically applies to any student officially engaged in work experience duties or on practicum experience approved or arranged by ECU. In situations where students arrange their own WIL activity, the insurance coverage will apply if the activity is clearly approved by ECU.

The personal accident cover extends to the necessary travel to and from the WIL activity, and only covers out-of-pocket non-Medicare expenses. Further information can be found on the [Insurance](#) webpage of the Enterprise Risk Team. WIL activity outside of Australia must be referred to the [ECU Insurance](#) team for confirmation of coverage.

#### **Paid vs. unpaid WIL activities**

ECU's personal accident cover only applies to unpaid WIL activities. It is important to ensure hosts and students understand that if students have an accident whilst on an unpaid WIL activity; they should not be submitting a claim to the host for workers' compensation insurance as they are not an employee of the host organisation.

If the student is paid for work during the placement, then an employment arrangement may exist, and the host organisation must provide workers' compensation insurance for the student. Where the host organisation proposes to pay a stipend or scholarship, but not otherwise employ the student, the matter should be referred to [Legal & Integrity](#) to clarify the existence of an employment arrangement.

### 4.2. Certificates of currency

As per the WIL Risk Management Checklist, prior to commencing a WIL activity, the WIL coordinator must obtain a copy of the host organisation's public liability cover.

Should host organisations request certificates of currency for ECU insurance policies, these can be found on the [Insurance](#) webpage of the Enterprise Risk Team.

## 5. Incident management

Preparing to manage an incident is a key risk management strategy and depends on the type of incident:

### • **Health and safety incidents**

If an incident occurs whilst on placement, it is the responsibility of the student and ECU supervisor to report the incident, in accordance with ECU's [Incident Reporting and Investigation Guideline](#). Incidents should also be reported to the host organisation in accordance with their established reporting processes which should be made available to students during their induction.

An online incident report must be recorded in the Incident and Hazard module of Riskware. Further information and guidance can be found on the [Incident Reporting and Investigation](#) webpage of the Safety & Employment Relations Team. Students should be encouraged to download the '[Pocket Safety App](#)' prior to commencement of their WIL activity.

- **Sexual assault and sexual harassment**

Reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment must be done in accordance with the Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Policy which includes the option of reporting via an [online form](#). Further information can be found on the [Student support SASH](#) webpage.

- **Mental health and wellbeing**

Student mental health incidents can be reported to the [student incident and support](#) mailbox.

Critical incidents arising during a WIL activities will be handled in accordance with ECU's [Critical Incident Management framework](#).

## 6. Reference documents

- [Work Integrated Learning Policy](#)
- [Incident Reporting and Investigation Guideline](#)
- Standard 3.5 of the *Framework to support assurance of institution-wide quality in Work Integrated Learning*; Australian Collaborative Education Network Limited, 2019