

Fieldwork Placement Program Guide (Handbook)

Undergraduate Psychology

College of Health and Biomedicine

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About the Fieldwork Placement Program

The Fieldwork Placement Program involves students undertaking 60 hours of voluntary work or paid employment in a work setting which requires them to use interpersonal or organisational skills. Students undertake placements with a wide range of organisations. In the past, these have included agencies, charities, government departments, private business, health service providers and schools.

Students negotiate the timing and format of the placement with the supervisor at the organisation.

*It should be noted that students will be required to complete 30 of the required 60 hours before undertaking the block mode APP3028 unit.

Undertaking a fieldwork placement is an opportunity for you to put into practice the skills and knowledge you have gained throughout your degree in a professional setting. The host supervisor may reasonably expect you to be work ready, meaning you can be assigned a reasonable level of responsibility, take initiative and at times self- manage, as would be expected of a graduate recruit.

Students are encouraged to find a fieldwork placement that relates specifically to their areas of interest and expertise. The Fieldwork Placement Coordinator is available to support you through this process, however, the emphasis is on the student to source and negotiate their own placement. This is useful experience before you head in to the job market.

Placement opportunities that arise will be advertised in the Learning Hub and on VU Collaborate, so please check this regularly.

A database with organisations where students have undertaken placements in previous years is managed by the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator. This is expanded each year through the information that you and the organisation provide on the WIL evaluation forms, which are returned to the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator at the completion of your placement. Therefore, it is important that constructive feedback is provided for our records. The report can be copied and may be helpful for your CV.

Assessment

WIL documentation form part of your assessment for this unit. While these documents need to be returned to the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, the WIL schedule must also be submitted to the tutor. Therefore, please ensure you keep copies of all documents for both purposes.

Advanced Standing/Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

To be eligible for RPL for the placement component of this unit, the learning must fit the course criteria, and should normally have been undertaken within the past 12 months. Students are still required to undertake all placement related assessment tasks outlined in the Unit Guide to successfully fulfil this unit's overall requirements. If you believe you are eligible for please contact your tutor to discuss further.

Fieldwork Placement Documentation

Return to the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator (Dr Sally-Ann Free) before the placement commences:

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Schedule

1. Complete with your host supervisor the 'WIL Activities' in section 2.

Ensure that the document is signed, dated and returned to the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator as soon as possible, following this meeting to activate VU's insurance coverage.

The Fieldwork Placement Coordinator will scan and email the final version to all parties.

PLEASE NOTE: Placements need to be approved by the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator and Tutor prior to commencement. Placements undertaken without formal University approval will not be deemed appropriate for this unit of study.

Ensure the following forms are completed:

2. **Log of Hours (Logbook)** (*Student to complete, Supervisor to sign off*)

Record your placement dates, times and activities undertaken

3. **Workplace OH&S Induction** on Starting Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Placement

4. **Supervisor Placement Assessment Report** (*Supervisor to complete*)

This enables the supervisor to evaluate your performance.

Please note this also forms part of your Assessment for this unit. Refer to the Unit Guide for details.

5. **Student Placement Evaluation Report** (*Student to complete*)

This gives you the opportunity to evaluate the organisational setting for future students.

The information provided is uploaded to the College's database, and your feedback is used to review and improve the Fieldwork Placement Program.

How to find your Fieldwork Placement

- ◆ The following details some tips on providing a suitable fieldwork placement.
 - ◆ Have an introductory letter outlining your areas of interest and skills, and your resume ready to email upon request.
 - ◆ Ensure that your introductory letter and resume are error free, (spelling and grammatical errors are likely to deter an employer from considering your application).
 - ◆ Don't delay applying for placement opportunities thinking that the best ones will be advertised later – placement opportunities are circulated as they arise.
 - ◆ Call the organisation and ask for the most appropriate person to speak with regarding a university student undertaking a fieldwork placement with them.
 - ◆ When contacting organisations it is important that you check that it is a convenient time for them to speak with you, always offer to call back if they can give you a more suitable time. (If they are too busy to talk, they may feel pressured to deal with you right then and there, making it easier for them just to reject you).
 - ◆ Give them a brief overview of the placement requirements (familiarise yourself with this Guide and the Unit Guide before you call). Offer to email them some additional information. If they are interested in hosting you, send them a copy of the Host Guide, the Introductory Letter, your resume and a copy of the WIL Schedule (which outlines everyone's responsibilities).
 - ◆ Follow up with a phone call 3-4 days after you have sent the email. eg. "I was just wondering whether you have had a chance to consider the information that I sent you recently?"
 - ◆ If you say you are going to do something, whether it is to make a phone call or send an email, make sure that you do so at your earliest convenience.
 - ◆ If they agree to host your fieldwork placement, then you need to arrange an initial meeting with the Host Supervisor, to enable the completion of the placement Schedule and to confirm the particulars of the placement, dates/days/times etc.
 - ◆ Always try to be flexible when arranging to meet with organisation representatives, as well as throughout the negotiation of placement times and days.
 - ◆ Don't delay in applying for placement opportunities that are advertised if they interest you. Selection of students varies depending on the organisation's preferences. At times students are chosen on a first come first serve basis, other times selection is via submission of your resume or an interview process. So have everything ready to go!
 - ◆ Don't be discouraged if you don't have all of the attributes requested in the advertisement, as placements are to be a LEARNING experience for you. Staff at host organisations are expected to spend some of their time training you.

- ◆ If you accept an offer of a fieldwork placement and are then not able to fulfil this commitment, or need to postpone the opportunity for any reason – you **MUST** advise the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, the Tutor, and the Organisation ASAP to inform everyone concerned. Remember, your fieldwork placement is for a unit of study and you are being assessed. Not informing all the parties of changes to your placement can impact upon your grades.

It is in your best interest to complete Section 2 of the WIL Schedule together with your host supervisor, as then it can act as the agreement for the fieldwork placement experience. If there are some activities that the organisation undertakes that you would like to gain some experience in, then you should negotiate to have it included on the WIL Schedule.

Submit your signed WIL Schedule to your to the Undergraduate Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, Sally-Ann.Free@vu.edu.au as soon as this has been completed. The WIL Schedule will be scanned and emailed to all parties. Once this has been undertaken by the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, your placement has been approved. Placements undertaken without formal University approval may be deemed inappropriate.

The Learning Hub – Career Resources

VU offers all students support and advice in career development and career planning. These services are free, so all students are encouraged to take advantage of these services and resources offered by the Learning Hub. More details are available at: <https://learninghub.vu.edu.au>

Information includes:

- ◆ Volunteer placements
- ◆ Career related workshop/seminars
- ◆ Information about Graduate Programs
- ◆ Government and Career Employment Expos
- ◆ Student Leadership Opportunities
- ◆ Access to Industry Mentors
- ◆ Full-time/part-time/casual employment opportunities
- ◆ Work Integrated Learning opportunities

All students are encouraged to access The Learning Hub for guidance in:

- ◆ writing a resume
- ◆ covering letters
- ◆ job applications / addressing selection criteria
- ◆ interview skills

Professional advisors are available at the Learning Hub. No appointment is necessary.

<https://learninghub.vu.edu.au/>

For feedback/suggestions on your Curriculum Vitae or Resume and cover letter, visit the Learning Hub

<https://learninghub.vu.edu.au>

The benefits of fieldwork...

There are a range of benefits for undertaking a fieldwork placement. These include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Valuable industry experience prior to graduating to enable you to build up your resume.
- ◆ Increase your employability, (*students are sometimes offered ongoing positions*).
- ◆ Apply skills/knowledge learnt throughout the degree to real life situations.
- ◆ Gain better focus within your chosen vocation (*placements sometimes result in students deciding to take different avenues, or discover their preferences within the industry*).
- ◆ Make industry contacts / networking (*75% of jobs are filled through contacts - not advertising*).
- ◆ Learn new skills / industry programs.
- ◆ Produce work for your employment portfolio (*always make sure you get a copy of any work that you produce to be able to showcase to any of your future employers*).
- ◆ Gain better industry understanding / adapt to culture of that type of organisation.
- ◆ Give you confidence in your own abilities and skills.
- ◆ Learn negotiation skills, eg. *negotiate placement days/times/duties with your host supervisor*.

The benefits to the Host Organisation include:

- ◆ Near-graduate to support the operations of their business.
- ◆ Students bring new perspectives / creative ideas / latest research / best practices / tricks of the trade.
- ◆ Opportunity to try out employees before they hire into ongoing positions.
- ◆ Build relationship with local university.

What the Host Organisation can expect of you

Due to the benefits gained from undertaking a fieldwork placement you are advised to treat the placement as if you are a new member of staff and:

- ◆ Be punctual.
- ◆ Conform to the dress code of the organisation.
- ◆ Advise the organisation if you are unable to attend in the time specified.
- ◆ Be professional in your attitude, ie. complete work to deadlines; show drafts of your work; ask for feedback and assistance as required.
- ◆ Adapt your approach to the style of the organisation.

- ◆ Show enthusiasm and initiative even if you consider the task boring. Mundane duties are part of every job.
- ◆ Be flexible and adaptive.
- ◆ Provide ongoing feedback to the host supervisor about how you are progressing in the placement, and address any concerns you have early otherwise they can escalate.

Make yourself an asset to the organisation

- ◆ Make an impact while you're there. A number of students have made such a great impression that they have been employed following their placement. Remember, you are also an important ambassador for VU.
- ◆ Think about ways that you can assist the organisation during any downtime you have, for eg. consider what on-line research you could undertake to support their business operations.
- ◆ What could you do to make their workplace more efficient?
- ◆ Consider how could you improve the operations of the business if it belonged to you?
- ◆ What have you learnt throughout your degree that would assist this business? Why not share this information with them.
- ◆ Share the latest tricks of the trade.
- ◆ 75% of jobs are attained through networking, if you make a good impression you could end up with a job there, or be recommended by them to someone else in the field who is looking to employ these possibilities are out there!.

In return, we encourage the host organisation to support you with the following:

- ◆ Undertaking an induction into the organisation, which includes Occupational Health and Safety awareness (OH&S).
- ◆ Undertake the role as described and outlined by the Host Organisation in the WIL Schedule.
- ◆ Be included as part of the team.
- ◆ Be given appropriate and relevant tasks which will be used, in total or in part, by the organisation.
- ◆ Be provided with assistance when required.
- ◆ Be provided guidance in completing tasks in the style, culture of the organisation.
- ◆ Be given an understanding of the scope, codes of conduct and values of the organisation.
- ◆ That consideration will be shown for you as a beginner in your professional field.
- ◆ Receive ongoing feedback from the host supervisor about your performance.
- ◆ And that any issues arising are dealt with efficiently and appropriately.

Encountering a problem during placement

If at any time you feel that you are in imminent danger in any way, you need to remove yourself immediately from the organisation, contact the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, Dr Sally-Ann Free on 9919 4096 or the tutor.

You can use your placement as an opportunity to practice dealing with issues that might arise in a normal working environment. Addressing issues can be difficult, though the opportunity may assist you in gaining confidence should you encounter similar experiences in your future employment.

Some tips for dealing with issues that could arise...

Please remember that there will always be a degree of boring, mundane duties in all work places. Within reason, this is a normal part of being employed and is not considered sufficient reason to discontinue a fieldwork placement without addressing the issue.

Raise any issues you are experiencing as soon as is appropriate with your host supervisor (if able). When addressing an issue, always try to suggest some possible solutions (try to be part of the solution and not just the problem).

If the issue is related to being given irrelevant tasks to do, eg. make tea/coffee, photocopying/filing for extensive periods, then you should refer your supervisor back to the WIL Schedule that outlines the experience that you both agreed upon, and question whether that experience is still available, and if it is not, explain that you will need to seek out an alternate opportunity to enable you to fulfil your unit requirements.

You should be well prepared when you approach your supervisor, and have some suggestions of how you might be able to assist their organisation while fulfilling your own requirements. Suggestions might be: consider some on-line research that you could undertake for them; think about some tasks that you could do related to your course that could assist their core business function; tasks you could do to make their working environment more efficient; outline the types of activities you have undertaken, and the skills you have acquired throughout your course that they may be able to utilise more effectively.

If you are being asked to do work that is too difficult, or you are not being sufficiently guided or trained, then you need to discuss this with your host supervisor, explain to them what you need in order for you to complete the required tasks, what training or additional support you need, or ongoing feedback to ensure that you are completing the work to the organisation's satisfaction.

If you have addressed the issue and feel that there is no noticeable improvement in the situation, then you should contact the Fieldwork Placement Coordinator or tutor to discuss the best course of action.

Remember that placements are to be mutually beneficial for both the organisation and you.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Schedule

NOTE: Student and Host Supervisor to complete Section 2 together. Please forward the WIL schedule for approval and registration to Dr Sally-Ann Free, Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, Undergraduate Psychology, BEFORE the commencement of the placement. Only placements with formal University approval may be deemed acceptable.

This schedule agreement sets out the terms on which Victoria University will place the student with the Host Organisation for the purpose of the student undertaking the Work Integrated Learning described in Section 2. The student information provided in this agreement is for the administration of practical placement arrangements only and is not to be used for any other purpose unless required by law.

SECTION 1

Host Supervisor to complete:

Organisation Name:		
Address and postcode: (location of placement)		
Contact Person / Supervisor:		
Position / Qualifications held:		
Telephone Numbers	<i>Business:</i>	<i>Mobile:</i>
Facsimile:		
Email Address:		
Website:		
<i>I hereby agree to abide by the conditions set out in Section 3 of this Schedule Agreement:</i>		
SIGNED for and on behalf of the HOST ORGANISATION	Signature:	Date:

Student to complete:

Last Name:		
Given Name:		
Address:		
Emergency Contact Person:		
Emergency Contact Phone:		
Telephone Number:	<i>Home phone:</i>	<i>Mobile:</i>
Email Address:		
Student Number:		
<i>I hereby agree to abide by the conditions set out in Section 2 of this Schedule Agreement:</i>		
SIGNED by the STUDENT	Signature:	Date:

Victoria University representative to complete:

Organisation Name:	College of Health and Biomedicine, Victoria University	
Postal Address:	PO Box 14428, Melbourne City Mail Centre, MELBOURNE VIC 8001	
Contact Person:	Dr Sally-Ann Free	
Title:	Fieldwork Placement Coordinator, Undergraduate Psychology	
Telephone Number	03 9919 4096	
Email Address:	Sally-Ann.Free@vu.edu.au	
<i>I hereby agree to abide by the conditions set out in Section 4 of this Schedule Agreement:</i>		
SIGNED for and on behalf of the UNIVERSITY	Signature:	Date:

SECTION 2

Host and Student to complete together to form an agreement

PARTICULARS OF THIS WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING ACTIVITY		
Dates of WIL activity:	Commencement date:	Exp. completion date:
Hours of Standard Work Day:	Start time:	Finish time:
<p>The following section is an Agreement between the Organisation Supervisor and the Student, and should be completed with both parties present. This Agreement is to ensure that the experience is mutually beneficial, with a balance between the achievement of goals required by the organisation, and the provision of a learning experience for the student.</p> <p><i>The student has contributed to, and agrees to undertake the following tasks during the placement:</i></p>		
<p><i>At the completion of the placement, it is anticipated that the following outcomes will be achieved, based on the above list of tasks:</i></p>		

1. THE STUDENT AGREES TO:

- a. read and comply with the information provided in this Memorandum of Understanding by signing and returning this Schedule to the University **PRIOR** to the commencement of the WIL experience, which will activate coverage by the **University's Insurance Policy**;
- b. behave in a professional manner, including being punctual, attending on all agreed days for the duration of the Schedule, behaving professionally, not disclosing any confidential information of the Host Organisation, dressing appropriately and performing tasks satisfactorily;
- c. work in accordance with the policies, procedures, directions and requirements of the Host
- d. Organisation (including, without limitation, those relating to occupational health and safety, equal opportunity, confidentiality and information privacy);
- e. advise the Host Organisation if the Student suffers from any medical condition or disability that may affect his/her work performance;
- f. comply with the statutes, policies and procedures of the University (including, without limitation, the Work Integrated Learning Policy & Procedures and the procedures relating to occupational health
- g. and safety, equal opportunity);
- h. maintain communication with the University and the workplace supervisor(s);
- i. be available and prepared to discuss relevant issues when visited or contacted by the University, complete relevant WIL evaluation documentation and submit to the University at the completion of the WIL experience;
- j. address any issues/concerns that arise with the workplace supervisor in order to resolve them, referring any unresolvable issues on to the University;
- k. immediately advise the Host Organisation and the University of any accident or incident in the workplace; and
- l. at the completion of the activity return to the Host Organisation all its property or equipment including security cards, computer disks, documents and records and all copies of such material in the
- m. possession or control of the Student.

2. THE HOST ORGANISATION AGREES TO:

- a. read and comply with the information provided in this Schedule Agreement by signing and returning it to the University **PRIOR** to the commencement of the WIL experience, which will activate coverage by the **University's Insurance Policy**;
- b. provide and maintain a safe workplace environment, free from discrimination/ harassment, with appropriate occupational health & safety and equal opportunity safeguards in place;
- c. provide proper supervision of the Student by a suitably trained supervisor;

- d. continuously provide constructive and supportive performance feedback to the student throughout the workplace experience;
- e. meet with the student for a reasonable amount of time each day in order to brief, debrief, and provide any training / guidance and feedback necessary for him/her to satisfactorily undertake assigned tasks;
- f. provide a learning environment with adequate opportunities for the Student to meet the learning objectives of his/her Work Integrated Learning experience;
- g. provide an appropriate orientation to the Host Organisation, its work culture, policies and procedures;
- h. comply with, and ensure that its personnel comply with all relevant Commonwealth and State legislation, regulations, rules, codes of practice and Australian Standards, including, without limitation
- i. those relating to Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) to ensure that the Student is not exposed to any uncontrollable or inadequately controlled hazards or risks;
- j. address any issues or concerns that arise in relation to the Student in order to resolve them with the Student in the first instance, referring any unresolvable issues to the University at earliest convenience;
- k. immediately advise the University of any accident or incident that occurs in the workplace;
- l. allow visits by the University to monitor and assess the Student's progress; and
- m. complete and return the student evaluation documentation and a written reference to the University at the completion of the WIL experience.

3. THE UNIVERSITY AGREES TO:

- a. use best endeavours to ensure there are opportunities for the Student to meet the learning objectives of the workplace experience;
- b. monitor and assess the Student's progress;
- c. provide constructive and supportive feedback to the Student;
- d. liaise with the workplace supervisor responsible for the Student if any issues arise; and
- e. act promptly to address any concerns about the safety and suitability of the workplace and well-being of the Student.