

Host Organisation Guide

Your Guide to Hosting a Student on Placement





Welcome to the Guide for Hosting University of Canterbury (UC) Students on Placement. We're thrilled to have you on board to support our students during their work-integrated learning (WIL) experience.

Purpose

This document has been designed to help you understand and prepare for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) at the University of Canterbury (UC), more specifically for placement-based WIL experiences.

Understanding Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

You may be more familiar with terms such as placement, internship, or apprenticeship. WIL is about connecting what students learn in the classroom with real-world work experience, to help them develop professional skills and networks.

Key Terms

Here are some key terms you'll encounter:

WIL Experience: The overall term for work-integrated learning, focusing on placement settings.

Host or Partner Organisation: The place where the student will do their WIL experience, like a company or not-for-profit.

Host or Partner Supervisor Contact: The person responsible for guiding and supporting the student during their WIL experience.

UC Contact: The person from UC who is your main point of contact for the course you are engaged with.



Benefits for Hosts:

Fresh Ideas and Talent

Gain new perspectives from students, bringing new ideas and innovation to work projects.

Stronger University Connections

Build long-term relationships with universities for future collaboration and recruitment.

Enhanced Mentorship Skills

Improve leadership capabilities of staff by guiding and mentoring students.

Develop Future Professionals

Play a role in shaping a skilled and workforce-ready generation.

Improve Workplace Culture

Students can bring energy, diversity, and enthusiasm to your team.

Cost-Effective Support

Gain extra support without the cost of a permanent hire.

Social Responsibility

Contribute to education and workforce development in your industry.

Future Talent

Build a talent pipeline for future hiring.

WIL Expectations

As a tertiary education provider and a host organisation, there is a shared responsibility to ensure students are in a safe and supported environment under various legislation.

Before a student starts their placement, it's crucial to clarify roles, responsibilities, issues or concerns and support mechanisms. UC expects students will be in a safe (both physically and psychologically) and supportive environment.

For some students, this may be their first time in a professional setting so not only does an orientation and induction provide students with critical information, but it can also help the student settle in and understand some of the workplace norms for your organisation.



Recommended Office Orientation

- A tour of the office/environment
- Introductions to the team, and explanation of their responsibilities
- Discussion of workplace norms such as work hours, dress code, any office regulations and policies which are relevant, social media expectations, breaks and lunch expectations

Recommended H&S Induction:

- Outlining emergency procedures, including what to do in an emergency and where the assembly areas are.
- Highlighting any relevant risks, and mitigations
- Explaining reporting procedures for incidents and accidents
- Providing the student with relevant policies and procedures including those regarding physical and emotional harm, bullying and harassment

Student Support and Pastoral Care

Once students are enrolled at UC, including during their WIL experience, they have access to a wide range of support services. If you or your team become concerned about a student you are hosting, keep your UC Contact informed.

Legal and Security Considerations To ensure a safe and supportive environment for students and protect your organisation, we encourage you to consider whether the following are required by your organisation:

- Confidentiality agreement
- Provisions for intellectual property
- Police Vet (background check)
- Working with Children (Children's Act check)

Your UC Contact will provide you with the necessary UC agreements and paperwork that are required to confirm the placement.

We appreciate your support in hosting UC students. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to your UC Contact.



During the WIL Experience

Supporting a student to develop personally and professionally throughout their experience can come in a variety of forms. Some suggestions include:

Communication

Be available to help ease the student into the experience and encourage students to find solutions or alternative and understand how to best communicate with your student — do you prefer email, text or phone, or in person? Will this work for the student as well? At what frequency? Is this understood by you both?

Be generous with positive reinforcement to help build confidence. Provide feedback throughout the experience so the student has an opportunity to reflect and improve.

Establish structured check-ins to connect with the student. It is important that these are regular and predictable, and in a forum where the student can raise concerns or questions.

Professional Development Support the student in their career progression by exposing them to appropriate networking and development opportunities.

Encourage your wider team to approach and include the student where appropriate, e.g. inviting them to meetings.

Guide the student to create realistic deadlines. Regular check-ins on progress can help get you on the same page and help to ensure the student gains a good understanding of typical work practices.



Feedback

Most of the time, a WIL experience is incredibly rewarding for both you and the student. That said, there is always an opportunity to learn and develop. Feedback is an essential part of the WIL experience. We encourage you to pass on any feedback about the experience and process to your UC contact so that we can learn from it too.

At the end of the WIL experience, you may be asked to fill in some paperwork relating to the student to help the programme team and understand the student's progress.

Feedback options for you to consider:

- Conducting an exit interview with the student
- Sharing your insight with your UC contact (both positive and constructive)
- Asking for feedback from the student and/or your UC contact

The student may request you to act as a reference on future job applications or for a letter of recommendation.

The student may request you to act as a reference on future job applications or for a letter of recommendation. Please keep in mind that students may have limited professional experience and your support may be the key to them securing future professional or academic opportunities. Accepting any such requests is at your discretion.

Supporting a Remote WIL Experience

Remote WIL experiences require a focus on effective communication and rapport-building to ensure students feel included and supported. Here's how you might enhance the remote hosting experience:

- Invite students to virtual meetings and/or social activities to support team integration
- Stay alert for changes in the student's communication style, engagement, or work quality. Remote settings can sometimes amplify challenges

Designing a Successful WIL Internship Project

When designing a project for a university intern, keep these key points/questions in mind to make it clear, effective, and successful for both your organisation and the intern.

Is your project Specific?

- Does the project have clear goals?
- Is there a well-defined aim and direction?
- Are the location and personnel involved clearly identified?

Is your project Measurable?

- Have success benchmarks been set?
- Are there clear milestones to track completion?
- Is there a process for regular assessment of progress?

Is your project Attainable?

- Is the project scoped according to the intern's level of ability?
- Does it align with the intern's competencies?
- Are tasks adjusted for differentiated capacities?

Is your project Relevant?

- Is the project authentic and meaningful?
- Does it align with your strategic organisational goals?
- Will it create a tangible impact for your organisation?

Is your project Time-Bound?

- Can the project be completed within the agreed period (e.g. 12-week period)? If not have plans been made for another intern or employee to pick it up?
- Does it allow the student to meet their required internship hours (e.g., 70 or 140 hours)?

Is your project Level-Appropriate?

- Does it align with the intern's university experience and disciplinary progress?
- Does it match their current skill set?

Is your project Adaptable?

- Can the project shift between online and in-person formats?
- Is there flexibility to rescope tasks based on benchmark assessments or feedback during the project?

Is your project Competency-Focused?

- Does it provide opportunities to build hard skills (technical abilities)?
- Does it enhance soft skills (interpersonal and communication)?
- Does it help boost the intern's confidence and professional growth?



Ako ā-Mahi **Work-Integrated Learning**

W: www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/other-study-options/work-integrated-learning

E: akoamahi@canterbury.ac.nz