



# Internships and work placement opportunities for international students in Victoria

A report prepared for the Victorian Department of Business and Innovation  
by the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA)

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# CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Background and methodology	8
Defining internships and work experience	9
Literature review	10
Audit of current practices in Victoria	16
Access barriers	23
Case studies	26
Initiatives in other jurisdictions	32
The evidence base for future activity	34
Conclusions and options for action	35
Appendices	38
References	50

## FOREWORD

This report is presented at a time of significant interest by governments and higher education institutions in the role international education plays in supporting the development of national and regional economies and the global economy more generally.

Developed economies are in open competition to attract global talent to secure their future in a globally competitive environment and to ensure their continued prosperity. International students are increasingly viewed as a significant source of talent: acculturated in terms of qualifications, language and social understanding of the societies in which they have been educated and trained.

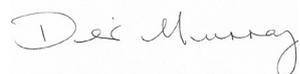
International students, in particular the generation now coming through, are striking evidence of a new human phenomenon – the globally mobile, cosmopolitan professional worker. International graduates no longer assume they will necessarily return to their country of origin to live and work. They have had experiences and have gained qualifications which equip them to work almost anywhere in the world. Their interests, aspirations and the opportunities they believe may be available to them are no longer simply local and parochial, they are global.

This report reflects these developments. The desire and the opportunity for internships and the expectation of an experience in a global work context, during and following study, are primary drivers of international student choice of an overseas study destination.

The report's findings illustrate the challenges that face international students, but also their education institutions, in identifying and in securing work placements in Victoria. There are significant barriers to be addressed before Victoria is able to fairly claim that study in Victoria will provide international students with the necessary qualifications and the work experience to make a smooth transition into attractive, well paid employment, in Australia or internationally.

The report comes out at a time when many of its findings and the options proposed for the Victorian Government, education institutions and employers are reinforced by other work. In particular, the Ken Henry White Paper, 'Australia in the Asian Century', signals strongly the strategic directions that should be taken in relation to investment in people skills through education and especially job-specific skills to expand and deepen Australia's engagement with Asia. The White Paper reinforces the call by Asialink for the development of an Asia capable workforce.

The message of the current report is that internships and work placements for international students have the potential within a comprehensive Victorian strategy to help the Victorian community, businesses and education institutions to achieve deep international engagement, in particular with Asia. The task is to find the mechanisms to achieve this.



Dennis Murray  
Project Leader

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the present research is to begin to build an evidence base to support Victoria's public policy development, strategic marketing, institutional support and communication about the transition from study to employment for international students. In particular, the research aims to address how studying and working in Victoria can enhance an international student's employability. The intention is to work towards formulating a distinctive value proposition to encourage international students to choose Victoria as their preferred study destination. The focus is the Victorian higher education and VET sectors.

The research is conceived and conducted recognising the potential that internships and work placements for international students might have within a comprehensive Victorian strategy to help the Victorian community, business and industry achieve deep international engagement with priority countries, within Asia especially.

Given the timeframe within which the project had to be conducted (July-September 2012), the methodology involved a desk audit of practice in internships and work-integrated learning (WIL) at a national, state and institutional level; a literature review; face-to-face/telephone consultations with selected key stakeholders; and preparation of a small number of case studies.

Approaches to internships and work placements are directly impacted by the industry context and there are significant differences across industries. The research scoped and considered three types of internships and work placements available to international students: during study, post-study and stand-alone.

The research reveals substantial key benefits of WIL to students, employers and institutions. However, the research also reveals significant challenges and barriers to expanding the opportunities for international students to access internships and work placements.

These include perceived employer attitudes to international students and placements, perceived English language competence and cultural issues, resource and capacity constraints affecting employers and education institutions, the need to prepare international students to secure and succeed in work placements and perceived legal uncertainties around the issue of study and work.

For a variety of reasons then international students are in deficit when it comes to securing work placements in Victoria. Without discriminating against local students, it should be possible to 'give a leg up' to international students seeking a Victorian work experience through well-designed practical program support.

There is also an opportunity for Victoria, as an after-sales service, to support international students to secure employment in their home countries, by mediating through local Victorian companies operating in the countries concerned to link returning graduates with local employers.

The study reveals a growing expectation among international students studying in Australia that their Australian qualification will lead to post-study employment opportunities in Australia. The opportunity to gain practical experience while studying in Australia is considered critical to international graduates' employment prospects both in Australia and elsewhere.

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Internships and work placements for international students have the potential within a comprehensive Victorian strategy to help the Victorian community, business and education institutions to achieve deep international engagement with priority countries, especially within Asia.

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Government, business and education institutions can take a lead to deepen Victoria's global engagement and to take advantage of the opportunities that Asian economic growth offers. The vast majority of international students in Victoria come from the Asian region and will return to work and live there. They are potential ambassadors and networkers for Victoria.

However, there is currently a reality gap that needs to be bridged between the promise of work related experiences for international students and their availability in Victoria. Programs to achieve an expansion and smooth operation of WIL and work placement opportunities would need to be properly designed, trialled and rolled out before any value proposition promoting Victoria as a desirable study destination (based on the opportunities the State provides for work experience and placement) is promulgated to international students.

The mood for innovation in this space is strong. All Victorian education stakeholders consulted were of the view that the time is right for Victoria to take a lead in breaking through the existing barriers and, over the longer term, seek to create a value proposition around internships and work placement opportunities in Victoria for international students, with a view to growing and strengthening the Victorian international education and business sectors.

## Summary of action options

### General

1. Internships and work placements for international students could be seen as an integral part of an overall Victorian strategy for deep global engagement.
2. Development of a value proposition to distinguish and promote Victoria as a highly desirable study destination for international students (based on opportunities that Victoria offers for internships and work placement) will require overcoming significant existing barriers. These include current limited opportunities for internships and work placements and perceptions among Victorian employers about employing international students and graduates.
3. The Victorian Government could take the lead and work in close collaboration with Victorian education institutions, business and industry. The initial priority focus might sensibly be Asia, with other countries and regions being considered subsequently.
4. The environment of WIL is complex for international students, institutions and employers. Programs attempting to promote WIL need to be based on a simplified explanation of how to undertake WIL. Some legal clarification is needed (or at least Victorian legal opinion sought) and a clear statement prepared for dissemination to education institutions, employers and international students.

### Victorian education institutions could

5. In conjunction with the Victorian Government and Victorian business and industry, explore ways of expanding, securing and administering work placements and internship opportunities on a much greater scale for international students than at present, including where possible involving employers in students' home countries.
6. Consider opportunities to expand employment opportunities for international students on campus.
7. Consider ways of helping international students to overcome the deficit they face in identifying and securing work experience beyond the campus.
8. Institutions should probably review their promotion and marketing materials and their resourcing and support for the administration of WIL and work placements to ensure the promise to international students matches the reality.

9. Help bridge the gap between international students' employability skills and employer expectations, within the curriculum, and by assisting international students to prepare work oriented portfolios.
10. Review and consider a wide range of curriculum and resource related matters affecting WIL and the broader curriculum, in particular: integrated or post-study placements; location and timing of WIL; the relationship between WIL and the rest of the curriculum; pre-placement preparation for international students; and the possibility of developing global WIL for all students.
11. Institutions should quality assure and take particular care if choosing to use private contractors to manage work placements for international students.
12. Collect and use testimonials and good practice examples of WIL from employers and from international students who have had a successful work placement experience in Victoria.
13. Recognising that the employment market for local and international postgraduate students is changing rapidly, institutions could review and consider new opportunities for work experience and work placement for Victorian international postgraduate students in Australia and in their home countries.

### The Victorian Government could

14. View internships and work placements for international students as an integral part of an overall Victorian strategy for deep global engagement, especially with Asia.
15. Consider making a public case to Victorian employers and to the Victorian community about the value of using international students in work experience settings, in the interests of Victorian business and long-term international connections. It will probably be important for the Premier to lead such an initiative.
16. Advocate for WIL with Victorian Businesses (Small Business Victoria and relationship with VECCI, Australian Association of Graduate Employers, Country Business Councils, Australian Services Roundtable companies).
17. In conjunction with Victorian education institutions and Victorian business and industry, explore ways of expanding, securing and administering work placements and internship opportunities on a much greater scale for international students.
18. Provide a clearing house/database resource for use by employers, institutions and students and develop online proformas/templates/road maps to help employers understand the benefits of employing international students, to assist their understanding of the legal requirements and to facilitate their engagement with international students.
19. Provide after sales service for international students returning to their home countries, by mediating through local Victorian companies operating in the countries concerned, and through significant Victorian alumni, to link returning graduates with local employers. This would work especially well through an expanded network of Victorian state offices as part of a global engagement strategy based on priority regions, countries, states/provinces or cities. The focus initially could be through government to foreign government/state/province internship/work placement employment programs for talented students and graduates (a talent pipeline).

20. Support a State symposium involving Victorian government, employers, research organisations and education institutions to explore the work related needs of international postgraduate research students and graduates.
21. Ensure vigilant Victorian regulation of WIL, in relation to the gap between the promise and the reality, through relevant State and national authorities such as VRQA, TEQSA and ASQA.
22. Consider opportunities to expand employment opportunities for international students within State government departments and agencies.
23. Over the longer term, work with other State governments to reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty across various jurisdictions about the legal status of WIL and, if possible, to have the CRICOS restriction on WIL relaxed.
24. Consider aligning Department of Business and Innovation priorities and structures with these objectives and resourcing them to achieve these objectives.
25. Consider conducting an industry workshop to identify critical evidence gaps to achieve practical policy outcomes and improved institutional policy and practice in the area of WIL and international graduate employability.

# BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

International education is Victoria's largest export worth \$4.6 billion in 2011. It acts as a vital facilitator of business and cultural opportunities between Victoria and the world. International students educated in Victoria gain knowledge and understanding of Victoria's capabilities and culture, opening doors for major export, trade and cultural opportunities. Government research shows that a primary reason international students undertake study is to improve post-study job opportunities and incomes, both in Australia and when they return home. Students are far more likely to undertake a course of study that contributes to them obtaining a well-paid, engaging and secure job.

## Goals of the study

The purpose of this study is to build an evidence base to support policy development, strategic marketing, institutional support and communication about the transition from study to employment. In particular, it aims to address how working in Victoria can enhance a student's international employability or add to Victoria and Australia's skills base. The intention is to work towards formulating a distinctive value proposition to encourage international students to choose Victoria as their preferred study destination.

## Research scope

The research scope involved:

- Identifying the range of internship and work placement programs on offer in Victorian universities and VET institutions
- Identifying programs that require a work placement or internship as a course requirement
- Considering international student participation rates in internship and work placement programs according to sector and discipline
- Documenting institutional support for international students accessing internship and work placement programs
- Considering the legal status of internship and work placement programs
- Analysing specified discipline areas across VET and higher education
- Conducting a number of case studies in VET and higher education
- Considering the flexibility of the relevant legal frameworks
- Considering strategies employed by other states.

## Methodology

The project commenced on 1 July 2012. Based on the limited time available to complete the study the following methodology was adopted:

**Stage 1** Desktop audit of practice in internships and WIL (national, state and institutional level)

**Stage 2** Literature review on internships and WIL

**Stage 3** Face to face/telephone interviews with selected key stakeholders and in-depth case studies (see Attachments 2 and 3, p.40–1)

**Stage 4** Report with findings and options for action.

## Research team

Dennis Murray	Project Leader
Jill Blackmore	Project Adviser
Cate Gribble	Research Consultant
Rebecca Hall	Research Assistant

## DEFINING INTERNSHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

For the purpose of this study, the research team considered a range of work related experiences, including internships and work placements, that can be broadly defined under the term Work Integrated Learning (WIL). It is clear from both the literature review and the stakeholder consultations that there are myriad definitions and approaches to internships and work placements.

Definitions vary depending on what the work placement constitutes, which internal and external stakeholders are involved in supporting/arranging it, and the timing of the placement. Moreover, approaches to internships and work placements are directly impacted by the industry context for which students are being prepared. There are significant differences in approaches across industries, depending on the history and the training model for internships and placements, and depending on the regulatory context/requirements in which they operate.

Table 1 describes the range and types of internships and work placements that are currently or may become available to international students in Victoria, structured either as during or post-study, or independent/stand-alone.

**Table 1: Types of internships and work placements**

During study	Post-study	Stand-alone
Mandatory work placement as part of approved course	Professional Year	Internship visa (416)
Optional course elective involving for credit placement	Internship visa (416)	Working Holiday Visa (417) undertaking fee for service internship
Informal or value added option where student requests or arranges own placement	Post-study work rights visa (proposed from 1 July 2013)	Occupational Trainee Visa (442)
Overseas service learning or global WIL placements		Professional Development Visa (470)

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is an umbrella term used to describe learning that is embedded in the experience of work (McIlveen et al, 2009). While the terminology used to describe such programs varies, the most common forms of WIL are: cooperative education, work experience, placements, practicum, internships, field work, workplace projects, workplace research, work-based learning, sandwich years, cadetships, community-based learning and service-learning. There are also considerable variations between the form of WIL programs, including the type of participation, who arranges it, length and timing within a course, the relationship to other course content, remuneration and whether the program is compulsory or an elective. While some WIL programs are based on highly formalised and collaborative relationships between the education provider and industry, others can be informal, one-off arrangements (McLennan & Keating, 2008).

WIL programs in universities differ from those in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The Australian VET sector has a long history of providing education and training skills for work with an emphasis on practical skills development. Most VET courses are part of national training packages, which are updated regularly in consultation with relevant industry bodies. VET programs incorporate practical training that can take place in the workplace or in simulated workplaces at the training institution. VET programs emphasise providing students with occupational skills (NCVER, 2012).

While VET programs have always had an occupational focus, there is growing interest in WIL within Australia's higher education sector more generally. The majority of Australian universities are increasing their involvement in WIL with most including WIL in their strategic directions. The increasing interest in WIL stems from an understanding that the availability of work-ready graduates is key to addressing labour market challenges, including workplace participation and productivity, skills shortages and international competition. Expanding and enhancing WIL is seen as critical to meeting such challenges. As a result, universities are under pressure to produce work-ready graduates who will enjoy a smooth transition into the workforce (McLennan & Keating, 2008).

## International students and WIL

The employment outcomes of international graduates are a key concern for Australian universities and the Australian economy. Many international students studying in Australia now seek to acquire foreign work experience to complement their foreign qualification and build a career portfolio.

The rapid growth in self-financed international students has fuelled greater emphasis on foreign work experience. Self-financed international students often need to work after graduating in order to repay loans incurred to fund their foreign studies. In the past, highly prized foreign credentials were sufficient to provide returning students with a competitive advantage in the home country employment market. However, there is some suggestion that inflated credentials have de-valued overseas degrees. The graduate employment market in many countries has become highly competitive and many returning students hope that foreign work experience will enhance their employment prospects in their home country (Gribble & Blackmore, 2012).

At the same time a large proportion of international students consider study abroad a step towards long-term residency in the host nation. International students intending to apply for permanent residency in Australia are keen to gain experience in the local labour market as recent changes to the skilled migration policy place greater emphasis on relevant local work experience. Reports from Australia and other major host nations reveal that post-graduation employment is a primary goal of international students and that post graduation work opportunities are now a key factor in determining the choice of study destination (Labi 2010; Bennet 2011; Shroff 2011).

According to one submission to the 2011 Strategic Review of the Student Visa Program: "A degree from a reputable Australian university, without substantial, relevant professional work experience, is deemed no longer sufficient to secure the desired graduate position and career path" (PPI Australia, 2011).

There is a growing expectation among international students studying in Australia that their Australian qualification will lead to post-study employment opportunities in the host country. The opportunity to gain practical experience while studying in Australia is considered critical to international graduates' employment prospects either in Australia or elsewhere. The provision of some form of WIL is likely to enhance the employability of international graduates by providing international students with the opportunity to contextualise new knowledge within the socio-cultural and functional environment of the Australian workplace.

Despite the importance placed on work experience, many international students are dissatisfied with current opportunities to participate in work experience related to their field of study. The 2010 International Student Barometer (ISB) reports on research undertaken at 34 of the 37 universities in Australia. 36,308 students or 25 per cent of the international student cohort in participating universities took part in the survey. Results of the ISB survey revealed that while international students weighted employability, work experience and career advice as very high in importance (90%), students' experience of these key areas received a much lower satisfaction rate with careers advice rating only a 65 per cent satisfaction rate and opportunities for work experience, 60 per cent (Varghese & Brett, 2010).

Studies by Australian Education International (AEI) and others confirm that lack of work experience is a major source of frustration for international students (AEI, 2010, AEI, 2012, Gribble et al, 2012; Bennet, 2011).

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"A degree from a reputable Australian university, without substantial, relevant professional work experience, is deemed no longer sufficient to secure the desired graduate position and career path."

*PPI Australia (2011)*

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According to 'Work-integrated learning: A national scoping study' (2008), international student access to WIL requires urgent attention. International students were the group most frequently referred to in the data. Issues raised in the report included visa requirements, variable English skills and limited understanding of the Australian workplace. The report also found that some employers are reluctant to provide work placements to international students as they feel there is a limited return on investment when international students are unlikely to stay in Australia after graduation (Patrick et al, 2008).

While visa provisions due to take effect in 2013 will provide international graduates with post-study work

opportunities, the research evidence is that more will need to be done to improve the work-readiness of international students if they are to successfully take up the option of work. Without relevant work experience, many international graduates will struggle to find employment in their field, both in Australia and in their home country.

Universities Australia recommends that industry and government work with universities to expand and enhance work integrated learning opportunities in the interests of the skilled migration program, the Australian economy and Australia's higher education sector (Universities Australia, 2008).

## Key benefits of Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

### International Students

The multiple benefits to students and graduates that WIL provides in terms of improved learning and enhanced generic skills such as problem solving, communication, teamwork, self-esteem and confidence are attested by a wide range of studies (e.g. Patrick et al, 2008, Billett, 2009, Crebert et al, 2004). Participation in WIL programs are particularly important for international students, who often have limited local networks that can restrict their capacity to find employment after graduating (Gribble et al, 2012). Contacts and informal networks are increasingly important for job seekers and a lack of network capital is the main barrier to well-educated migrants' success in the Australian labour market. This is likely to be applicable to international graduates.

WIL has the potential to provide international students with a valuable introduction to the Australian labour market and the chance to build up a network of contacts in their field (May, 2012). Participating in a WIL placement also means graduates have personal involvement in a real life project that they can refer to in job interviews (Gamble et al, 2010). WIL can also provide international students with the opportunity to learn about Australian work culture and expectations, hone their English language skills and develop important soft skills.

### Employers

There are also multiple key benefits for employers including the opportunity to develop strong partnerships with education and training institutions to ensure graduates are being equipped with the specific skills and knowledge needed in their industry (Patrick et al, 2008) as well as to provide employers with a valuable extra resource for employers.

Many employers see the benefits of WIL programs as providing work-ready graduates who possess awareness of workplace culture and key insights into the industry. Some employers support WIL because of its wider contribution to their industry (Webb and Hayes, 2008). International students provide employers with additional benefits. Employers with experience in hiring international graduates often cite their drive, determination and work ethic as a key advantage (Blackmore et al, 2012).

International students also bring important cultural and linguistic expertise to the workplace, which can prove advantageous when liaising with non-English speaking clients in Australia and overseas. For employers keen to enhance their global integration, bilingual and multilingual employees can act as cultural bridges for global communication and foster transnational business networks. Moreover, a culturally diverse workplace also encourages greater diversity of thought, improves corporate culture and improves client relations (Kristensen & Markey, 2009).

### Education institutions

In 2008 the Australian Government's Bradley Review into higher education asked providers to place greater emphasis on "the preparation of international students for the world of work and particularly for working in Australia" (Bradley, et al 2008). The benefits to education institutions in fostering WIL for all students thereby allowing the development of critical industry partnerships are also evident (Abeysekera, 2006).

Crucially, there are marketing and promotion benefits for education institutions. Institutions that successfully provide international students with the opportunity to gain relevant work experience during their study, along with integrated career education and a focus on English language proficiency and soft skills, directly enhance the employability skills and longer term career prospects of these students. Institutions will also be better able to position themselves in the highly competitive global education market for international students (Gribble & Blackmore, 2012).

### The Victorian community

Victorian Government, business and education institutions are all keen to deepen Victoria's global engagement and to take advantage of the opportunities that Asian economic expansion offers. The vast majority of international students in Victoria come from the Asian region and will return to work and live there. They are potential ambassadors and networkers for Victoria.

The argument for a globally capable Australian workforce is inescapable. Strategies to ensure an Asia-ready workforce are a key feature of the Henry Review recommendations to the Australian Government on 'Australia in the Asian Century'. At the same time, work by Asialink, 'Developing an Asia capable workforce: A national strategy' (September 2012), makes a strong case for building Asian networks and utilising existing talent pools, including international students, to drive Asia-focused strategies for deep engagement. It also calls on businesses to work with education providers to provide internship and work experience opportunities for international students in Asia-focused businesses. This requires government, business and the education and training sector to work together to develop and support concrete programs to achieve the desired objectives.

In short, internships and work placements for international students have the potential within a comprehensive Victorian strategy to help the Victorian community to achieve deep international engagement with priority countries, within Asia especially.

## Challenges in providing WIL to international students

There are a number of challenges associated with providing meaningful workplace opportunities to international students. A report by the National Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (NAGCAS) identified federal government legislation, employer attitudes, labour market fluctuations, market forces associated with the education export industry, language capacity and intercultural competence as some of the specific challenges international students face in accessing and benefitting from workplace experiences (Smith, et al 2009).

### Identifying placement opportunities

Some discipline areas have a long history of providing practical placements for students, particularly when the practical component is considered an integral part of the program (for example, education, nursing and medicine).

However, other discipline areas often place the onus on the student to source their own placement. Requiring international students to find their own work placement puts considerable pressure on international students and in many cases is unworkable in practice. While local students are able to draw on relatives, family friends and other local networks when seeking work placements, the majority of international students have very few local connections they can access for assistance (Gribble et al, 2012).

When a WIL placement is a compulsory program requirement, international students often resort to undertaking some sort of research project within their faculty or school if they can arrange that or alternatively return home to complete the work experience requirement during the long vacation. Undertaking a WIL experience in their home country allows students to complete their study experience in Australia while familiarising themselves with workplace practice and professional culture in their country of origin. However, international students are frequently dissatisfied with this option as it does not provide what is most highly desired: an Australian work experience (Gribble et al, 2012).

Education institutions themselves occasionally offer internships but these require interested students to formally apply for positions. Applicants usually undergo a selection procedure that mimics the job application process. Poor understanding of the job application process, coupled with weak communication skills, often places international students at a disadvantage (Gribble et al, 2012). Many institutions also place Grade Point Average (GPA) requirements on students undertaking internships.

Many large companies offer vacation programs to students. These programs are considered an important way for students to gain relevant work experience during their summer holidays and can often lead to graduate employment. However, most vacation programs run by large organisations only allow Australian citizens or permanent residents to apply, and exclude international students (Chugh, 2011).

WIL program coordinators in education institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to identify suitable placement opportunities for international students. Identifying, securing and managing WIL is also very resource-intensive for education institutions. Many teaching staff believe they lack the training and resource infrastructure to locate work placements for the growing number of international students (Blackmore et al, 2012). A major challenge facing the university sector is how to secure sufficient work placements for all eligible students, as well as how to provide adequate support and supervision to students while participating in work placements. There are additional concerns surrounding the staffing and professional development for those involved in WIL programs, particularly when there are high numbers of international students enrolled.

### Employer attitudes

Finding employers willing to host international students on work placements is another key challenge. The research suggests that many employers are reluctant to take on international students because of a perceived lack of essential cultural knowledge, understanding of the Australian work context and perceived deficiencies in English language competence. Some employers use internships and other forms of WIL as a recruitment method and may be hesitant to take on international students because their visa conditions place limitations on opportunities for long-term employment (Patrick et al, 2009).

There is concern within the higher education sector and among others who work with international students about the apparent lack of willingness on the part of Australian employers to accept international students on placements and for graduate positions. Informing employers about the benefits associated with employing an international student or graduate, providing clear and accessible information about visa options, and promoting some of the good news stories surrounding international students and employment are some of the strategies currently being considered by education institutions and associated organisations (Blackmore, et al).

### Visa barriers/legal status of WIL

The legal status of WIL is also ambiguous and likely to act as a barrier to international students participating in work placements, internships and other forms of WIL to the extent they might desire.

International students on an Australian student visa are eligible to participate in a paid work placement or internship as part of their CRICOS approved study. Payment received as part of a work placement is considered additional to the 20 hours of paid work permitted as part of a student visa. International students and recent graduates between the age of 18 and 30 are also eligible for the Special Program 416 visa. The 416 visa provides current students and recent graduates (up to 24 months after graduation) with the opportunity to undertake an internship for periods of up to 26 weeks (Australian Internships, 2012).

However, there exists a level of ambiguity in the wording of the National Code Part C: Work-based Training (under the ESOS Act) that causes some institutions to be cautious about encouraging and supporting WIL. The National Code states that: "Work-based training must only be approved by a designated authority as part of a CRICOS-registered course where:

- a. it must be undertaken to gain the qualification, and
- b. the registered provider has appropriate arrangements for the supervision and assessment of overseas students in place." (National Code)

A conservative reading of this part of the Code by some Victorian institutions has led them to exclude international students from work-based training, thereby minimising potential risk to the institution through possible infringement of the Code. Other Victorian institutions interpret Part C more leniently and allow international students access to all work based programs.

There are a range of Commonwealth and State legal instruments or rulings in addition to the ESOS Act that impact and may affect an institution's willingness to offer WIL and internships in Victoria including:

- Fair Work Australia ruling on internships, vocational placements and unpaid work
- Training and Reform Act 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Equal Opportunity Legislation
- Guidelines for Applications for Approval of Work-Based Training in Courses for Overseas Students issued by the VRQA
- Working with Children Act 2005.

In short, the proliferation of laws, jurisdictions and interpretations around WIL and internships mean that education institutions and employers tend to err on the side of conservatism when it comes to exploring new opportunities for work experience for international students. The matter is frequently viewed as being too hard, resulting in institutions and employers shying away from exploring new options.

### Preparing international students for internships and WIL

Many employers express concern about the successful integration of international students in the workplace (Lilley, 2008). Successful placements depend on students, teaching staff and employers having a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of the placement and the process of placement being well managed so that long-term partnerships can succeed. Adequate briefing of students, employers and institution staff about their roles, relationships and responsibilities in relation to WIL, along with information about the assessment criteria and process itself are key to ultimate success (Martin & Hughes, 2009).

Examples of effective preparation include presentations from employers about their workplace and about issues surrounding work placements, as well as talks by students regarding their experiences on placement. Some universities offer placement guides for students with specific institutional requirements. Providing international students with information about the Australian workplace and work placement requirements via a YouTube video is another strategy (Blackmore et al, 2012).

### English language and communication skills

Research indicates that many employers harbour concerns about the English language capability of international graduates and believe that more needs to be done to improve the language and communication skills of international students in order to prepare them for employment. A number of studies suggest the most effective strategy is to embed English language and intercultural skills into the curriculum to ensure international students have adequate English language and communication skills needed in the Australian workplace (Arkoudis et al, 2009; Mak & Kennedy, 2012).

### CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING WIL TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Identifying placement opportunities
- Employer attitudes
- Visa barriers/legal status of WIL
- Preparing international students for internships and WIL
- English language and communication skills

One Australian university has introduced substantial English language support programs for all international students with the goal of students achieving IELTS scores of 7.0 early in their academic career. The hope is that by raising English language standards international students will be better equipped to succeed, including to participate in WIL programs (Gamble et al, 2010).

This issue is significant, and will be the subject of a national symposium, 'Five Years on: English language competence of international students', organised by the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) and to be held in February 2013 in Melbourne.

## Conclusion

The proposed introduction of post-study work visas in 2013 is certain to raise post-graduation employment expectations among international students. Having relevant local work experience will be critical for international students to gain employment in their field in Australia after they graduate. Australian work experience is also likely to enhance the employment prospects of international graduates returning home or seeking work internationally with international employers believing that overseas work experience makes graduates more attractive (McKillop, 2008). For many international graduates, the combination of overseas study and work experience is considered fundamental to their success. A professional placement in Australia adds considerable weight to an international graduate's portfolio.

Australia has a strong reputation for WIL and Australian education institutions have become the first choice for many international students seeking to enhance their employment prospects either in their home country or in Australia (Gamble et al, 2010). Many international students choose to study in Australia with the expectation of experiencing the Australian workplace. The key challenge for Australian higher education providers is how to provide meaningful WIL to both local and international students and on a greater scale. Successfully meeting this challenge will require the involvement and shared responsibility of all stakeholders: students, education institutions, employers and government.

# AUDIT OF CURRENT PRACTICES IN VICTORIA

The project team undertook to map current practices of selected Victorian tertiary education institutions in providing internships and work experience to international students. A two-pronged approach using a desktop audit and selected institutional interviews was used.

For higher education institutions, the focus was on three discipline areas – business, accounting and engineering. For VET institutions the focus was two discipline areas – hospitality and accounting.

An attempt was made to gather data on the number of students in Victorian tertiary institutions participating in internships and work placements. However, this proved problematic for two reasons. Firstly, institutions do not centralise data about WIL placements; what data exists generally resides at course level. Over 80 individual higher education courses were identified involving WIL. Collection of participation data was therefore beyond the scope of the present project. Secondly, many institutions view data about work placements to be commercially sensitive and are reticent to make it available publicly. However, a general sense of the extent of international student participation in WIL was gained from interviews and is reported on below.

Broadly, the audit looked at six key matters:

1. The extent and character of internships and work placements currently provided by Victorian tertiary institutions.
2. Who manages internships and work placements for international students in Victorian tertiary institutions?
3. What constitutes an internship or work placement in Victorian tertiary institutions?
4. What is happening outside the institution?
5. What are the barriers facing international students in accessing these programs in Victoria?
6. What opportunities exist to improve international students' access to and success in internships and work placement in Victoria?

It is clear from the audit that there is great variability across the sector in the availability of internships and work placements and how they are arranged, managed, promoted, accessed, assessed and recorded.

## Extent and character of internships and work placements currently provided by Victorian tertiary institutions

Tables 1 and 2 (Attachment 4) (p.42-49) identify the extent of internships and work placements available in Victorian universities and VET institutes respectively for the disciplines investigated. The general findings of the audit are summarised below.

### Universities

1. A wide range of internship and work placement programs are offered by Victorian universities to students, in particular in the professional disciplines – business, law and the technologies, especially engineering and to a lesser extent information technology. Fewer programs are available in the sciences, health and arts/humanities.

2. Restrictions are often placed on international students participating in these programs, in some cases due to uncertainty amongst some universities about the restrictions dictated by CRICOS requirements related to study and work requirements (see p.14).
3. Three universities consulted were in the process of reviewing their industry based learning programs and in particular seeking to address some of the barriers to international students participating in this program.
4. A crossover between internship and work placement and international exchange opportunities is occurring at a number of universities that are using their international partnerships and links to grow WIL participation.

### Vocational Education and Training (VET)

1. There is a wide range of internship and work placement programs offered by Victorian VET institutes in the hospitality and business disciplines. Those in hospitality are generally compulsory. Those in accounting are generally not.
2. There is a marked difference in the way work placements are structured in hospitality and accounting. Hospitality programs have a mandatory 280-hour work placement, as part of the course. Accounting programs tend to embed work placement into the Professional Year program and not in the course of study as such.
3. Both domestic and international VET students play a significant role in arranging industry placements and work experience themselves.
4. The resourcing of managing industry partnerships usually sits with a trainer who has cultivated strong industry contacts and in many cases continues to work in industry.
5. The VET sector has a strong connection to industry and many providers are using these connections and high quality industry brands to promote their courses.
6. To meet the needs of international students a number of institutions have registered new courses to include appropriate time for work placement and have widely adopted Professional Year programs in accounting, IT and engineering to offer access to work placement.

### Who manages internships and work placements for international students in Victorian tertiary institutions?

The process of operationalising WIL is multi-layered with many interdependencies. Many stakeholders are of the view that success requires a stronger partnership between the central international area (usually the international office), the teaching areas and the central careers and employment unit within the institution.

**Figure 1 Interdependent roles in supporting international students and work placement**



There is no single model extant for managing and supporting WIL. Some institutions manage WIL at a central level, others at the faculty/school discipline level. Some institutions employ Industry Placement Officers, WIL coordinators, Industry Based Learning consultants and Careers officers to support their programs. Academic champions and administrative leaders are seen unanimously as critical to successfully resourcing and delivering WIL.

A noticeable recent trend among institutions, universities particularly, is consideration of WIL as a part of their strategic review and visioning processes, with the intention if possible of differentiating the institution from competitors. This aligns well with the focus of the Victorian Government through the current research project.

### Industry snapshots – Approaches to WIL for international students in Victorian tertiary institutions

**Swinburne University of Technology** has just completed a full audit of all work-integrated learning and industry based learning (IBL) in the university, identifying barriers to international student participation. The detailed findings are for internal use only but indicate that while overall the university has a good approach to IBL, more could be done in relation to international students. The audit investigated the reasons international students might be excluded from IBL and examined how the university might increase access. Faculties are hesitant to make WIL or work placements mandatory for international students because of the shortage of placements within the local employer community and the resources required to place international students.

**Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN)** is currently working on a project focused on WIL leadership, considering the structures and leadership competencies required to operate WIL. Early work drawing on a case study of structural approaches to WIL in universities shows that a distributed leadership model is required and that this needs to be tailored depending on the industry needs.

**VET approach to WIL leadership** Work and industry placements are commonplace in many vocational education courses and in some cases training packages mandate a work placement. However, the majority of placements are determined through the institution's delivery strategy. Industry engagement is also mandated as part of the Australian Quality Training Framework where VET institutions must evidence their engagement with industry. This has placed the broad theme of industry engagement at the forefront of thinking of CEOs and managers in VET institutions.

### Approaches to internship and work experience in tertiary institutions

A variety of approaches operate to deliver internships and work experience. Table 2 (p.19) describes the three main approaches – optional placement, elective placement and mandatory placement – together with the resource/risk levels involved.

**Table 2 Approaches to international student internships and work placement**

Optional placement	Elective placement	Mandatory placement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ May be organised by student and be undertaken during holidays or outside study hours</li> <li>■ Student may request support from teacher to refer them to potential employer</li> <li>■ May pay additional fees to undertake a 3rd party structured program</li> <li>■ Optional mentoring programs considered a way of further developing employability skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Student can enrol in elective that enables them to undertake work placement</li> <li>■ Placement is assessed and gives credit towards course</li> <li>■ Some institutions also require the student to secure the placement as part of learning process</li> <li>■ In some cases, placement may be undertaken overseas in home country</li> <li>■ Growing interest in service learning and community internships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Student is required to complete industry based learning in order to satisfy requirements of the course</li> <li>■ May also be completed in home country under supervision</li> <li>■ This placement may also be a requirement of accrediting body</li> </ul>
<b>Low level of resources/risk</b>	<b>Mixed level of resources/risk</b>	<b>Higher level of resources/risk</b>

### Optional placement (non-credit)

Optional placements are offered by both VET and university institutions. The placement is often promoted internally through the institution and relies on teaching staff having strong industry networks. In one VET provider surveyed this was the only form of outside work placement offered to students (all other learning was in simulated context). The optional placement may also be arranged directly by the student and completed during holiday periods. In most cases the placement does not count towards study credit.

### Optional placement through external service provider or partner

Many institutions work collaboratively with partners to offer students non-compulsory work placement services. This may be on a formal basis or ad hoc. Local and international partners are working with institutions to offer these placements. There is some hesitation among Victorian providers about the capacity of these service providers to continue to meet the growing needs for placements. There is also an issue that in working with external service providers, students may be required to change from a student visa to an internship visa.

### Mentoring as an optional placement

Most universities in Victoria offer a mentoring program, either centrally managed across the university or offered within faculty areas. During the stakeholder interviews it became apparent that there is an important role for mentoring programs to support students in accessing greater internship and work placement opportunities. Mentoring programs can foster greater skills, confidence and provide access to a useful business network.

### Elective placement (for credit)

Many institutions have embedded a range of elective programs within their course areas for students to engage in industry based learning, work experience and service learning. These range from 1-2 credit points and may be taken full-time over a semester (i.e. 1 day per week), in intensive mode 3-6 weeks or through capstone projects over 1 year. Many faculties have created elective courses for students to enrol in with a variety of assessment methods. Many institutions noted that they are not in a position to make work placements mandatory for international students due to concern over the student's preparedness to undertake the placement, their visa eligibility and the resources required to secure a suitable placement for all students.

### Volunteer placements and service learning as elective placement

Many providers are now embedding service-learning programs as electives. Melbourne Business School offers the Volunteer Business Practicum that is open to all students as an intensive 3-4 week program during semester break in February or July. The WIL volunteer program is also available to students to undertake an unpaid volunteer activity (up to 80 hours) with a not-for-profit organisation.

All parties involved viewed international students gaining work placement in the volunteer sector as a win-win outcome. The volunteer sector stresses the importance of training and supporting a volunteer workforce. Volunteer placement may offer a unique pathway for an international student to build skills they can then apply in the corporate context. Placement in community based organisations also enables international students to engage with the local community in a way that may not have been previously possible.

### Mandatory placement

Many of the stakeholders interviewed during the study were of the view that internships and work placements would need to be made mandatory if a significant expansion of them were to be achieved. Where placements are mandated, participation rates are high. This is clearly problematic however. Not all industry sectors require a qualifying internship. Moreover placement may not be guaranteed (see below).

There are also other challenges and tensions: some practical, some statutory. For example, many programs in Victorian universities that include mandatory placements find it necessary to include home country placements in order to meet students' needs. At the same time, under Victorian regulations, VET placements have to be conducted within Victoria in order to be compliant.

At two Victorian universities, international students are excluded from undertaking formal WIL placements. This is informed by two considerations. The first is an interpretation by these universities of the National Code Part C that in their determination prohibit work placements unless they are mandatory (see p. 14). The second is a view that there are limited places for internships and that a placement cannot be mandatory if a place cannot be guaranteed.

As a consequence of their understandings of the National Code requirements a number of VET institutions and universities have created two courses – one with a mandated work placement/ internship and one without. For example, William Angliss TAFE offers both VET and higher education qualifications for the tourism and hospitality sector. The Diploma of Hospitality is offered in two ways, with the second option including a further semester of mandatory placement. Enrolments in the program requiring a mandatory placement are capped at 75 students per semester and include a student ratio requirement of 50:50 international and domestic students. One full-time Industry Placement Coordinator is responsible for all aspects of student placement.

### Internship Placement Work Experience overseas/ in home country

Many institutions offer international students the option of completing their internship and work placement in their home country. Students source their own overseas placement and complete this as part of their course with prior approval of their academic adviser. Growth in global volunteering and internships also means that more activities are being undertaken offshore. Victoria University has identified an opportunity to engage with international students who return to their home country during holidays (December–March). Victorian University actively encourages international students to use this time more effectively by engaging in purposeful career readiness activities. Victoria University is also trialling a Career Passport program to support global learning.

### Developments outside institutions

During the audit process, two important developments were identified outside institutions impacting on internship and work placement activity. The first is the growth in third-party service providers who support students in gaining internships and work placements. The second is the introduction of government sanctioned post-study Professional Year programs in the accounting, computer science and engineering disciplines. The two developments are interrelated. Professional Year programs are usually delivered through third-party providers and include an internship.

## Role of third party providers

Over the past five years there has been substantial growth in the services offered to education institutions by third-party service providers. These services include supplying work placements and internships for international students as well as other training designed to facilitate the transition from education to employment. As outlined in Table 1 (p. 9) there is considerable activity underway in the post-study and stand alone internship markets, usually dominated by third party providers. While this area is not the focus of this study, it is an important consideration as these providers have a direct impact on the availability of work placements, employer perceptions of international students and work placements, and international students' own views about internships offered through third-party providers.

Three organisations were consulted during the audit: Internships Australia, Professional Pathways Australia and Education2Employment (e2e). Whilst not directly interviewed during this study, the work of Navitas Workforce Solutions is also considered.

Australian Internships, Professional Pathways Australia and Navitas Workforce Solutions operate as stand alone providers (offering 416 visa internship placements) but each has nevertheless entered into direct partnerships with universities and VET providers to offer internships and work placements for international students.

### *Snapshot: Professional Pathways Australia – Internships*

Professional Pathways Australia is a corporate business arm of Monash University and is considered one of Australia's leading pathway and internship providers. The Director of PPA notes that "the number of people asking for work experience is increasing at an exponential rate, every student survey, particularly those with international students, shows that this is a demand area that is not being met."

PPA offers Professional Year (PY) programs, stand alone 416 visa internships and Working Holiday Visa internship programs. From 1 January 2013 PPA is offering a Job Readiness Program, targeting those students seeking to move to post-study work rights. The two-week program will involve a mini professional year with 60 hours of face-to-face content and then the option to undertake an internship. Students are paying \$1,250 for access to internships offered by PPA and other providers. The new Job Ready Program will be offered at \$2,000.

## The role of the Professional Year

Introduced in 2009, Professional Year (PY) programs for international students in accounting, information technology and engineering play an important role in preparing recent graduates for work. The approach essentially builds a work placement after the completion of formal studies at a VET or higher education institution, not within the program of study. Professional Year programs are managed by peak industry bodies, but delivered through a network of approved education providers:

**Information Technology** – Australian Computer Society

**Accounting** – CPA Australia, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Institute of Public Accountants

**Engineering** – Engineers Australia

The Professional Year is a structured professional development program, mandated by the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, combining formal learning and workplace experience. The goals of the program are to:

- familiarise participants with the norms and values in the Australian workplace as well as the Australian employment market and workplace culture
- teach participants how to communicate effectively and professionally in the Australian workplace with colleagues, managers and clients
- include an internship (work experience) to educate participants about all aspects of work practices in an Australian company.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) is currently reviewing the success of the Professional Year program and considering the role of the Professional Year once the new post-study work visa is introduced in 2013. An outcome of this review process is due in early 2013. Table 3 (p.22) outlines those organisations in Victoria that are registered to deliver Professional Year programs.

<b>Table 3 Professional Year Providers (Victoria)</b>	<b>IT</b>	<b>Accounting</b>	<b>Engineering</b>
Central Queensland University	•	•	
Education Centre Australia (ECA), Victoria University	•		
Navitas Workforce Solutions	•	•	•
Performance Education	•	•	
Professional Pathways Australia	•	•	•
Swinburne University of Technology	•	•	
Accountants Resource Centre		•	
AMI Education		•	
Australian Institute of Practical Accounting		•	
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE		•	•
QIBA		•	
Top Education Group		•	

*(Source: EA, CPA, CA and ACS websites as at 15 July 2012)*

There is currently no publicly available data about the uptake of the Professional Year in Australia. With the DIAC review underway we hope to be able to access data on how successful the program has been, not just in terms of uptake but also more importantly in terms of outcomes for the participants. Professional Pathways Australia (PPA), the largest provider of the Professional Year in Victoria has reported steady enrolments since 2009, with around 550 students per annum completing the program. PPA reports that 70 per cent of Professional Year graduates are employed in their field, most within 3 months of graduating. Enrolments in Professional Year programs indicate that Melbourne, followed by Sydney, are the key hubs for Professional Year programs.

# ACCESS BARRIERS

The scope of the present study did not allow for direct engagement with international students. The conclusions below are therefore based on the literature review and feedback from institutions. They highlight four areas where institutions perceive barriers affecting international students' access to work placements:

## Perceived employer attitudes to international students and placements

Perceived negative attitudes of employers to international student work placements was an issue consistently raised in the literature review and in stakeholder consultations. Finding employers willing to host international students on work placements is therefore a key challenge.

The barriers appear two fold: (1) employers lack of knowledge about international students as a group and (2) employers perception that employing international students or graduates is problematic, including because of language deficiencies and cultural differences (see below), and of little or no value to their business.

A comprehensive program of engagement with and education of the Victorian business community will be required if Victorian employers are to be convinced of the potential value of international student work placements.

## Perceived English language competence and cultural issues

Perceived English language deficiencies as well as cultural expectations are related barriers. While many education institutions support students with English language during their studies, employers frequently perceive students whose first language is not English as being less employment-ready<sup>1</sup>. Education institutions also noted the mismatch between international students' expectations of gaining a high profile placement (e.g. with a large multinational) against the reality of most placements (mostly with local small-to-medium enterprises). Other barriers include international students' limited local networks (both business and personal) and the lack of confidence of many international students to embark on a placement.

## Resource and capacity constraints (institution and industry)

The literature review and stakeholder consultations both confirm that WIL program coordinators in education institutions are finding it increasingly difficult to identify suitable placement opportunities for international students. While the audit of Victorian institutions revealed a wide range of types and opportunities for WIL, the scale is exceedingly limited. The evidence suggests there is substantial unmet demand for internships and work placements from international students (as well as from domestic students). The scalability of internships and work placements is problematic and a serious challenge.

### ACCESS BARRIERS TO INTERNSHIPS AND WORK PLACEMENTS

- Perceived employer attitudes
- Perceived English language and cultural issues
- Resource and capacity constraints (institution and industry)
- Perceived legal uncertainties

<sup>1</sup> The English language competence of international students, including in the transition to employment and the workforce, will be the subject of a National Symposium organised by IEAA, to be held in Melbourne on 25 February 2013.

Identifying, securing and managing WIL is also very resource-intensive for education institutions. International students require extensive support if they are to be encouraged and prepared to successfully pursue work placements. However, institutional resources to achieve these objectives are extremely limited. Some institutions do better than others in the provision of resources, but all face a resourcing challenge. In practice, many institutions (including VET) have had to cap course enrolments in order to manage placements within available resources and the pool of currently available placements in industry and the community. More than likely this affects international students disproportionately.

## Perceived legal uncertainties

As indicated previously, there are a variety of interpretations of the relevant provisions of the National Code. A conservative reading of part C of the Code by some Victorian institutions means they exclude international students from work-based training, thereby minimising potential risk to the institution through possible infringement of the Code. Other Victorian institutions interpret this more leniently and allow international students access to all work based programs.

Whether the Code is actually ambiguous is a moot point. However, varying institutional behaviours based on different interpretations of it clearly act as a barrier to international students participating in work integrated learning to the extent they might hope. It would be desirable if all Victorian institutions acted under the same understanding of the Code. The Victorian Government might like to consider whether formal legal advice would assist in clarifying the matter for Victorian institutions and international students.

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There is currently a reality gap that needs to be bridged between the promise of work related experiences of various kinds for international students and their availability in Victoria.

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## Conclusion

There is currently a reality gap that needs to be bridged between the promise of work related experiences of various kinds for international students and their availability in Victoria. To avoid the potential for the promise to exceed the reality, and to avoid consequential damage to Victoria's reputation and image, significant expansion of opportunities for work experience is needed and promotional campaigns carefully planned and managed so as not to raise unfulfillable expectations among international students. Programs to achieve an expansion and smooth operation of WIL and work placement opportunities will need to be properly designed, trialled and rolled out before any value proposition promoting Victoria as a desirable study destination (based on the opportunities it provides for work experience and placement) is promulgated to international students.

Clearly, the delivery of a high quality education and industry experience on a large scale in Victoria poses challenges. There are many problems to be solved before Victoria can legitimately claim to be a highly desirable study destination for international students wishing to undertake a work placement as part of their education and training.

However, all Victorian education stakeholders consulted were of the view that the time is right for Victoria to take a lead in breaking through the existing barriers and over the longer term to seek to create a value proposition around internships and work placement opportunities in Victoria for international students to help grow and strengthen the Victorian international education and business sectors.



# CASE STUDY 1: BELLWOOD UNIVERSITY

The following case study provides an analysis of work experience and internship opportunities for international students studying in the accounting and engineering disciplines at a Victorian university.

## Overview

Bellwood University is a Victorian public university with over 40,000 higher education students enrolled in 2011. The university has campuses situated in a major metropolitan city as well as in two regional locations. In 2011 more than 6,500 international students were enrolled both onshore as well as with offshore partners. Most international students studying at Bellwood University are enrolled in undergraduate programs (65%), with the vast majority located in the Faculty of Business and Law (67%) at the metropolitan campus of the university. The Bellwood University School of Engineering is located at one of the regional campuses and in 2011, 130 international students were enrolled in the Bachelor of Engineering (22% of the total cohort). Nearly half (46%) of all international students at Bellwood come from China, with 7% originating from India and 6% from Hong Kong. The majority (65%) of international students are aged between 20–24 years.

## Bellwood Accounting: work experience opportunities

Bellwood offers a three-year Bachelor of Commerce degree. After a first year of study in key business disciplines, students may choose from a wide range of major sequences, including accounting. All students have the option of undertaking work integrated learning (WIL). According to Bellwood, WIL provides students with the opportunity to gain work experience that can make a significant difference when seeking employment after graduation. The Faculty of Business and Law at Bellwood offers three WIL options that are designed to prepare students for the day-to-day requirements of prospective employers, develop professional work practice and networks, apply theory to practice, earn credit points and contribute to students becoming more competitive graduates. WIL programs in the Faculty of Business and Law involve no formal class contact and can be completed in Australia and overseas. Information on the faculty website states that the university has existing relationships with a range of employers but also notes that students can source their own placement.

Current WIL options at Bellwood University consist of Business Internship, Industry Based Learning placement (IBL) and Community based volunteering. The Faculty has been offering business internships for 11 years, while IBL and community-based volunteering were only introduced mid-2012.

**Figure 1. Business internship: participation rates**

2009		2010		2011	
Domestic	International	Domestic	International	Domestic	International
60	18	59	18	57	7

## Benefits

Interviews with those involved with WIL in the Faculty of Business and Law at Bellwood revealed the many benefits associated with international students' involvement in WIL as well as a number of key challenges impacting on their successful participation. According to the WIL coordinator in the Faculty of Business and Law, WIL provides international students with a real world experience in the world of work, exposes them to professional issues and challenges and provides an important reference point when they are applying for work as a graduate. International students who participate in WIL can refer to their placement when discussing workplace issues in a job interview. WIL also provides international students with a quality referee as well as important networks in their industry. Importantly, as competition among graduates intensifies, a WIL placement provides international graduates with a point of difference in both the Australian and overseas graduate labour markets.

## Challenges

Identifying placement opportunities is one of the main challenges for students and the faculty. The faculty requires students to source their own placement. There are two reasons for this requirement. The first relates to resources. The WIL program was built around a sustainable model that involved the student negotiating his or her own placement. Current staffing precludes the faculty from sourcing placements for all eligible students. The second reason is based on a belief that ownership in the work placement negotiation process is critical to the success of the placement. The process of securing their own placement requires students to develop skills critical to future employment, such as negotiation and communication, and enhances their knowledge of the Australian labour market.

Many international students struggle to find their own placement which some staff at Bellwood suggest is due to the gap between workplace readiness of the students and the expectations of employers. A leading authority on WIL at Bellwood believes the university needs to do more to prepare international students for the Australian workplace, particularly in the areas of English language and communication skills and knowledge of the Australian work culture. Australian employers, particularly large firms, that use work placements as a recruitment method are often reluctant to take on international students for fear they will require additional support and will not transition easily into the workplace.

In addition, WIL staff at Bellwood believe many students (both local and international) place too much emphasis on obtaining positions with prestigious accounting and professional services firms at the expense of mid-tier and micro firms. According to the WIL coordinator in the Faculty of Business and Law, many students fail to see the value in smaller firms and often students would prefer to return to a coursework unit if unable to undertake an internship in a large, well-known firm. For those who are prepared to accept positions with smaller firms, the experience is generally very positive.

## Bellwood Engineering: work experience opportunities

The School of Engineering at Bellwood is based at one of the university's regional campuses. The School of Engineering offers four-year undergraduate degrees in civil, electrical and electronic, mechanical, and robotic engineering. According to literature provided by the School, the Bachelor of Engineering "places great emphasis on the practical application of engineering and scientific principles to produce industry-ready engineers, who are immediately employable and capable of adapting to an ever-changing future". Both domestic and international students can choose subjects that offer industry placements. According to the School, the Industry Based Learning (IBL) unit provides students with the opportunity to "apply and consolidate knowledge gained at university, experience workplace culture and work practices, explore career options and develop a professional network".

## Professional Practice

All undergraduate engineering students at Bellwood must complete a 12-week Professional Practice unit. Professional Practice offers many advantages to both international and local students and is an important factor in the university's commitment to producing industry-ready engineers. It is of particular importance to international students as it provides them with important exposure to the Australian workplace as well as links to those active in their industry. Many employers use the 12-week placement as a method of graduate recruitment. Importantly, the 12-week Professional Practice unit is a mandatory accreditation requirement by Engineers Australia.

## Challenges

For international engineering students, Professional Practice creates many challenges. Discussions with staff in the School of Engineering, as well as staff in careers and employment and student counselling, reveal there are serious problems with the Professional Practice unit as it currently stands. Bellwood Engineering began as a small program with strong ties to the local community. In the past, it has been relatively easy for engineering students to find their own placements and this model has relieved teaching staff of the resource intensive task of placing all students. However, as the international cohort has grown, engineering academics concede the model may need to be revised. Other universities administer more formalised programs and Bellwood may need to examine the current model if demand for engineering degrees among international students grows.

One of the main hurdles facing international students involves the requirement that they source their own placement. With minimal local networks and often limited understanding of the local labour market, international students struggle to find placements. While local students are highly successful in securing paid work placements, many international students are only able to find unpaid positions placing them at greater risk of exploitation. Lack of any preparation for the professional practice experience has also emerged as an issue. International engineering students are required to locate placements without formal career education or study of the Australian labour market.

For many international students, the prospect of finding their own placements is so daunting that they postpone their professional practice until the last moment, often leaving themselves facing a crisis in their final semester. Lack of local options leads many international students to complete their Professional Practice in their home country where they have better networks. However, this is often not the desired outcome for many international students. Many hope to gain Australian work experience to complement their Australian qualification in order to enhance their post-study employment prospects either in Australian or overseas. Undertaking the placement overseas also makes it harder for Bellwood staff to oversee and assess it. Some university staff were also highly critical of the marketing of university programs as many students feel they have been misled by the promise of work placements. According to one staff member, while Bellwood has a strong reputation for industry partnerships, the professional practice experiences at the faculty level are not meeting the expectations of international students.

## Work Integrated Learning

In addition to professional practice, all engineering students at Bellwood are eligible to participate in an elective work integrated learning unit as part of their program of study. There are two options for students. The first is the Industry Based Learning (IBL) unit which is a three month full-time paid placement. Importantly, students must have a 70-point grade average in order to participate in the IBL. The second option is an unpaid 100-hour internship which has no entry requirement. Both the IBL and the internship require rigorous assessment based on a 'preparation, placement and portfolio' model. According to the WIL coordinator, providing students with comprehensive preparation that focuses on developing students' generic skills and familiarising them with the Australian labour market is key to a successful placement.

**Figure 2. Industry Based Learning (IBL) participation rates**

2009		2010		2011	
Domestic	International	Domestic	International	Domestic	International
10	0	18	1	11	1

**Figure 3. Unpaid Internship participation rates**

2009		2010	
Domestic	International	Domestic	International
7	2	10	12

## Challenges

According to the WIL coordinator in the Faculty of Engineering international students are underrepresented in WIL. The 70-point grade average stipulation prevents many from participating in the IBL. Another deterrent may also be the expectation that students locate their own placement for both the IBL and the unpaid internship. WIL staff at Bellwood commented that international students often enrol in WIL without a clear career path or thought about where they would like to undertake their placement. Despite the Faculty being very clear from the outset that students are required to find their own placement, most international students expect to be provided with a placement. According to the faculty, around half of international students participating in WIL require additional support from the Faculty to secure a placement.

Comprehensive pre-placement preparation along with rigorous assessment tasks may also deter some students who may otherwise consider an internship an easy way to earn credit points towards their degree. While students considering enrolling in WIL may perceive the pre-placement preparation as onerous, faculty staff are unequivocal about the importance of preparation they consider critical to a successful placement.

## KEY MESSAGES FROM CASE STUDY 1

- Despite placing importance on acquiring local work experience, international students are under-represented in terms of work placement participation. Nor do they participate in significant numbers.
- International students encounter many difficulties when required to secure their own placement.
- University staff are of the view that international students place too much emphasis on large, high-status employers at the expense of smaller employers.
- Most international students prefer to gain local work experience. Those students who complete a placement in their home country usually do so as a last resort. Supervising and evaluating overseas work placements poses additional challenges for the Australian education institution.
- Most university staff involved in WIL are of the view that preparation is key to a successful placement.
- Pre-placement preparation ranges from one or two non-compulsory classes given by careers and employment staff, to highly structured programs that aim to ensure the student is work-ready.
- There is widespread support for expanding and improving work experience opportunities for international students. Overall, university staff value WIL highly and believe that demand for meaningful work experience among both local and international students is likely to grow.
- WIL is resource intensive and any moves to expand and enhance current programs will require additional resourcing.
- Many university staff highlight the need for a university-wide approach to WIL to ensure the delivery of high quality work experience opportunities that align with the expectations of international students and the promise of university marketers.

## CASE STUDY 2: TOURISM, HOSPITALITY AND EVENTS INSTITUTE

The following in-depth case study provides an analysis of work experience and internship opportunities for international students studying in the tourism and hospitality disciplines at a Victorian VET institution.

### Overview

Tourism Hospitality and Events (THE) Institute is a specialist training provider for the food, tourism and hospitality industries, delivering a range of courses from four-year degrees, diplomas, apprenticeships and short courses. Over 21,900 students study with THE Institute each year, including 1,300 international students at the Melbourne campus and another 1,200 students offshore in four joint campuses in China. The Institute is registered as both a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and Higher Education Provider (HEP) offering Diploma and Bachelor-level programs. Maintaining close connections with industry is vital to the success of the Institute and most programs require periods of industry placement. THE Institute positions itself as enabling students to gain the skills and knowledge needed for a successful career through both classroom and industry-based training.

### Work experience opportunities

Industry placement is integral to the programs on offer at THE Institute. While the Institute offers many programs that include work-based learning and vocational placement, the focus of the present case study is on the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Hospitality specialising in the Industry Placement Program (IPP). Within the Diploma two semesters, the 2nd and 4th, are IPP with 364 hours and 396 hours respectively spent in industry. The first placement must be in a food and beverage attendant role as these competencies are assessed. The second placement can be in any hospitality role.

Due to the requirements of the National Code where work placement must be a mandatory component of the course, THE Institute created a new CRICOS registered course that embedded a mandatory industry placement. This course is identical to the Diploma/Advanced Diploma in Hospitality but continues on for another six months in order to complete the industry placement. An Industry Placement Coordinator is assigned to teach and coordinate the industry placement program for all students.

During their placements students are paid full award wages. Due to CRICOS registration requirements international students are not permitted to complete placements outside of Victoria.

Given the practical nature of the course there are quotas placed on class sizes and also limits on local and international enrolments. Class sizes are set at 25 students per class with a targeted 50:50 international and domestic student ratio. Students pay a marginally higher rate to enrol in the IPP program.

The IPP is not the only way students engage with industry during their training. They are also required to complete six shifts of work experience within a hotel. The work experience follows the traditional modelling of secondary school work experience whereby the students are buddied with a hotel employee. The purpose of the work experience is to give the students an opportunity to shine and gain exceptional placements.

The Institute's Careers and Employment service also assists students to access other paid and voluntary work experience including working with the Australian Open and the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.

The Ready 4 Work program is an in-house program designed by THE Institute to cover the basic food and beverage skills required for hospitality employment. On successful completion, the participants receive a licence, including accredited units. This program is designed to support students by giving them an edge when applying for casual or part-time positions within the hospitality industry.

An IPP Coordinator is responsible for securing placements, yet students are also encouraged to take an active role in this process. In order to prepare for the IPP students undertake a weekly workshop and take part in a unit called 'Working in Industry' over 14 weeks before they are placed. During the placement students are visited in the host organisation twice per placement. There is weekly communication via phone email or Facebook. All parties enter into a Practical Placement Agreement that outlines the obligations and responsibilities for the placement.

## Benefits

Consultations with those involved with industry placements at both the VET and HE level noted the first benefit for students as financial. When they are on placement, they are paid award wages. This makes the placement easier to manage for students who may be reluctant to undertake a period of work placement without payment. The other benefits are the networking and further employment outcomes.

The Coordinators noted that many students secure part-time employment during their course or full-time employment post studies with their employer. The fact that students are immersed in the work culture is very important. The Coordinators noted improvements in social and professional communication with notable improved outcomes in language and industry specific language. In the tourism and hospitality industry work placements are common. It is therefore important to create a unique learning experience and one that is a point of difference. THE Institute promotes the high quality of its industry placement program as a selling feature to study at the institution. From a learning perspective the main benefit of well designed and managed industry placement is that it heightens the learning for students by applying classroom experiences in the workplace and workplace experiences in the classroom.

## Challenges

The Placement Coordinators identified language skills and lack of previous work experience as the main challenge to delivering WIL to international students. The prior work experience gap is not necessarily related to the hospitality industry as such so much as having a general experience and understanding an Australian workplace. Another challenge is the seasonal nature of the industry, meaning that long-term commitments are hard to make from the industry side. The importance of the one-on-one relationship between the host organisation and the Institute staff member can also sometimes be a challenge as it only exists until one or another leaves.

The Industry Placement Coordinators don't report any greater or different challenges for international students than that for the local student cohort. The ease or otherwise of arranging industry placements varies greatly depending on the experience of the employer, the size of the business, the human resources processes and the training approaches. Many large employers are familiar with the model of work placements for students studying and have built their own systems to support these students. The Coordinators noted that it is disappointing that no government agencies are able to accept students on work placement. In their view, if the Victorian Government could open up access for international students to undertake a tourism placement this would make a big difference.

## KEY MESSAGES FROM CASE STUDY 2

- The Institute designed and registered on CRICOS a new course to enable international students to access structured industry placements.
- International students and domestic students are largely treated equally in the program, with the exception that international students must complete their placement in Victoria only (as a requirement of CRICOS registration).
- Placing a 50:50 target on international and domestic students ensures that the program is balanced and that students have the opportunity to learn in a genuine multicultural environment.
- Securing appropriate placements is a partnership between the student and the placement coordinator.
- Arranging industry placements relies heavily on the individual teacher/coordinators' connections in the industry.
- The hospitality industry is generally accepting of student placements and understands its obligations to support students.
- Employers in the hospitality industry are willing to pay for skilled students to gain experience in the work place. Equally students are better able to manage this period of work placement as it is paid at award rates.
- The program is in high demand and in order to ensure appropriate placements for all students, enrolments may need to be capped.

## INITIATIVES IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

This section considers a number of Australian state-based initiatives and some international initiatives around the transition of international students into the workforce.

### AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVES

#### Queensland

##### Brisbane City Council

Brisbane's 'Window of Opportunity' report (2011) includes a specific reference to the need for the city to develop international student internships and placements. The report notes that "adoption of the Knight Review will allow certain international students to remain in Australia for post graduation work for a period of time. Brisbane to target graduating international students with relevant qualifications to seek access to employment pathways (work experience, internships or salaried positions) in Brisbane with targeted employers. A facilitated employment pathway program will provide Brisbane with a competitive advantage in attracting international student enrolments and graduates to Brisbane."

As a specific outcome of the 'Window of Opportunity' report, Brisbane City Council is currently investigating a concept to develop an International Student Partnership Centre that will include offering employment services and internships to international students studying in Brisbane.

##### Volunteering Queensland

With funding from Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Volunteering Queensland has launched the International Student Volunteer Initiative in 2011. The initiative promotes itself as a way for students to experience Australian culture; practice English; meet new people; learn new skills; be part of a professional work environment; have fun while making a difference and improve chances of getting paid work. Volunteering Queensland works in partnership with local education providers to promote the program. They have also produced a Guide to Volunteering for international students in Queensland.

#### Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

The ACT's Learning Capital Council (LCC), chaired by ANU's Vice Chancellor, Ian Young, has put forward the idea of a guaranteed two-week work placement for international students with an ACT organisation. The LCC has included this initiative in its strategic plan that has gone to the Chief Minister for his endorsement and approval.

#### Western Australia

Perth Education City is aware of the importance of work experience and access to meaningful placements for its students (both domestic and international). PEC is not currently undertaking any collaborative programs in this space.

#### New South Wales

The NSW International Education and Research Industry Taskforce has been engaging with education providers to create a state-wide strategy and vision for international education. Two of the key elements of the vision relate to employment outcomes and careers for international students. By 2021: (1) NSW delivers cutting edge, industry-relevant education that launches domestic and international students into careers of choice; (2) NSW education is regarded in our key markets as one of the best life and career decisions for international students.

The report goes on to note "the high costs of undertaking practical experience and a lack of employment opportunity are hindering students from gaining practitioner experience". NSW has not flagged any specific programs in their strategy to support pathways to employment or open WIL for international students.

## INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

### UK Prime Minister's Initiative 2 (PMI2)

Employability is a central theme in PMI2, and is key to the UK's overseas marketing campaigns. A consortium including the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) and the National Association of Student Employment Services (NASES) has been funded to provide:

- online databases of employing organisations within the UK and overseas
- dissemination of best practice initiatives for careers and employment staff working with international students
- communicating the benefits and regulations around employing international students to employers
- the International Student Employee of the Year Award, to recognise the contributions and achievements of international students who combine part-time work with study.

### Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) is a multi-stakeholder council providing solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in the labour market. Some initiatives include:

- Career Edge Paid Internship Program – for recent graduates from Canadian colleges and universities provides meaningful, entry-level work experience for Canadian graduates. Internships are paid positions that last for 6, 9 or 12 months.
- Mentoring Partnership – brings together recent skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation specific mentoring relationships.
- Community Partners – streamlined, innovative solutions to better connect job-ready-skilled graduates with meaningful work.

## Conclusion

It is clear from these examples that while there is considerable and growing interest and activity around the issue of the transition of international students into the workforce, no other Australian state or region appears yet to be comprehensively engaging government, employers and tertiary institutions in support of work placement, internships and post-study work opportunities for international students. Few, if any, large scale and effective programs in this space exist at present. Victoria has an opportunity to achieve early advantage if it is prepared to take the lead.

## THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR FUTURE ACTIVITY

In addition to the matters identified by this report it is clear that Victorian public policy and institutional policy and practice suffer from significant gaps in knowledge about internships and work placements for international students and, moreover, about the general phenomenon of the transition to employment by international students. There are significant gaps in the research and data, particularly in applied research focused on a range of critical matters. It will be important for Victoria to try to fill these gaps as the issue of critical skills shortages and deepening global engagement come more and more to the political and economic forefront.

An effort is made here to list a number of areas where future work in Victoria would be valuable as a means of filling the knowledge gaps and providing a sound evidence base to improve public policy, institutional policy and practice in this space:

1. Investigating the most effective way of preparing international graduates for employment, including in transitioning to work in Victoria. There has been no student analysis.
2. Identifying the critical success factors in the effective operation of WIL generally, under a variety of forms of WIL.
3. Producing the metrics on outcomes of the Professional Year. There is no coordinated published data. Victoria has the majority of the professional field holders.
4. Investigating how Victorian Qualifications and experience translate internationally, and identifying and overcoming barriers to their acceptance.
5. Investigating how WIL can be used to lever from and position Victorian education institutions together with Victorian business and industry in the Asia-Pacific over the longer term, with a focus on Victorian international alumni.
6. Investigating market development through deepening Victorian Government engagement with priority country markets, around WIL. The focus could be on design of internship/work experience products to sell (e.g. in the priority areas of focus – again probably at the advanced knowledge/research end in health, food, the environment and climate change and other areas of particular Victorian strength and expertise). Victoria could be the lead State Government in this space.

There are certain to be other options. A workshop to identify critical evidence gaps to achieve practical policy outcomes might usefully be held under the aegis of DBI as part of the response to the present research to consider future directions for Victoria in the area of supporting internships and workplace learning and enhancing international graduate employability.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS FOR ACTION

The timing is right for the Victorian Government to lead a collaboration between Victorian industry and educational institutions to develop and deliver a significant internship/work placement scheme to significantly enhance international student experiences, improve community engagement for international students and help the Victorian business community and local employers to more effectively engage with international talent seeking to work in Victoria as well as engage more deeply with other regions globally, in particular Asia.

Efforts should probably be made by the Victorian Government (in conjunction with other State Governments) to get legislative rules relaxed to meet current and future needs. There is also a need to agree what the Victorian Government, education institutions, business and industry could do to improve opportunities for and access to internships and work placements for international students, both in the short term and over the longer term. This should form part of a strategy to deepen Victoria's engagement with priority countries and regions, especially in Asia.

International students are in deficit when it comes to accessing internships and work placements in Victoria. There is much to be said and much to be gained if the Victorian Government – in conjunction with institutions and employers – were to give a leg up to international students, to help them achieve equitable access to internship and work placement opportunities while in Victoria and with the long term view of deepening engagement between Victoria and students' home countries.

### Action options

#### General

1. Internships and work placements for international students could be seen as an integral part of an overall Victorian strategy for deep global engagement.
2. Development of a Victorian value proposition to distinguish and promote Victoria as a highly desirable study destination for international students (based on opportunities that Victoria offers for internships and work placement) will require overcoming significant existing barriers. These include current limited opportunities for internships and work placements and current perceptions among Victorian employers about employing international students and graduates.
3. The Victorian government could take the lead and work in close collaboration with Victorian education institutions, businesses and industry. The initial priority focus might sensibly be Asia, with other countries and regions being considered subsequently.
4. The environment of WIL is complex for international students, institutions and employers. Programs attempting to promote WIL need to be based on a simplified explanation of how to undertake WIL. Some legal clarification is needed (or at least Victorian legal opinion sought) and a clear statement prepared for dissemination to education institutions, employers and international students.

## Victorian education institutions could

5. In conjunction with the Victorian Government, business and industry, explore ways of expanding, securing and administering work placements and internship opportunities on a much greater scale for international students than at present, including where possible involving employers in students' home countries.
6. Consider opportunities to expand employment opportunities for international students on campus.
7. Consider ways of helping international students to overcome the deficit they face in identifying and securing work experience beyond the campus.
8. Institutions should probably review their promotion and marketing materials and their resourcing and support for the administration of WIL and work placements to ensure that the promise to international students matches the reality.
9. Help bridge the gap between international students' employability skills and employer expectations, within the curriculum, and by assisting international students to prepare work oriented portfolios.
10. Review and consider a wide range of curriculum and resource related matters affecting WIL and the broader curriculum, in particular: integrated or post study placements; locations and timing of WIL; the relationship between WIL and the rest of the curriculum; pre-placement preparation for international students; and the possibility of developing global WIL for all students.
11. Institutions should quality assure and take particular care if choosing to use private contractors to manage work placements for international students.
12. Collect and use testimonials and good practice examples of WIL from employers and from international students who have had a successful work placement experience in Victoria.
13. Recognising that the employment market for local and international postgraduate students is changing rapidly, institutions could review and consider new opportunities for work experience and work placement for Victorian international postgraduate students in Australia and in their home countries.

## The Victorian Government could

14. View internships and work placements for international students as an integral part of an overall Victorian strategy for deep global engagement, especially with Asia.
15. Consider making a public case to Victorian employers and the Victorian community about the value of using international students in work experience settings, in the interests of Victorian business and long-term international connections. It will probably be important for the Premier to lead such an initiative.
16. Advocate for WIL with Victorian Businesses (Small Business Victoria, Australian Industry Group, VECCI, Australian Association of Graduate Employers, Country Business Councils, Australian Services Roundtable companies).
17. In conjunction with Victorian education institutions and Victorian business and industry, explore ways of expanding, securing and administering work placements and internship opportunities on a much greater scale for international students.
18. Provide a clearing house/database resource for use by employers, institutions and students and develop online proformas/templates/road maps to help employers understand the benefits of employing international students, to assist their understanding of the legal requirements and to facilitate their engagement with international students.

19. Provide after sales service for international students returning to their home countries, by mediating through local Victorian companies operating in the countries concerned, and through significant Victorian alumni, to link returning graduates with local employers. This would work especially well through an expanded network of Victorian state offices as part of a global engagement strategy based on priority regions, countries, states/provinces or cities. The focus initially could be at the quality/merit end – through a government to foreign government/state/province internship/work placement employment programs for talented students and graduates (a talent pipeline).
20. Support a State Symposium involving Victorian government, employers, research organisations and education institutions to explore the work related needs of international postgraduate research students and graduates.
21. Ensure vigilant Victorian regulation of WIL, in relation to the gap between the promise and the reality, through relevant State and national authorities such as VRQA, TEQSA and ASQA.
22. Consider opportunities to expand employment opportunities for international students within State government departments and agencies.
23. Over the longer term, work with other State governments to reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty across various jurisdictions about the legal status of WIL and, if possible, have the CRICOS restriction on WIL relaxed.
24. Consider aligning Department of Business and Innovation priorities and structures with these objectives and resourcing them to achieve these objectives.
25. Consider conducting an industry workshop to identify critical evidence gaps to achieve practical policy outcomes and improved institutional policy and practice in the area of WIL and international graduate employability.

# ATTACHMENT 1: SPECIFICATION OF WORK

## Title

Internships and Work Placement Opportunities for International Students in Victoria

## Background

International education is Victoria's largest export worth \$4.6 billion in 2011. It acts as a vital facilitator of business and cultural opportunities between Victoria and the world. International students educated in Victoria gain knowledge and understanding of Victoria's capabilities and culture, opening doors for major export, trade and cultural opportunities.

Government research shows that a primary reason that international students undertake study is to improve both post-study job opportunities and incomes, both in Australia and when they return home. Students are far more likely to undertake a course of study that contributes to obtaining a well-paid, engaging and secure job.

## Purpose

The research undertaken by the Service Provider will contribute to the evidence base to support policy development, strategic marketing, institutional support and communication about the transition from study to employment. In particular it will address how working in Victoria can enhance a student's international employability or add to Victoria and Australia's skills base.

## Aim/objectives

The Service Provider will gather information from key stakeholders to inform Government action and contribute to Victoria's value proposition as a high-quality provider of education and training to international students.

The Service Provider will undertake a comprehensive investigation of internships and work placement opportunities currently available to international students studying at Victorian tertiary education institutions. The study will examine work placement programs in a variety of disciplines in both the VET and Higher Education sectors in Victoria.

In particular the Service Provider will identify:

- The range of internship and other work placement programs on offer in various disciplines
- Programs that require a work placement or internship as a course requirement
- International student participation rates in internship and work placement programs according to sector and discipline
- Institutional support for international students in accessing internship and work placement programs.

The Service Provider will analyse available quantitative and qualitative data related to internships and work placement programs. This will include a case study of internship and work placement programs in both the VET and higher education sectors. The case studies will provide a deeper analysis of the key issues surrounding the participation of international students in internship and work placement programs. The study will also explore the current legal status of internship and work placement programs in Victoria.

## Timing

A draft report including a communication plan will be provided to the Department for approval by 10 August, 2012 and a final report and presentation of findings will be provided to the Department by 31 August, 2012.

### Deliverables/outputs

The Service Provider will provide the Department with one soft electronic and three hard copy written progress and final reports including recommendations and prioritisation of issues from the target market perspective.

The Service Provider will present the findings to the Department and provide an electronic copy and three hard copies of the presentation.

The Service Provider will provide the Department with a communication plan to present the results to Victorian international education stakeholders. Following approval of the communication plan by the Department, the Service Provider will execute the plan.

## ATTACHMENT 2: STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders	Details
Victorian universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deakin University</li> <li>■ The University of Melbourne</li> <li>■ Swinburne University of Technology</li> <li>■ RMIT</li> <li>■ La Trobe University</li> <li>■ University of Ballarat</li> <li>■ Victoria University</li> </ul>
Victorian VET providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ William Angliss</li> <li>■ Academies Australia</li> <li>■ Menzies Institute of Technology</li> </ul>
Peak bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Victorian International Directors Committee (VIDC)</li> <li>■ Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)</li> <li>■ Victoria TAFE International (VTI)</li> <li>■ Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN)</li> </ul>
Third-party providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional Pathways Australia</li> <li>■ Internships Australia</li> <li>■ Education2Employment (E2e)</li> </ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Perth Education City</li> <li>■ Study Adelaide</li> <li>■ City of Melbourne</li> </ul>

## ATTACHMENT 3: STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS

- Does your institution have a strategy/policy around WIL or student internships?
- What benefits do WIL programs bring international students?
- Do you offer a WIL placement to international students as part of your program? If so, how long has your faculty/department been offering WIL programs to international students?
- Are there any differences between the WIL programs offered to international and local students?
- Describe the WIL program that your Faculty/School/Department offers international students? Length? Optional/compulsory? Credit points? Location – local or overseas
- If you don't offer WIL, why not? (resourcing? lack of suitable placements?)
- What are some of the challenges associated with delivering WIL to international students in your program area?
- Are there difficulties associated with sourcing placements? If so, provide details.
- Who sources the international students' placement? (faculty? individual student? other?)
- Do international students encounter particular challenges when trying to secure a WIL placement? Give details.
- Are there any legal barriers to your students gaining WIL opportunities?
- If international students are unable to locate a WIL placement, do you offer an alternative program/subject? If so, describe this program/subject.
- Can international students choose to do a WIL program overseas? What are some of the pros/cons of doing a WIL program overseas?
- What preparation for the WIL program are students given?
- What support are students given when they are on their WIL placements (from the institution, host employer, etc.)
- Do international students encounter challenges while on WIL placements? Provide details.
- How do host employers view WIL? What do they consider to be the challenges and opportunities associated with hosting an international student on a WIL placement?
- Can you suggest any improvements in the way your institution manages WIL programs?
- Do you think there is a role the State Government can play in enhancing WIL opportunities for international students in Victorian tertiary institutions?

## ATTACHMENT 4: TABLE 1

**Table 1: Summary of internship and work experience opportunities as part of study within Victorian universities (business, engineering)**

<b>Deakin University</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Faculty of Business and Law	<p>MPI700 Postgraduate Internship</p> <p>MPI701 Business Practicum Program Community based volunteering Business Internship Industry Based Learning Postgraduate WIL programs Sport Management Practicum Law Clinic</p>	<p>WIL Unit can be added as an elective.</p> <p>IBL program requires as part of its assessment, students to find and negotiate their own community volunteering or business internship. Recommends the use of Professional Pathways Australia and Internships Australia as university partner</p>	<p>MP1700: average one day per week throughout the trimester</p> <p>MP1701: average two days per week throughout the trimester</p>
<p>Faculty of Science and Technology</p> <p>Engineering Bachelor of Engineering - Civil major</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering - Mechanical major</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering - Mechatronics and Robotics major</p> <p>Bachelor of Engineering - Electrical and Electronics major</p>	<p>Industry-based Learning (IBL) placement unit</p> <p>Internship placement unit.</p>	<p>Faculty level elective units</p>	<p>Full-time IBL placement over a trimester</p> <p>Majority of internship placements – one day a week during a trimester</p> <p>An internship may be completed on a full-time basis over a 3 week block.</p> <p>Engineering Students: 12 weeks of suitable practical experience during the course</p>
Bachelor of Engineering (Engineering Scholars Program)	<p>Industry internships or research placements.</p> <p>Students will be assigned a mentor and have additional opportunities for paid industry internships or research placements.</p>		

<b>University of Ballarat</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
The Bachelor of Business (Entrepreneurship)	Practical business placements and projects courses	No	2 credit points
Bachelor of Commerce	Practical business placements and projects courses	No	2 credit points
Bachelor of Management	Practical business placements and projects courses	No	2 credit points
Bachelor of Business	Practical business placements and projects courses	No	2 credit points

<b>Melbourne University</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Faculty of Business and Economics: Accounting, Strategic business management, Human resources, financial analysis, Economic research, Science and engineering.	Melbourne Business Practicum (MBP)  WIL Subject: BUSA 90473 Melbourne Business Practicum	No	Team of four students, working with a Melbourne based host organisation during the Winter and Summer Recess for 10 consecutive days, with a week of induction and post assessments.
Master of Management (Accounting) Master of Commerce (Management) Master of Management	Global Business Practicum (GBP)  A credit-based subject providing an overseas study experience.	No	Two-week work project undertaken with an international company, preceded by seminars on culture and business practices in the host country.
Melbourne School of Business	Volunteer Business Practicum (VBP)	VBP is available to all GSBE Students, at any stage of study	Intensive three-four week period during the semester break in February or July
Volunteer Experience	WIL Volunteer un-paid volunteer activity with a not-for-profit organisation	No	Maximum of 80 hours

Swinburne University of Technology			
Program name	Type of WIL	Compulsory	Duration
Bachelor of Business Information Systems Bachelor of Business Information Systems / Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Information and Communication Technology Bachelor of Applied Information and Communication Technology	Industry-Based Learning  Full-time paid placement in industry in an area relevant to their studies	No. Currently not available to international students	One year
Bachelor of Information Technology - Scholarship Program	Industry Based Learning (IBL)	Compulsory for domestic students. Not available for international students	Two 20-week periods
1. Business Major/s 2. Communication Major/s 3. Social Science Major/s.  May be available to other degree programs	Work Integrated Learning Project: Unit Code: LZZ331	Elective unit of study, restricted to international students	Fifteen weeks (15) or one semester
Any Bachelor degree offered by the Faculty of Higher Education	Work Integrated Learning – during 3rd year	No. 3rd year only	160-180 hours

<b>RMIT</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
BP143 - Bachelor of Business (Logistics and Supply Chain Management) (Applied)	3rd Year - WIL / Cooperative Education Placement	Yes, subject to meeting certain academic criteria	One year
BP143 - Bachelor of Business (Logistics and Supply Chain Management) (Applied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study tour</li> <li>■ An exchange for one semester or one year</li> <li>■ International work placement</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Two weeks</li> <li>■ One semester / one year</li> <li>■ Not specified</li> </ul>
BP030 - Bachelor of Business (Entrepreneurship)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study tour</li> <li>■ An exchange for one semester or one year</li> <li>■ International work placement</li> <li>■ Work-integrated learning courses such as New Venture Creation and Intrapreneurship. Industry mentors, case study work, enterprise formation and workplace experience.</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Two weeks</li> <li>■ One semester / one year</li> <li>■ Not specified</li> </ul>
BP129 - Bachelor of Business (Professional Accountancy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The third year - a compulsory work-integrated learning component - a cooperative education placement or professional skills program project.</li> <li>■ Specialist accounting (WIL) courses</li> <li>■ Specialised accounting study tours to Europe and North America</li> </ul>	Yes	Two Semesters of Co-op
BP027- Bachelor of Business (International Business) (Applied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study tour</li> <li>■ An exchange for one semester or one year</li> <li>■ International work placement</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Two weeks</li> <li>■ One semester / one year</li> <li>■ Not specified</li> </ul>
BP027- Bachelor of Business (International Business) (Applied)	A year of work-integrated learning in - cooperative education placement or professional skills placement.	Yes	One Year

<b>Monash University</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Bachelor of Accounting	Industry-based learning Full-time employment where one or more specified projects are to be completed.	Yes	14 weeks
Bachelor of Commerce	Industry-based learning Full-time employment where one or more specified projects are to be completed.	Yes	14 weeks
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences	Work-Integrated Learning (WIL): work placements, internships or clinical rotations  (PAC4371 - Professional experience placement program) –  (PGC6006 - Speciality clinical placement)		Internships: Placements of 420 hours  420 hours  4 weeks
Bachelor of Business Information Systems (industry based learning stream)	Industry-based learning Full-time employment.	Yes	22 weeks

<b>Victoria University</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Health, Engineering and Science	Engineering Industrial Experience	Yes	at least 12 weeks
Business and Law	Cooperative education as the third year of a four-year business degree	Yes for Tourism and Hospitality students	offers a year of paid, full-time employment (minimum 40 weeks)
	Business integrated learning (BIL) recognises industry-based experiences such as relevant project work, part-time employment, a holiday job or voluntary work undertaken while completing the qualifications in most Business courses	Yes for Event Management courses	
	Professional legal practice		150 hours
Arts, Education and Human Development	Learning in The Workplace and Community (LiWC) activities: professional placements, fieldwork, internships, service learning.		

La Trobe University			
Program name	Type of WIL	Compulsory	Duration
Bachelor of Business (various)	Work Integrated Learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ industry-based learning (IBL)</li> <li>■ internships</li> <li>■ industry-based projects</li> <li>■ short-term overseas study program</li> <li>■ 6–12 months in a student exchange program</li> </ul>	No. Restrictions for international students	
Faculty of Business and Law WIL Subjects	Accommodation Operations Management THS1AOM, Accounting Practicum ACC3APR (available from 2013 Summer School), Business Ethics MGT2BET, Business Projects MGT3BP, Clinical Legal Education LAW2CLE, Event Planning THS3EOP, Food & Beverage Service THS1FBS, Human Resources Management Practicum, MGT3HRP, Integrated Management Project MGT3IMP, Legal Practice and Conduct LAW4LPP, Marketing Practicum MKT3MPR, Project Management MGT3PM, Public Interest Law Practice LAW2PLP, Rural and Regional Issues in Justice LAW2RRJ, Sentencing Law Policy and Practice LAWSLP, Sport Practicum THS3SPR, Strategic Logistics Management MGT3SLM, Victorian Champions League THS3VCL, Work Integrated Logistics Project A BUS3WIA, Work Integrated Logistics Project B BUS3WIB.	No. Restrictions for international students	
Science, agriculture and engineering	Science Cadetship program industry-based projects industry placements	No. Restrictions for international students	
Bachelor of Information Technology	Industry Based Learning (IBL) IT Projects IT Cadetships	No. Restrictions for international students	
Bachelor of Information Technology (Professional)	Industry Based Learning (IBL) IT Projects IT Cadetships Students will be awarded scholarships and automatically undertake IBL placement	Yes	One Year IBL Placement
Partnership with VECCI	La Trobe University and the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI) have partnered to promote Work Integrated Learning across Victoria.		

## ATTACHMENT 4: TABLE 2

**Table 2: Summary of internship and work experience opportunities as part of study within Victorian VET Institutes (accounting and hospitality disciplines)**

<b>Academia International</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Hospitality	Work Placement. Successful assessment of tasks in a work placement required to be awarded the Diploma.  Has created industry partner prospectus to engage with industry and an Industry Club for those members who want access to the highest quality graduates.	Yes	280 hours
Diploma of Accounting	No formal placement available	No	Nil

<b>Holmesglen Institute of TAFE</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Diploma of Hospitality	Simulated learning in onsite facilities including – Working kitchens, training restaurants, simulated travel office and hotel & conference centres.  Also offer of unique industry experiences in Melbourne, across Victoria and around the world. Cookery students have the opportunity to work with chefs at home and around the world including an exclusive internship at the third top restaurant in the world in Spain.  Tourism and hospitality students travel to Singapore on a WIL study tour.	Yes  No	Various
Advanced Diploma of Hospitality	Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket internship	By application	2 months
Diploma of Accounting	Not included, although access to careers support to gain work experience or placement in semester break.	No	.
Skilled Migration Internship Program	Students are able to move through to Accounting Internship Skilled Migration Internship Program – Accounting. 44 week program including a 12-week internship.	Yes	12 weeks

<b>Navitas Workforce Solutions</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Diploma of Accounting	Workplace assessment. Course guide notes "To gain the Diploma of Accounting you will have to pass a number of practical and workplace (or simulated workplace) assessments."	Yes	Not specified
Skilled Migration Internship Program	Students are able to move through to Accounting Internship Skilled Migration Internship Program – Accounting. 44 week program including a 12 week internship	Yes	12 weeks

<b>Holmes College</b>			
<b>Program name</b>	<b>Type of WIL</b>	<b>Compulsory</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Diploma of Accounting	No formal vocational placement required Work experience may be arranged by student	No	N/a
Diploma of Hospitality	Work placement in industry approved by Holmes Institute. In order to successfully complete the course and to be awarded with the Certificate students must complete a period of work placement to demonstrate their ability to perform to the required standard in the workplace. This is assessed by Holmes Trainer.	Yes	280 hours

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