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Building a bridge between university and employment: Work-integrated learning

In Australia, approximately 60% of university courses include some form of workplace learning. Work-integrated learning programs are used throughout the world to develop the skills, behaviour and self-awareness university students require for their future professional employment.

Work-integrated learning is a partnership between three major participants: the student, the organisation/organisational supervisor as well as the university/academic coordinator. These programs enable students to integrate the learning from their classroom studies with work in the student's chosen occupational field.

These programs result in significant benefits for the student. Well-designed and coordinated work-integrated learning programs also result in numerous benefits for the work organisation/organisational supervisor and the university/academic coordinator.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many university students believe that the purpose of their tertiary education is to prepare them for a particular field **(page 1)**. Work-integrated learning programs enable students to develop a range of skills, behaviours and self-awareness to complete their academic studies and help prepare them for a successful career **(page 2)**. These programs should possess a number of core elements **(page 2)**. Work-integrated learning programs involve at least three people: the student, the supervisor and an academic coordinator from the sponsoring education institution **(page 2)**.

Work-integrated learning programs have existed for hundreds of years. However, the first modern programs in America are just over 100 years old **(page 3)**. Significant numbers of students around the world participate in these types of programs. In Australia, estimates suggest that approximately 60% of university courses contain some type of workplace learning **(page 4)**. The inclusion of this type of program in large numbers of university courses throughout Australia suggests that there needs to be a strong understanding of their costs and benefits for all participating parties **(page 4)**. Work-integrated learning programs are important because of the experience they provide to inexperienced workers, the skills they provide to students, the assistance supervisors provide and their role in making professions more accountable **(pages 5-6)**.

There are two main types of programs. The first is a structured experience undertaken for university credit. The second is more informal exposure to the work environment **(page 6)**.

Students need to bring a number of elements to ensure a successful work-integrated learning experience **(pages 14-15)**. A successful placement has a number of benefits for students including increased self-esteem, confidence, social skills, practical knowledge and chance of discipline-related employment **(pages 15-16)**. However, students also suffer drawbacks during the placement experience such as increased transport costs **(page 16)**.

Supervisors provide a 'real world' perspective for students **(pages 18-19)**. Successful supervision involves a number of factors such as the ability to help students develop autonomy through the provision of appropriate tasks, providing students with opportunities to participate in decision-making and teaching skills **(pages 19-20)**. Organisations benefit from participating in these programs through the provision of highly motivated students for short-term projects, opportunities to recruit from the pool of students and providing a forum to sell the industry to university students **(pages 21-22)**. Disadvantages of participation include possible difficult relationships between students and supervisors, the stress related to assessing a student's work and, in some organisations, a lack of support for supervisors **(page 22)**.

Academics and universities use work-integrated learning programs to provide a relevant degree for students **(pages 23-24)**. However, universities need to do more than just 'place a student'. Universities should ensure that their programs are based on appropriate academic models. They should provide the student with a range of experiences to help them grow and develop. They should also offer support to supervisors and organisations **(pages 24-25)**. A number of activities will help to guide student learning **(pages 25-26)**.

Academics and universities benefit from providing work-integrated learning programs **(pages 26-27)**. These programs help universities to attract students, including those outside the institutions' traditional catchment areas. Any partner (student, supervisor or academic) within the process may stimulate curriculum change to ensure that the course is up-to-date and relevant. International programs provide links with researchers and organisations overseas. They also provide staff development opportunities. However, the logistics of organising placements is difficult. Academic coordinators frequently feel undervalued by universities when compared to other, more theoretically focussed, staff **(pages 27-28)**.

This brief provides examples of work-integrated learning programs in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America **(pages 7-13)**. Examples of the benefits and costs for specific students **(pages 17-18)**, organisations **(pages 22-23)** and universities **(pages 28-29)** are included.

1 INTRODUCTION

Many university students view their time in tertiary education as training for a particular career or profession. For this reason, subjects that enable students to directly link their academic studies with workplace realities are popular. Work-integrated learning programs are tertiary subjects designed to enable students to do this. These programs develop a student's professional skills and provide opportunities for personal development.[1]

Academic ability is just one quality that employers seek in potential employees. Other important qualities sought by employers include generic skills such as communication, time management, professionalism and independence. Work-integrated learning helps students develop these generic skills.

University students, particularly those that enrol immediately after completing secondary studies, frequently lack employment experience. Placements provide inexperienced students with the opportunity to develop a range of skills and abilities relevant to their chosen field. Work-integrated learning experiences help students gain employment after they graduate from university.

The benefits of work-integrated learning programs are not confined to students. They also offer benefits to employers and universities.

1.1 WHAT IS WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING?

The National Commission for Cooperative Education, based in the United States of America, defined work-integrated learning as:

> … *a structured educational strategy integrating classroom studies with learning through productive work experiences in a field related to a student's academic or career goals. It provides progressive experience in integrating theory and practice. It is a partnership among students, educational institutions and employers, with specified responsibilities for each party.*[2]

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1 P Linn, 'Stepping into the waterfall: How wet do students get?', *Proceedings of the 5th Asia Pacific Cooperative Education Conference*, C Eames, (ed.), New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education, Hamilton, 2004, p 2.

2 National Commission for Cooperative Education, in T Groenewald, 'Towards a definition of cooperative education', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds.), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 17.

Work-integrated learning is a process where students develop their skills, behaviour and self-awareness.[3]

A number of other terms also refer to work-integrated learning. These terms include experiential learning programs, externships, field-based learning, field placements, internships, practice-orientated education, professional practice, sandwich courses, work-based education and cooperative education.[4]

While there are a number of titles for work-integrated learning, all programs should possess four core elements. These elements are:

- A curriculum integrated with industry needs;
- Inclusion in the curriculum of a work component for the students in the curriculum to learn through experience;
- A group of workplaces offering appropriate placements for students to ensure that the tertiary course remains relevant by providing advice and input regarding the curriculum; and
- Well-defined logistics for the program to provide clear detail about organising, coordinating and assessing students.[5]

Universities in Australia include work-integrated learning in their curriculums in a range of fields. These fields are diverse and include social work, nursing, teaching, psychology, business, criminology and environmental science. These types of programs further develop the skills and abilities of the enrolled students forcing them to engage in deeper learning.[6]

1.2 WHO IS INVOLVED IN WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS?

Work-integrated learning programs involve at least three people: the student, the workplace supervisor and an academic co-ordinator from the sponsoring

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3 L Cooper & J Maidment, 'Thinking about difference in student supervision', *Australian Social Work*, 54(1), 2001, p 42.

4 Groenewald, p 19.

5 Groenewald, p 23.

6 M Bates, 'The assessment of work integrated learning: Symptoms of personal change', *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 14(2), 2003, p 303.

educational institution.[7] Frequently, one person can fulfil a number of roles throughout their academic and employment careers. For example, in long-running programs, former students are frequently contacted to act as supervisors as their careers advance.[8]

1.3 HOW DID WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS DEVELOP?

No-one knows when the idea to link theory with work to enhance education first developed. One suggested date is 1903 when Sunderland Technical College in Northern England introduced a program for architecture and engineering students.[9] Other suggested dates include the 1600s and 1800s when students undertook apprenticeships in areas such as teaching and medicine.

Work-integrated programs developed in the United States of America nearly 100 years ago. In 1906 Herman Schneider, an engineering lecturer at the University of Cincinnati, believed that professional concepts and skills required more than just classroom teaching. He believed students required practical experience to develop and master these professional concepts and skills. He proposed that students learn by alternating on-campus study with off-campus employment experiences.[10] Although earlier methods used a combination of theory and practice to educate individuals for professions such as law and medicine, none were similar enough to be considered forerunners to Schneider's method.

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7 A Bates, M Bates & L Bates, 'Weaving the threads of knowledge: A focus on students', *Proceedings of the 5th Asia Pacific Cooperative Education Conference*. C Eames, (ed.), New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education, Hamilton, 2004, p 2.

8 E Cameron, 'The history and evolution of an international cooperative education department in a changing world: From telex to internet 1985-2004', *Proceedings of the 5th Asia Pacific Cooperative Education Conference*. C Eames, (ed.), New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education, Hamilton, 2004, p 2.

9 P Franks & O Blomqvist, 'The World Association for Cooperative Education: The global network that fosters work-integrated learning', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds.), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 283.

10 E Sovilla & J Varty, 'Cooperative education in the USA, past and present: Some lessons learned', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds.), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 4.

Schneider enrolled 27 electrical and chemical engineering students in his initial work-integrated learning program in 1906-1907. His program was popular with students and he received over 400 inquiries for the second year of his program.[11]

Since this time, the number of programs offered by tertiary institutions has grown. Around the world, universities offer programs based on similar concepts.[12]

1.4 HOW PREVALENT ARE WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS?

Around the world, large numbers of students participate in work-integrated learning each year. In the United States of America, 200,000 students participate in cooperative education each year.[13] In the United Kingdom, up to 250,000 students are involved in a placement each year.[14]

In Australia, estimates indicate that 60 % of university courses include some type of workplace learning. This type of learning accounts for between one eighth and one quarter of the marks.[15]

There are calls by some researchers to extend work-integrated learning further and include it as a part of all university courses.[16]

1.5 WHY EXAMINE WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS?

The prevalence of work-integrated learning is one reason why these types of programs need examining. The inclusion of this type of program in the majority of university courses requires a strong understanding of the costs and benefits.

Students in a range of fields including teachers, media professionals and social workers believe they learn more during their placement than from their classes.

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11 Sovilla & Varty, p 4.

12 Sovilla & Varty, p 4.

13 NCCE in E Reeders, 'Scholarly practice in work-based learning: Fitting the glass slipper', *Higher Education Research and Development*, 19(2), 2000, p 205.

14 Foster & Stephenson in Reeders, p 205.

15 Martin in J Orrell, L Cooper, & R Jones, *Making the Practicum Visible*, Paper written for the HERDSA conference, downloaded from www.flinders.edu.au on 6 January 2005, 1999, p 1.

16 Reeders, p 206.

They also find the experience rewarding because they address real problems and the work they produce is used by other people.

Despite the positive reports of students, evaluations of these programs have mixed results. However, the research design used to conduct these evaluations is frequently flawed.[17] For this reason, these types of programs need examining to identify the quantifiable benefits versus the quantifiable costs.

The continued relevance to the stakeholders involved in work-integrated learning has ensured the success of programs to date.[18] However, a number of political, economic, social and technological factors affect the ability of educational institutions to continue to offer these programs.[19] The effect of each of these factors changes as circumstances alter over time. By examining work-integrated programs, an accurate assessment of the continuing need or the requirement to alter a program based on environmental changes can be made.

Additionally, not all practicum experiences are positive. For example, students who participate in inappropriate experiences or receive inappropriate supervision can draw negative conclusions from their placement.[20] The practice of examining and monitoring these programs ensures that the universities offer best practice courses for their students and that students benefit from participation.

1.6 WHY ARE WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS IMPORTANT?

The working environment has undergone a number a changes in the past two decades. These changes, including economic, technological and social, have altered the skills that employers require of graduates. Educational institutions need to ensure that their graduates have the necessary skills to make them employable after graduation.[21]

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17 Reeders, p 206.

18 M Atchison & P Gotlieb, 'Innovation and the future of cooperative education', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds.), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 261.

19 Atchison & Gotlieb, p 262.

20 Bates, Bates & Bates, p 2.

21 M Cullen, 'Environmental science internships: Benefits for the student, the host organisation, and the study programme', *Proceedings of the 5th Asia Pacific Cooperative Education Conference*. C Eames, (ed.), New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education, Hamilton, 2004, p 1.

Employers prefer employing individuals with experience. However, many new graduates find it difficult to obtain relevant experience. Work-integrated learning programs help provide tertiary students with this experience.[22]

Supervisors are able to assist students obtain professional employment by monitoring the difficulty of allocated tasks and helping the student anticipate their mistakes through discussion, modelling of appropriate behaviours and the provision of corrective feedback. Students may also use the placement to assess decisions about their career and decide if they are more suitable for particular roles within the industry.[23]

Work-integrated programs make each profession, as a whole, more accountable. Supervisors have an important role in ensuring that students have the capacity to deal with a variety of situations.[24] They assess students' maturity, values and ability to join the profession. Supervisors perform a gatekeeper role.

2 TYPES OF WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS

There are two main types of work-integrated learning programs. The first type provides students with a structured work experience that is part of the student's degree. Frequently, engineering, education and medicine courses provide students with this type of experience.[25] Students receive an academic grade on completion of the program.

The second type of program is an informal program that exposes students to the realities of life and work. Students do not receive academic credit for this type of program.[26]

Both types of programs aim to link theoretical studies with employment practicalities. However, students in the first type of program are encouraged to apply their classroom knowledge as an important component of the program. This

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22 Cullen, p 1.

23 J Patford, 'Can I do social work and do I want to? Students' perception of significant learning incidents during practica', *Australian Social Work*, 53(2), 2000, p 21.

24 M Eisenberg, K Heycox & L Hughes, 'Fear of the personal: Assessing students in practicum', *Australian Social Work*, 49(4), 1996, p 33.

25 J Hassan, 'Challenges for cooperative education', *Paper presented at World Association on Cooperative Education Conference*, downloaded from www.waceinc.org on 5 January 2005, World Association on Cooperative Education, Boston, 1997, p 1.

26 Hassan, p. 1.

enriches the entire placement experience. The success of students in the second type of program varies from placement to placement due to the unstructured nature of the program.[27]

This research brief will concentrate on the first type of program.

2.1 AUSTRALIAN EXAMPLES

Academic institutions around Australia offer work-integrated learning programs. The programs vary between institutions. This research brief will provide examples of two programs.

2.1.1 School of Environmental Science and Management, Southern Cross University, Lismore

The School of Environmental Science and Management at Southern Cross University offers a Bachelor of Applied Science degree. The majors within this degree are Coastal Management, Environmental Resource Management, as well as Fisheries and Aquaculture Management.[28] The school commenced a work-integrated learning program in 1997 in response to student demands and staff identifying the need for such a program.[29] Over time, the program has evolved based on comments from students and organisations. The subject is now regarded as the most important elective subject for students.

The student generally completes his or her placement over the summer break (November to February). However, flexible arrangements are possible. In these cases, the student could complete the placement at a different time of year or on a part time basis.[30] Individuals unable to complete a block placement due to family or other commitments generally use these flexible arrangements.

Within the program, students must complete a written application, undertake an interview for the position, complete eight weeks of equivalent full time work experience, keep a work diary and complete a 1000 word report on their

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[27] Hassan, p 2.

[28] Cullen, p 2.

[29] Cullen, p 1.

[30] Cullen, p 3.

experience.[31] The organisational supervisor completes a written evaluation of the student. University staff contact all students and supervisors at least once during the placement. The school encourages students to contact the university if they need help.

At the conclusion of their placements, students have an understanding of workplace practices, experience in applying the theoretical knowledge developed during their degrees to work within their profession, skills and industry contacts to help them when seeking graduate employment and the ability to critically assess and report on their placements.[32]

After completing the placements, students receive credit that is equivalent to one elective subject.

2.1.2 School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University, Brisbane

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University provides students with a broad liberal social science degree that gives students a broad understanding of legislative frameworks, social justice and human service operations and enables them to develop research and conceptual abilities.[33] The school offers a work-integrated learning subject to its final year students called *Field Placement*. This subject is an elective subject within the Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice. It is a compulsory subject for students enrolled in the double degree Bachelor of Behavioural Science/Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice.[34]

The aim of the subject is:

> *To link theoretical knowledge and skills to a practical work environment in order to promote increased student competency for developing and articulating their own personal theories.*[35]

To successfully finish this subject, students must complete 100 hours of unpaid work during the semester. Students must also attend compulsory workshops

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31 Cullen, p 2.

32 Cullen, p 2.

33 Bates, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education,* p 304.

34 M Bates, *3008CCJ Field Placement Handbook 2003,* Griffith University, Brisbane, 2003, p 1.

35 Bates, *3008CCJ Field Placement Handbook 2003,* p 6.

throughout the semester.[36] The convenor places students, wherever possible, in work environments of their choice. The assessment includes student attendance and participation in the placement, a supervisor's report, a written report from the student and a journal, written by the student, that critically reflects on their experiences.[37]

Different placements provide students with different experiences. For instance, some placements are highly structured and require students to complete specific research, development or evaluation tasks. Other placements are less structured. However, students in all placements observe, assist appropriately and become acquainted with the organisational structure as well as the roles and responsibilities required of professionals.[38]

Each student, in consultation with his or her workplace supervisor, develops a learning plan. The purpose of this plan is to develop and focus effective student learning.[39] This document is designed to meet the individual student's needs within their specific placement. It requires the student to articulate his or her ideas on what they wish to experience and develop while reflecting on their existing skills, knowledge and experiences. It also states the learning objectives and expectations of the student. The plan is flexible and changes throughout the placement as a result of discussions between the student and the supervisor.[40]

The School of Criminology and Criminal Justice website highlights several students who state that their placement experience was a beneficial experience and helped them gain employment.[41]

2.2 INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

Work-integrated learning programs operate differently around the world. The two examples below are from New Zealand and the United States of America.

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36 Bates, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, p 304.

37 Bates, *3008CCJ Field Placement Handbook 2003,* p 17.

38 Bates, *3008CCJ Field Placement Handbook 2003,* p 3.

39 Bates, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, p 304.

40 Bates, *3008CCJ Field Placement Handbook 2003,* p 14.

41 School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, *What Our Graduates Say*. Downloaded from www.gu.edu.au on 4 January 2005, Griffith University, Brisbane, 2005, p 1.

2.2.1 School of Science and Technology, University of Waikato, New Zealand

The School of Science and Technology at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand originally offered students a three year Bachelor of Science degree. However, in 1974 the school commenced the Bachelor of Science (Technology) degree. Students within these degrees study a range of science disciplines including physics, electronics, chemistry, biology, earth sciences, mathematics, computer sciences, process engineering, technology, resource and environmental planning, environmental sciences and biochemistry.[42]

Students in the Bachelor of Science (Technology) take four years to complete their studies (compared with three years for the Bachelor of Science) but undertake 12 months of paid work experience. The school organises approximately 170 placements per year.[43]

The academic requirements for the two degrees are similar, with students in both degrees studying the same subjects. However, students in the four year degree undertake two placements. The first placement is from November to February (three months) at the end of the student's second year, while the second is from November to July (nine months) at the end of their third year. While on placement, students receive a wage that is approximately equivalent to a short-term contract worker (between NZ$9-13 per hour).[44]

Students in the four year degree must take classes in communication, technology innovation, total quality management, accounting and marketing. Science and technology employers identified that graduates needed to improve their skills in these areas. Employers believe that if graduates develop an understanding of these generic management skills, the gap in understanding and ability to communicate between 'science employees' and 'management' would improve.[45]

Since 1995, the school has had a dedicated Cooperative Education Unit with placement coordinators focussing on each individual science discipline. These coordinators work as a team to manage student placements. Coordinators are

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42 R Laslett & K Zegwaard, 'Cooperative education in science and technology', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds.), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 90.

43 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 90.

44 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 90.

45 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 91.

highly involved in the process and interact frequently with students. Each coordinator is responsible for approximately 40 students.[46]

The first step occurs early in the academic year when placement coordinators assess a student's suitability for the program. This includes considering his or her academic achievements and completing a face-to-face interview. Students that are unsuitable revert to the three year degree. After this, a more in-depth interview occurs to gauge the student's interests and career focus. This interview is also used to determine the student's suitability for a particular placement, give career advice and suggest various placement types. There may also be follow-up meetings.[47]

Once placed with an organisation, students undertake a small project or a minor part of a larger project. The school assigns students to an academic staff member who has particular expertise in the area where the student is working. This staff member provides support to the student. Each student is also visited twice by the placement coordinator. Information from these visits is used in the student's assessment.[48]

The student completes a work placement report. This report is used in conjunction with the site visit information and a report from the employer on the student's performance to award a final grade.[49]

All recent graduates of the four year degree actively seeking work found employment within six months of completing the course.[50]

2.2.2 Northeastern University, United States of America (USA)

Northeastern University in Boston has offered its students a work-integrated learning experience since 1909 when it introduced cooperative education into its traditional educational process. This experience is a structured part of the

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46 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 91.

47 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 91.

48 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 92.

49 Laslett & Zegwaard, p 92.

50 University of Waikato, *Bachelor of Science (Technology) – BSc(Tech)*, downloaded from www.waikato.ac.nz on 7 January 2005, University of Waikato, Hamilton, 2005, p 1.

curriculum.[51] The university's work-integrated learning program is the university's signature program and distinguishes the university from other tertiary institutions.

Most full-time undergraduates participate in the work experience program. In some cases, participation is compulsory to complete the course.[52] Full-time students complete up to three six-month placements during their five years of study at Northeastern University.[53]

The program requires students to alternate semesters between learning in the classroom and learning in the workplace.[54] These work experiences are full-time, related to the area the student is studying or his/her personal interests and are generally paid. This process allows Northeastern University undergraduate students to identify what they like and don't like, make connections between the theory they learn at university and practice in the 'real' world as well as test their skills and abilities.

The employer decides the amount a student is paid. A student's salary depends on the industry, the level of the position and the economy.[55] However, students are not required to pay tuition fees to the university while on placement.

One of the work-integrated learning programs offered by Northeastern University for its students is an international cooperative education program.[56] This program places students in a position related to their field of study in a country outside the USA. The program also offers students the opportunity to develop further their skills in a second language. Employers of graduates from this program value highly the student's international experience.[57]

In the mid-1980s, this international co-operative program placed mostly undergraduate students in a six-month placement. The placements were offered from January to June or July to December. The university offered students the

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51 Division of Cooperative Education, *Department of Cooperative Education*, Downloaded from www.neu.edu on 4 January 2005, Northeastern University, Boston, 2005, p 2.

52 Division of Cooperative Education, *Students – FAQs*, Downloaded from www.neu.edu on 4 January 2005, Northeastern University, Boston, 2005, p 2.

53 Division of Cooperative Education, *Students – FAQs*, p 3.

54 Division of Cooperative Education, *Department of Cooperative Education*, p 2.

55 Division of Cooperative Education, *Students – FAQs*, p 10.

56 Cameron, p 1.

57 Cameron, p 1.

choice of three destinations, Germany, France or Britain/Ireland.[58] At this time, the university offered the program on a reciprocal basis that required the university to collaborate with academic institutions in each country where the placement was offered. In return, the university sponsored the USA work visa and found work placements for students from their partnered universities.

Recently, the International Cooperative Education Department at Northeastern University has restructured.[59] The restructure resulted in less funding and fewer staff. As a result, the department reduced its emphasis on the very structured, selective programs offered in the mid-1980s and considers other more flexible options. Northeastern University now places students in a number of countries, rather than just Germany, France and Britain/Ireland.[60]

The university now looks beyond paid employment within specific disciplines and specialised career paths. It gives credit for volunteer work that occurs over a shorter, four-month period. Rather than relying solely on departmental staff to identify placements, students learn how to research foreign companies and how to find jobs in the countries in which they want to work.[61] Students commence planning their placement nine months before they start working to maximise the chance of success.[62] Students meet weekly to share information and resources.[63]

In order to participate in an international work placement experience, undergraduate students must meet a minimum grade point average requirement and have already participated in a six-month placement within the USA.[64] Students must speak the language of the country they plan to work in.

While working, students generally receive an entry-level salary comparable to what nationals in the placement country receive. In some cases, students may receive housing and meals rather than a salary.[65]

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58 Cameron, p 3.

59 Cameron, p 5.

60 Division of Cooperative Education, *International – Frequently asked questions,* Downloaded from www.neu.edu on 4 January 2005, Northeastern University, Boston, 2005, p 1.

61 Cameron, p 5.

62 Division of Cooperative Education, *International – Frequently asked questions,* p 2.

63 Cameron, p 5.

64 Division of Cooperative Education, *International – Frequently asked questions,* p 2.

65 Division of Cooperative Education, *International – Frequently asked questions,* p 2.

3 STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

The main purpose of work-integrated learning is to benefit the students. Practitioners describe how many students are initially hesitant and confused but, as a result of the placement, develop grace and confidence. From their perspective, these students appear to have bright futures.[66]

Perhaps one reason why students appear to change so dramatically as a result of their placements is they experience a variety of new and unexpected events. An engineer who graduated from Antioch College in the USA in 1952 recalled one of his placements with a company that piped natural gas from southern USA to the north. He was 67 when the researcher interviewed him. In his interview, he recalled learning from an unexpected experience:

> *About two weeks after I started we got a call from headquarters that they had a pipeline break due to a flood down in Kansas and they wanted somebody from the engineering department to represent the company down there while they were fixing it …. It was a fantastic experience, seeing a major construction project going on under extremely difficult conditions. I even got the chance to fly an airplane. The pilot was tired and wanted to take a nap so he let me fly from St. Louis to Detroit while he slept… "Wake me up if something happens" he said.*[67]

3.1 ELEMENTS A STUDENT NEEDS TO BRING TO THE PROCESS

For a successful placement students need to bring a number of elements to the work-integrated learning process. The primary element is recognising that academic abilities are insufficient for a career in most fields.[68] Therefore, their placement is able to help them develop additional abilities required for a successful career. To maximise the benefits of their placements students should:

- Recognise their capability to acquire an assortment of new skills, attitudes and abilities through their work placement;
- Recognise their role as a contributor in the education process and take responsibility for their learning;

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66 S Dressler & A Keeling, 'Student benefits of cooperative education', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 217.

67 Linn, p 3.

68 Flinders University, *Benefits of Work-Integrated Learning*, downloaded from www.flinders.edu.au on 6 January 2005, Flinders University, Adelaide, 2005, p 2.

- Actively contribute to the workplace;
- Acknowledge that no placements are the same and that each option provides different developmental or transformative opportunities;
- Plan to develop a range of employment experiences;
- Reflect on the outcomes of their placement; and
- Be pro-active in arrangements to improve placement quality.[69]

Students who approach their placement with an appropriate attitude and willingness are likely to experience greater benefits.

3.2 BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

A successful placement has many benefits for students. Students are attracted to work-integrated learning opportunities for financial and employment benefits. Students who participate in a placement take less time to find graduate employment compared to those who do not undertake a placement. They are also more likely to find discipline-related employment within one month of actively seeking a position.[70]

A student's self-esteem increases after a work placement. In many cases, this results in improved academic performance.[71] Students study more effectively in response to the mentoring they receive at work and at university, obtain higher grades and progress through their degrees at a faster rate.

Other benefits for students include improved self-confidence, self-concept and social skills as well as gains in practical knowledge and skills. Placements help students gain the necessary skills to supplement their theoretical training.[72] They

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69 Flinders University, p 2.

70 M Weisz & R Chapman, 'Benefits of Cooperative Education for Educational Institutions', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*, R Coll & C Eames, (eds), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 248.

71 Weisz & Chapman, p 248.

72 R Waryszak, 'Assessing students' perceptions of their cooperative education placements in the tourism industry: International perspective', *Paper presented at the 1999 WACE/CEA International Conference on Cooperative Education*, downloaded from www.waceinc.org on 5 January 2005, World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 1999, p 1.

allow students to learn about career options, explore their abilities and determine their strengths and weaknesses.[73]

Work-integrated learning provides students with the opportunity to develop those skills that their industry identifies as critical for success. It also provides students with the opportunity to develop maturity and responsibility as they make the transition from the role of student to professional. Students receive an education that is more valuable because it includes the perspective of both educators and employers.[74]

Research indicates that students find that most of their learning while on placement occurs in non-theoretical areas such as correction of misconceptions about workplace 'reality', new skills, time management, development of self-confidence and an increased awareness of career options.[75]

3.3 DRAWBACKS FOR STUDENTS

Although the benefits of work-integrated learning for students are widely acknowledged, there are several drawbacks. Students frequently absorb additional financial costs during their placement. These costs include transport and, if required, additional child care. Students may also need to purchase additional clothes for the placement, particularly if the organisation has dress standards.[76] Students in some placements may not develop the range of skills they seek. For instance, there may be limited opportunities to develop managerial skills.[77]

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73 C Cates & P Jones, 'Learning outcomes and the educational value of cooperative education', *Paper presented at the 1999 WACE/CEA International Conference on Cooperative Education*, downloaded from www.waceinc.org on 5 January 2005, World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 1999, p 3.

74 Cates & Jones, p 3.

75 Bates, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, p 305.

76 J Maidment, 'Problems experienced by students on field placement: Using research findings to inform curriculum design and content', *Australian Social Work*, 56(1), 2003, p 58.

77 Waryszak, p 2.

3.4 CASE STUDY: MS GILLIAN THOMAS, BACHELOR OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE/ BACHELOR OF ARTS IN CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

As part of my Bachelor of Behavioural Science/Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice studies at Griffith University, I undertook my Field Placement subject with the Queensland Parliamentary Travelsafe Committee secretariat.

I discussed my preferences for placements with my Field Placement convenor. The convenor mentioned that the Travelsafe Committee secretariat was willing to take on a student. They had supervised a Griffith student the previous year. It was a completely different type of placement than my preferences, but the prospect of being placed at Parliament seemed extremely interesting. So, I took the chance.

What I hoped to gain during my placement was the confidence required to work in a professional atmosphere. My placement at Parliament gave me this confidence.

It also seemed a perfect opportunity to explore at least one avenue that my degrees could take me. The greatest learning from working with the committee, however, was how to complete my work as part of a team, through collaboration and asking for assistance when needed. I feel this was especially important for me as I completed four years of university straight after finishing high school. School and university focus on independent work.

My placement also allowed me to put my research skills gained at university into practice. It also taught me a great deal about the inner workings of the Queensland Parliament.

My supervisors also gave me the opportunity to undertake some extra paid work for the committee during the semester. This gave me even more experience of working in a professional atmosphere.

The greatest difficulty I faced whilst completing my Field Placement was time management. I had to find time to study for my three other subjects as well as my involvement with a university mentoring program. My placement was undertaken in my final semester of university, which meant that I was also attempting to find the time to apply for jobs and graduate programs with government departments.

3.5 CASE STUDY: MS SHELLEY PHILLIPS, BACHELOR OF PSYCHOLOGY (HONS)

I completed a Bachelor of Psychology with Honours at Griffith University. As part of my final year, I participated in a placement with the firm Chandler and Macleod. Chandler and Macleod is a recruitment and human capital company with offices in both Australia and New Zealand. They offer a range of services including recruitment, psychometric assessment, change management and executive coaching. Obtaining and participating in a professional placement while at university was a valuable experience. The prospect was also somewhat daunting! My studies were in the field of organisational psychology. I was made aware that a number of private organisations as well as government agencies were offering placements during my honours degree year. Overall, I wished to obtain a placement that was directly related to the field I was studying and was also something that would be looked upon favourably by prospective employers. I was provided with the option of where I wanted to be placed and had the opportunity to discuss the various alternatives with my honours year supervisor.

I had a number of objectives for my participation in the placement. I wanted to obtain first hand knowledge of working within the field, and narrow this down more specifically in relation to content – psychological testing for recruitment purposes. I was able to gain a thorough picture of the subject matter, being trained by the incumbent of the job and also allowed time to speak with other key players within the organisation. Overall, my aim was to gather as much information about this area as possible, gain experience within the field, and gain a realistic picture of life as a psychologist – all within a very short time. Additionally, I focussed on gaining an understanding of what an organisational psychologist actually did on a day-to-day basis. Fully immersed in the final year of my degree, it was crucial to determine exactly what my likely future job would entail. I wanted to observe the environment and the people, working closely with those at all levels, and question psychologists in particular in order to gain insight into how they found the role and the industry. As a bonus, I also learnt how psychologists networked within and outside the industry and the value this had to them professionally. I also found the insight I gained into general business practices and communication skill within a professional environment particularly beneficial.

The opportunity to work within a professional environment allowed me to learn a great deal, however, some difficulties were apparent as the placement began and progressed. It became essential to manage my time even more effectively around university contact hours, my regular job, the placement and my life! This balancing act was possible, however time and cost issues related to travelling into the city and parking each day were an unwelcome pressure. Despite these factors, however, the experience was an extremely valuable one, going some way in preparing me for what the future held.

4 ORGANISATIONAL AND SUPERVISOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Organisations play a critical role in the work-integrated learning process. Supervisors provide a 'real world' perspective and allow students to experience 'real world' situations. This is critical for the student's learning, growth and development. While educational institutions provide the framework for the work-integrated learning experience, it is up to the organisations and the supervisors within those organisations to execute and often improve upon that framework.[78]

Supervision is the process in which a suitably trained professional is given the authority to oversee the activities of a trainee in order to assist them develop an optimal level of professional functioning.[79] Supervisors facilitate the professional growth and development of the trainee and help them gain a high-level of work-related self-awareness.

There are three functions within the supervisory role. These include the administrative function, educational function and supportive function.[80] The administrative function involves the supervisor helping the student to work within the agency and assisting the student with any organisational difficulties. The education function is the development of the student by teaching appropriate knowledge and skills, developing basic skills to more advanced skills and helping students transfer their theoretical knowledge to practice. The supportive function is the encouragement a supervisor provides to help the student develop self-confidence as a professional and develop a high level of work related self-awareness.[81]

Supervisors also help students to develop as individuals. Organisational supervisors play a critical role in alerting students to issues of safety and managing stress in the field. Experienced workers supervising students are in a strong position to model, educate and support students in establishing and maintaining safe work practices and balanced lives.[82] This may have implications for the rest of student's working life.

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78 Cates & Jones, p 2.

79 N Pepper, 'Supervision: A positive learning experience or an anxiety provoking exercise?' *Australian Social Work*, 49(3), 1996, p 55.

80 Kadushin in Pepper, p 55.

81 Kadushin in Pepper, p 55.

82 Maidment, p 58.

4.1 ELEMENTS AN ORGANISATION AND SUPERVISOR NEED TO BRING TO THE PROCESS

Organisational and supervisory elements impact on the success or failure of a placement. Organisations and supervisors should provide students with progressively more demanding tasks. Students should be able to complete initial tasks in the early stages of their placement.[83] The tasks should increase in difficulty over time. As part of this process, supervisors should provide safety nets for students to enhance their confidence. They should then withdraw these safety nets throughout the placements as students gain confidence.[84]

Organisations and supervisors should provide students with opportunities to participate in decision-making in a meaningful way. They should also use students' enthusiasm to help solve problems. Students have a more positive perception of supervisors who use these skills.[85]

Organisations should not only focus on teaching skills. They should also provide an environment that allows students to generate ideas and develop as a person. Providing variety and change during the placement will encourage new ideas from the students and assist their personal growth.[86]

Sometimes the best action a supervisor can take to develop a student is to refuse to intervene and instead insist the student make his or her own decision and accept responsibility for the consequences.[87] This involves the supervisor possessing an ability to judge the most appropriate action to ensure that a student learns to become autonomous in a safe environment.

Supervisors should monitor the effect that social difference and power has on their relationships with students. Many students perceive their supervisors as powerful people. This may inhibit a student's ability to interact with his or her supervisor in a positive and constructive manner. Failing to address these issues can impact negatively on the effectiveness of the placement.[88]

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83 Waryszak, p 6.

84 Bates, Bates & Bates, p 5.

85 Waryszak, p 6.

86 Waryszak, p 6.

87 Bates, Bates & Bates, p 4.

88 Cooper & Maidment, p 43.

Organisations and supervisors can improve the value of the placement for the student by:

- Offering students an opportunity to learn about areas not covered in their formal studies;
- Encouraging students to participate in planned seminars and workshops used to train other employees; and
- Making a library of helpful information that students can refer to unaided as required.[89]

4.2 BENEFITS FOR ORGANISATIONS AND SUPERVISORS

Participating in work-integrated learning programs results in a number of benefits for organisations and their supervisors. Organisations benefit from having intelligent students who are highly motivated and are able to motivate other employees within the organisation.[90] They also benefit from students' currency of knowledge.

Work-integrated programs are ideal for staffing short-term projects. They allow organisations to access motivated individuals for this work.[91]

Organisations are also able to screen potential permanent employees in order to hire enthusiastic and motivated graduates.[92] After an organisation has hired a graduate, it is able to use its knowledge of individuals, gained during the placement experience, to plan inductions and help foster performance.[93] This enables organisations to contribute to, and benefit from, a workforce that has the skills necessary for success in the workplace.[94]

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89 Cates & Jones, p 2.

90 Weisz & Chapman, p 248.

91 L Braunstein & M Loken, 'Benefits of cooperative education for employers', *International Handbook for Cooperative Education*. R Coll & C Eames (eds), World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 2005, p 243.

92 Braunstein & Loken, p 243.

93 Waryszak, p 1.

94 Cates & Jones, p 3.

Supervising a student has benefits beyond the specific project and potential recruitment opportunities. Placements provide organisations with an opportunity to network and interact with higher education institutions in a positive way.[95]

Supervision of a student offers existing employees a staff-development opportunity. Employers will develop further skills and abilities as a result of supervising students.[96]

Placements also provide opportunities for industries. Organisations and industries are able to use the placement to demonstrate to students the career potential in each industry.[97]

4.3 DRAWBACKS FOR ORGANISATIONS AND SUPERVISORS

There are drawbacks for organisations and supervisors participating in the work-integrated learning process. A key drawback can be the student/supervisor relationship. As with other relationships, negative aspects may develop ranging from stressful and tense relationships, to conflict. This has the potential to make attending work unpleasant.[98]

A second form of stress for supervisors is assessment.[99] Supervisors may feel reluctant to provide negative feedback that will impact on a student's results.

Finally, the organisation and the educational institution may not provide appropriate support to supervisors.[100] Some organisations may expect supervisors to undertake student supervision as an additional duty in an already busy job. Universities may not explain the responsibilities of program participation fully. This could lead supervisors to feel isolated and pressured.

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95 Braunstein & Loken, p 243.

96 Flinders University, p 2.

97 Waryszak, p 2.

98 Pepper, p 63.

99 Eisenberg, Heycox & Hughes, p 33.

100 Patford, p 21.

4.4 CASE STUDY: MR GRAEME KINNEAR, MANAGER, PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION SERVICES - WORKPLACE COORDINATOR OF THE QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Queensland Parliamentary Internship Program (QPIP) is a parliamentary education program where students from selected universities are attached to a Member of Parliament or a senior officer of the Queensland Parliament to undertake a mutually agreed research project.

The parliamentary internship is based on a partnership between the student and the Member/senior officer of the Parliament. The partnership operates under a set of conditions mutually agreed to and ratified by the relevant University and the Parliament. The internship program is administered by Parliamentary Education Services at Queensland Parliament.

The internship program has a number of benefits for Members of Parliament and the Queensland Parliament. The most tangible benefits of the program for Members of Parliament who participate is a quality research paper on a topic of their choice. It also provides Members with a potential source of research talent for future employment opportunities.

Members who supervise parliamentary interns develop close working relationships with both tertiary students and academics. These relationships may provide a range of future benefits for all parties. Members are also able to remain up-to-date with current university education practices and standards of student performance.

QPIP enables the Queensland Parliament to establish ongoing partnerships with tertiary institutions. These relationships are mutually beneficial.

This program also provides the Parliament with the opportunity to enhance tertiary students' knowledge and understanding of the democratic processes of Parliament and Government in Queensland.

QPIP has a number of costs for both Members of Parliament and the Queensland Parliament. Participation in the program adds to the already extensive workload of the Member and his/her staff. Participating Members may not always receive quality research papers. This may adversely affect Members and the Queensland Parliament's perception of the value of the program.

Although the financial costs for the management of the program by the Parliament are small, QPIP is very time consuming in relation to the initial placements and administration. This extensive time commitment continues with the monitoring and supervising of the interns' progress by both Members and parliamentary staff.

5 ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE

Work-integrated placements improve the quality of education offered to students by academic institutions.[101] Universities are required to teach students the skills and confidence required to operate in an environment where globalisation, technology, cross-functional knowledge and teamwork are increasingly important.[102]

From a university perspective, the organisation of placements is a significant task. At Flinders University in Adelaide, there are over 100 staff involved in the coordination, management, supervision and teaching of work-integrated learning programs. There are a further 21 general staff that conduct lower level administrative tasks through to highly responsible program coordination roles. These staff work with over 3000 students in over 80 different programs (differentiated by year level).[103]

5.1 ELEMENTS AN ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY NEED TO PROVIDE

There is more to organising an effective placement than just 'placing the student'. Students need a range of experiences throughout their placement that help them to develop a greater understanding of themselves.[104] Academics and the university therefore have an obligation to provide the appropriate conditions for learning.

As work-integrated learning focuses on learning outcomes, it is necessary to use an academic approach to the placement. This involves emphasising learning, using academic assignments, planning learning experiences and selecting organisations based on learning opportunities. Linking work-integrated learning with theory strengthens the program and maximises learning outcomes.[105]

Placements should be based on an academic model. This model should define the educational purpose of the program and establish the learning outcomes. Universities and academics should select and arrange the content of the placement to support the mission and goals of the program and to maximise the student's

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101 Cates & Jones, p 3.

102 Weisz & Chapman, p 247.

103 Orrell, Cooper & Jones, p 3.

104 Bates, Bates & Bates, p 4.

105 Cates & Jones, p 2.

learning. A written syllabus or handbook will support this.[106] Universities and academics should develop clear policies to guide students before their placements. The effectiveness of these policies should be monitored throughout the placement.[107]

Prior to the student commencing the placement, universities and academics should set expectations for the student and make sure that students understand these expectations. They should highlight what students will gain from their placement.[108] Students should be encouraged to assume that their placement will be successful. Universities and academics should also encourage students to seek feedback from their supervisor.[109] Academics need to encourage students to face difficult and ambiguous situations and then offer specific encouragement and advice as required. As with organisational supervisors, it may be appropriate to refuse to offer advice in some cases. This forces the student to make his or her own decision and accept the consequences for the decision.[110]

Universities and academics should provide workshops for first-time supervisors. These workshops help the supervisor to develop the skills to provide 'non-directive' direction to students.[111] They are also opportunities for supervisors to network and develop peer support contacts.

5.1.1 Activities to guide student learning

The university should offer a number of activities designed to enhance student learning. Activities should occur at three times, before the placement, during the placement and after the placement.[112] Without these activities, students may not identify some of the important elements of working in their chosen professions.[113]

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106 Cates & Jones, p 2.

107 Waryszak, p 6.

108 Cates & Jones, p 2.

109 Cates & Jones, p 2.

110 Cooper & Maidment, p 42.

111 Bates, Bates & Bates, p 5.

112 Cates & Jones, p 2.

113 B Friedrich & C Gunn, 'Sending skilled students into a global marketplace', *Paper presented at the 1999 WACE/CEA International Conference on Cooperative Education*, downloaded from www.waceinc.org on 5 January 2005, World Association for Cooperative Education, Boston, 1999, p 2.

The pre-placement activities allow students to lay the foundation that will maximise their learning while on placement. These activities include identifying skills, interests and values, writing learning objectives essays, learning contracts and participating in a preparatory workshop.[114] Frequently, the topics included in the pre-placement workshop include preparing a resume, preparing for an interview and informing students about what they should expect during their placement.[115]

The inclusion of activities during the placement enhances student learning. It is best that these activities build upon the pre-placement activities. Activities include work journals, workshops, mid-placement evaluation, portfolio development and other academic projects.[116] Feedback from the organisation and supervisor is also important.

Activities to encourage students to reflect upon and evaluate their placement are critical. Requiring students to write an assignment at the end of their placement helps students to develop insight from their workplace learning, apply what they have learned to their studies and career preparation as well as prepare them for any further placements. Other reflective instruments might include a student evaluation form, short-answer evaluation, evaluation essay or an evaluation of the student by the workplace supervisor.[117]

However, it is not enough that students merely complete these projects. Students need effective and constructive feedback on their activities. In many cases, this requires the academic to take time to explain to students the link between working and learning.[118]

5.2 BENEFITS FOR THE ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY

It is important that educational institutions, as organisations that receive the majority of their funding from the government, attract and retain students. Attracting and retaining students is often dependent on the reputation of the university.[119] Universities that provide clear pathways to jobs and careers are more

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[114] Cates & Jones, p 2.

[115] Friedrich & Gunn, p 1.

[116] Cates & Jones, p 2.

[117] Cates & Jones, p 3.

[118] Cates & Jones, p 3.

[119] Weisz & Chapman, p 247.

likely to attract students.[120] Work-integrated learning programs are advertised frequently as a reason for potential students to select one institution over another.

Academic staff have an important role in attracting and recruiting students through their involvement in school and industry visits as well as faculty open days. The use of career events where existing students relate positive placement experiences to new students also assists in attracting new students.[121] Students from outside a university's traditional catchment area are more likely to attend that institution if it offers programs with work-integrated learning components.

A further benefit for the university is that work placements stimulate curriculum development. Any partner (student, organisation or academic institution) within the placement process can stimulate curriculum change.[122] Placements also provide an opportunity for the supply of continuous feedback to the university regarding the quality of their degrees.

Placements may also help universities develop international networks. Educational institutions that offer students opportunities for international work experience provide themselves and their academics with links to overseas industries and universities. This allows universities to enhance their international status and academic staff to develop their international expertise.[123]

A further benefit is career development opportunities for university staff. Staff involved in these programs develop and maintain contact with the 'real' world, forge and sustain collaborative research with industry, develop scholarships and consultancies, spend time in industry researching work-orientated projects, focus on the relevance and design of curricula and ensure that it meets the needs of both the student and employer.[124]

5.3 DRAWBACKS FOR THE ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY

Providing students with work-integrated learning programs does have drawbacks for the academic coordinator and the university. The logistics of organising a placement can be difficult. For example, educational institutions have difficulties

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[120] Weisz & Chapman, p 248.

[121] Weisz & Chapman, p 248.

[122] Weisz & Chapman, p 248.

[123] Weisz & Chapman, p 250.

[124] Weisz & Chapman, p 250.

locating sufficient placements. Only a small proportion of professionals with the appropriate skills and abilities undertake supervisory responsibilities.[125] This results in successive students being placed in a small number of organisations.

The academic staff that coordinate the placements appear to be valued less by the university than other, more theoretically focussed, staff.[126] Frequently many of the tasks associated with the management of the placement lack visibility for the teaching and research staff of the university.[127] A Flinders University study highlighted the specific concerns of staff working in the work-integrated learning field:

> *..the university and lecturing colleagues undervalued their work. They believe that the expertise required to manage the practicum is neither appreciated nor recognised.*[128]

This has implications for the careers of academic coordinators. The lack of career development opportunities may be an impediment to the creation of a work-integrated learning program.

5.4 CASE STUDY: DR MERRELYN BATES, SENIOR LECTURER/FIELD PLACEMENT COORDINATOR – SCHOOL OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Section 2.1.2 of this research brief described the work-integrated learning program run by the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. This program provides the academic with contact with individual students rather than dealing with students en masse.

However, one of the biggest benefits is the development and maintenance of relationships with practitioners. This results in the University having the opportunity to maintain contact with the currency of practice. This is mutually beneficial because practitioners, through their students, have the opportunity of becoming more aware of the current research and literature in their area. If the student is focussed on a particular project, then this might be particularly relevant. Academics are also given insight into organisations that they might not necessarily know about or come in contact with in the normal part of their work.

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[125] Patford, p 21.

[126] Reeders, p 207.

[127] Orrell, Cooper & Jones, p 1.

[128] Cooper, Lawson & Orrell in Orrell, Cooper & Jones, p 1.

With the development of relationships with practitioners, there is the opportunity for collaboration on further research. Positive placements provide the opportunity for ongoing relationships with supervisors/organisations, thus providing ongoing placements making it easier for the coordinator to find placements.

Academics also have the privilege of observing the maturation of individual students as they resolve the tensions and conflicts associated with the reality of the workplace.

However, the costs to the university/academic include the time commitment. It is very time consuming to organise placements. The academic coordinator is usually working with students individually to find placements, rather than the mass contact of normal lectures and tutorials. The academic also needs to commit time to offer support and training for supervisors. However, this time commitment is offset by the result of good supervision. Good supervision results in less problem-solving by the academic coordinator with the student. Administrative management associated with organising placements and the meeting of legislative requirements such as workplace health and safety, public liability, anti-discrimination, sexual harassment as well as workplace bullying and harassment is also time intensive.

As well as time commitments, there are greater financial costs associated with treating student workshops as workplace meetings for novice professionals, including the provision of morning teas.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Work-integrated learning involves three partners, the student, the organisation/supervisor and the university/academic coordinator. Although this research brief has described each partner within the work placement process separately, the relationship between each of these partners is critical to the success of the placement. Studies have shown the importance of cooperation between educational institutions and industry in placements.[129] Without this cooperation the placement is unlikely to provide benefits to students, supervisors or universities.

Although it is difficult to quantify the benefits and costs of work-integrated learning for each participant exactly, anecdotal evidence suggests that placements are beneficial for students, supervisors and universities. However, political, economic, social and technological factors will continue to affect the number and quality of placements for students.

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[129] Waryszak, p 2.

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