1. Preface

Workplace Learning, traditionally referred to as practicum, fieldwork and practical placement (see below for other terms) provides students with practical experience in the application of theoretical concepts and knowledge, and is generally designed to enable students to practise the skills of the profession in a real-life setting. The Teaching and Learning Guidelines outlined in this document are designed to support staff who are engaged in the design, implementation and monitoring of Workplace Learning in University of Tasmania courses and units. The Guidelines should be read as an extension of the University of Tasmania’s Practicum Policy, available at http://www.utas.edu.au/policy/vcpol/tp1.1.html. University staff involved in the development and implementation of Workplace Learning should also refer to the templates for establishing formal Agreements between the University and Industry partners in Workplace Learning and the University and Student Participants in Workplace Learning. These templates are available at http:// (TO BE CONFIRMED) .

Additional resources, including a typology of Workplace Learning contexts and descriptions of cases of Workplace Learning currently being conducted as a result of partnership agreements between the University of Tasmania and Industry partners, are available in later sections of this document and through the University’s Teaching and Learning website at http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/index.html and the Careers and Employment website at http://services.admin.utas.edu.au/careers/ .

Workplace Learning is based on a partnership model of teaching and learning in higher education, involving three principal stakeholders, namely the University, Industry partners and Students. Workplace Learning is regarded as making a key contribution to economic and professional spheres of real-world activity as well as contributing significantly to the quality of student learning outcomes during formal university courses. Workplace Learning also provides opportunities for the identification and extension of research opportunities for university staff, industry partners and students.

The University is committed to:

- including Workplace Learning in the teaching and learning contexts of the University;
- ensuring that students’ Workplace Learning experiences are of the highest standard;
- encouraging the use of a range of models of Workplace Learning;
• using learning in the workplace to develop productive partnerships between professions, industry and the University;
• providing resources to enable the development of effective Workplace Learning programs and/or activities; and
• ensuring that accreditation requirements of professional bodies are fulfilled and enhanced through Workplace Learning.

At the broadest level, the development and implementation of Workplace Learning should be informed by the University’s Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning, available at http://www.utas.edu.au/policy/subject.html#teaching. Thus, any Workplace Learning placement conducted by and/or for the University should provide a secure, supportive yet challenging environment for teaching and learning and research supervision that is characterised by high standards of professional conduct (University of Tasmania, Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning).

Workplace Learning also represents the University’s commitment to the development of a ‘learning intensive’ culture, within which students strive and are supported to acquire both disciplinary knowledge and generic attributes that will equip them to make a contribution to the wider community and employment (University of Tasmania, Teaching and Learning Development Plan, 2006-2008).

A sustained commitment to Workplace Learning within the University of Tasmania reflects industry and community desires to be more involved in the University and the education of its graduates (University of Tasmania, Teaching and Learning Development Plan, 2006-2008). Workplace Learning enables the University to reach out beyond its formal campuses and encourage all communities to engage with the University’s full range of activities (University of Tasmania, Teaching and Learning Development Plan, 2006-2008).

2. Key words

Workplace Learning is one of a number of terms used to denote the integration of university and industry and/or professional learning contexts. Other terms include co-operative education, enterprise learning, fieldwork, internship, learning in the workplace, industry-based learning, placement, practical placement, practicum, project, service learning, work experience, work-based learning, Workplace Learning, workplace project.
3. Definition of terms

Workplace:

Any place where individuals (paid or voluntary) conduct real work, i.e. provide a service or produce a good.²

Learning in the Workplace/Workplace Learning:

Learning activities that use the workplace, including the community, as a site for teaching and learning.²

Workplace Learning Placement:

Any element of work, observation or experience in a workplace external to or within the University which is a requirement of any course or unit offered by the University.³

Workplace Learning Co-ordinator:

A university staff member (Academic or General) who has responsibility for the management of a specific Workplace Learning placement.

Workplace Learning Supervisor:

Staff member of the University or an external workplace who has been assigned or contracted to supervise students engaged in a specific Workplace Learning placement.

University-based Workplace Learning Supervisor:

Staff member of the University who has been assigned to supervise students engaged in a specific Workplace Learning placement.

Placement-based Workplace Learning Supervisor:

Staff member of an external workplace who has been contracted to supervise students engaged in a specific Workplace Learning placement.
4. Guidelines for the design, implementation and monitoring of Workplace Learning Placements

4.1 The nature of Workplace Learning Placements

4.1.1 Workplace Learning placements may be designed to develop generic graduate abilities and/or course and unit specific skills. In the case of the latter, there should be an obvious and close relationship between the University-based and Workplace Learning components of a course and/or unit.

4.1.2 There should be a clearly defined set of aims and outcomes for specific Workplace Learning placements.

4.1.3 Workplace Learning placements should encompass a wide range of professionally relevant and thoughtfully planned learning experiences.

4.1.4 Workplace Learning placements should include Briefing, Placement and Debriefing components, for both University and Workplace staff and students. Where the duration of a placement spans more than three semester weeks or equivalent, in any of the academic semesters of the University, a Mid-Placement Debriefing opportunity should be offered to staff and students. This could be offered using the University’s online teaching and learning environment.

4.1.5 Where formal assessment tasks are associated with Workplace Learning placements, these tasks should be academically and/or professionally relevant.

4.2 Organisation of Workplace Learning Placements

4.2.1 Usually, Workplace Learning placements will take place outside of the University. Where Workplace Learning placements occur within the University, the student should supervised by a staff member who is NOT the student’s current academic supervisor.

4.2.2 Workplace Learning placements may be compulsory or elective components of a course or unit.

4.2.3 Workplace Learning placements may be vocational in orientation, directed towards meeting professional accreditation standards, or part of a generalist program such as an Arts or Science degree.
4.2.4 Workplace Learning placements should be managed by a University-based Workplace Learning Co-ordinator who is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and monitoring of the placement.

4.2.5 Where students are required to complete a Workplace Learning placement as a compulsory part of a unit they are enrolled in, they should have the support of a University-based Workplace Learning supervisor.

4.2.6 Each student participating in a Workplace Learning placement should have the support of a Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisor.

4.2.7 Workplace Learning supervisors should provide professional support for students as learners and as potential colleagues during the period of their placement in the workplace.

4.2.8 Where required, Workplace Learning supervisors will make assessments of students’ performance in the Workplace Learning placement, with specific reference to established criteria for the successful completion of the placement.

4.2.9 Sites for the operation of Workplace Learning placements may be obtained by the University, through Faculty and/or School-based Workplace Learning Co-ordinators and/or by students, according to the published specifications for particular Workplace Learning placements.

4.3 Preparation for Workplace Learning Placements

4.3.1 Workplace Learning Co-ordinators should ensure that all supervisors and students involved in a Workplace Learning placement are provided with appropriate documentation about the Workplace Learning placement, especially any assessment criteria and other relevant material, including University of Tasmania grievance policies and procedures.

4.3.2 Workplace Learning Co-ordinators should ensure that all supervisors and students involved in a Workplace Learning placement are provided with a pre-placement briefing in which the aims and expected outcomes of the placement are clarified, policies and procedures for successful completion of the placement are outlined, and appropriate professional behaviours are identified.

4.3.3 Prior to the commencement of a Workplace Learning placement, supervisors and students involved in the placement should ensure that they are familiar with the
goals and requirements of the placement, the professional behaviours and activities required of them during the placement, and where appropriate, criteria for assessment of student progress in the placement.

4.3.4 Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors should ensure that they understand where a particular Workplace Learning placement ‘fits’ in the sequence of a student’s academic and professional studies and/or experiences.

4.3.5 Students should ensure that they have assembled all documentation and materials necessary for commencement and completion of their Workplace Learning placement before commencing the placement.

4.3.6 Students may be required to contact their Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisor(s) prior to the Workplace Learning placement, to introduce themselves and consult their supervisor regarding any organisational details or requirements for successful commencement of the placement. Students should be advised of appropriate procedures for making contact with Placement-based staff in Course and/or Unit Outlines, specific Workplace Learning placement documentation, and at Workplace Learning placement briefings.

4.4 Supervision of students in Workplace Learning Placements

4.4.1 All Workplace Learning supervisors and students involved in a Workplace Learning placement should be provided with appropriate documentation about any direct and/or indirect supervision requirements of the placement. This should include a statement of specific supervision responsibilities and access to the University of Tasmania grievance policies and procedures.

4.4.2 Where the progress or performance of a student involved in a Workplace Learning placement is to be formally assessed as part of a unit and/or course in which they are currently enrolled, an appropriate level of direct supervision should be provided for the student, in both the placement organisation and/or from the University.

4.4.3 Workplace Learning supervisors in placement organisations and the University should be provided with preparation, training and/or ongoing support in the supervision of students involved in specific Workplace Learning placements.

4.4.4 University and Placement-based Workplace learning supervisors should ensure that they carry out their supervision responsibilities in Workplace Learning
placements in accordance with the University's *Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning* and relevant professional behaviour standards.

### 4.5 Assessment of students in Workplace Learning Placements

#### 4.5.1 Assessment of student progress in Workplace Learning placements should be consistent with the University of Tasmania policies and guidelines on assessment.

#### 4.5.2 Assessment of student progress in a specific Workplace Learning placement should also reflect the nature and purpose of the placement. For example, in placements closely related to professional accreditation processes, assessment should be based on the use a criterion-referenced standards framework acceptable to both the University and the accrediting organisation. In placements based around observation and/or authentic project work, assessment might take different forms, including reflective and/or narrative accounts of professional practice.

#### 4.5.3 Assessment of student progress in Workplace Learning placements may be conducted by University-based or Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors. Where the Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisor is the sole assessor of the student, the Workplace Learning Co-ordinator for the placement should ensure that the Placement-based supervisor is fully conversant with the University’s policy on Student Assessment and the aims and outcomes of the specific Workplace Learning placement.

#### 4.5.4 Students should receive regular and constructive feedback on their progress towards the aims and objectives of the Workplace Learning placement during the placement. This feedback should be provided by their University-based Workplace Learning supervisor and/or Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisor, as required in specific Workplace Learning placements.

#### 4.5.5 Students should be encouraged and supported to reflect critically and constructively on their own progress during a Workplace Learning placement.

### 4.6 Review of Workplace Learning Placements

#### 4.6.1 All Workplace Learning placements conducted as integral components of courses and/or units within the University should be subject to systematic and regular processes of review.

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4.6.2 Workplace Learning placement review processes should involve key stakeholders in specific placements. These would include University and Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors and students, or their respective representatives.

5. Further resources

Australian Co-operative Education Network (http://www.swin.edu.au/hosting/acen)

Flinders University: Teaching and Learning – Practicum Resources, Links and References (http://www.flinlers.edu.au/teach/t4l/practicum/resources.php)


Middlesex University: Accreditation of Short Courses, Prior Learning, Experiential Learning, Work-based Learning and other forms of Continuing Education and Professional Development. (http://www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/fpr/docs/aps2.pdf)

National Association of Field Educator Administrators (http://www.nafea.info)


6. Selected research papers


7. Appendices

**Appendix 1:** A typology of Workplace Learning contexts

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Footnotes


2. Term defined using Victoria University’s *Learning in the Workplace* policy, POA051010000.

3. Term defined using University of Wollongong’s *Code of Practice for Practical Placements*. It should be noted that students are sometimes encouraged or advised by University staff to participate in workplace experiences beyond those that are identified as a requirement of any course or unit offered by the University. Where this occurs, students and staff should be aware that such workplace experiences occur outside of existing University policies and procedures related to practicum placement of students.
## APPENDIX 1

### A typology of Workplace Learning Contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Good practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for work in a field of practice – learners are usually students in an on-campus, distance or flexible delivery unit or course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Focused observations in a workplace | - Short term (one semester or less)  
- Part of a University course and/or unit  
- Managed and/or supervised by University staff | - Focus on preparation for ENTRY to workplaces  
- Clearly defined role for student as observer |
| Specific project conducted in a workplace | - Short term (one semester or less)  
- Part of a University course and/or unit  
- Supervised and assessed by University and/or Placement-based supervisors | - Focus on preparation for ENTRY to workplaces  
- Clearly defined role for student as researcher-practitioner  
- Liaison between University and Placement-based staff |
| Placement focused on students gaining practical experience in the workplace | - Short or long term  
- Co-supervision by University and Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors | - Focus on preparation for ENTRY to workplaces  
- Clearly defined roles for student as practitioner  
- Site visits by University-based Workplace Learning supervisors and/or other external Workplace Learning supervisors as appointed by the University  
- Meetings between University and Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors  
- Briefing, and debriefing of staff and students  
- Formal evaluation of student performance and Workplace Learning program  
- Use of Workplace Learning placement experiences in concurrent and subsequent on-campus teaching |
| Internship program where students are gaining further experience, as workers and/or professionals | - Long term (one semester to one year)  
- Supervision almost exclusively by Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisor  
- Administrative supervision provided by Workplace Learning Co-ordinator | - Focus on preparation for ENTRY to workplaces  
- Clearly defined roles for student as worker and/or professional  
- Liaison between Workplace Learning Co-ordinator and Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors  
- Briefing, and debriefing of staff and students  
- Formal evaluation of student performance and Workplace Learning program  
- Use of Workplace Learning placement experiences in concurrent and subsequent on-campus teaching |
## Improvement of work in a field of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project in a learner’s normal workplace</th>
<th></th>
<th>Focus on ‘value-adding’ to student’s current workplace competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Usually a component of a postgraduate unit or course</td>
<td>• Supervised and assessed by University and Placement-based Workplace Learning supervisors</td>
<td>• Clearly defined roles for student as reflective and/or critical practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Assessment related to work contexts and competencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>