

CARRICK INSTITUTE : DISCIPLINE BASED INITIATIVES



Work Integrated Learning : A national framework for initiatives to support best practice

Griffith University

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Vignette title and details	Industrial Affiliates Program (IAP) Full-time, full semester placement for students in four-year engineering programs, and half-time full semester placement for students in three-year science and information technology programs. It is also part of Masters programs.
Discipline	Engineering, Science, Environmental Science, Nanoscience, Information Technology, Multimedia ... and growing.
Employment sector	Broad range of industries associated with above disciplines, including government and not-for-profit.
Student numbers	Presently around 200 students per year. By 2010 it will be 300-400 students per year.
Optional/compulsory	Either half a semester load and optional for 3 year programs, or full semester load and compulsory for 4 year programs.
Credit bearing	Always credit bearing.
Assessment	Variety of assessments. Planning report, seminars, milestone reports, technical defence, final report/thesis, participation in a project expo.
Payment	A growing number of students receive payments (which vary) from their industry employer. IAP is project-based rather than position-based – which means that employers are tied to ensuring the student spends their entire placement working on a defined, approved project, because project-based WIL produce excellent outcomes both for the WIL experience, and for subsequent learning. However, all employers pay a small fee to the university to assist in the high level of monitoring and support provided to IAP students.
Number of staff involved	The majority of academic staff (around 70) in IAP disciplines are involved as academic mentors / advisors for the students and / or as assessors for marking the various assessment items. To manage 200 student placements per year, also involves an academic convenor, and the equivalent of three full time administrative support staff.
Weblink	www.griffith.edu.au/industrial-affiliates-program
Key Words	Project-based; full-time; assessment; industry; engineering; science; IT; practicum

Overview

The Industrial Affiliates Program is a compulsory component in all of Griffith's Engineering degrees. Engineering students spend the first semester of their final year in a project-based placement. Students in other degrees which incorporate the IAP do a half-time project-based placement.

Structure of program

The IAP is project-based, with a high level of structure and academic and administrative support. Students work towards a solid outcome which creates a wonderful example of their professional skills. The IAP provides a variety of workshops and support mechanisms throughout the program to ensure that failure is extremely rare. The philosophy of the IAP is that it is not a test of what the student can do, but provides substantive new learning, in a highly supported, safe environment.

Special features

The IAP has been extremely successful in terms of students using their IAP experience to win professional and industry awards based on their IAP project. IAP students have been award-winners year after year in some awards, they won every award they entered – 11 different awards in the last two years; have won national and international competitions; and often their individual project has won against postgraduate projects and group projects. This is an excellent endorsement of the IAP structure. A particular feature of the IAP is that around 50% of students on placement are actually being supervised or mentored by a previous IAP student, many of whom are now working as employees in their previous IAP organisation.

The IAP does not closely match employers to students. It replicates the real world experience of students applying for specific projects, going through interviews with employers and being selected, or not, by employers. The IAP office facilitates this process and does some management of it, but it is largely a relationship between the employer and the student, as this provides the best opportunity for student and employer to value the choices made. The IAP model suits the scientific disciplines in this regard and is not necessarily applicable to other disciplines.

The thing that encapsulates the IAP success as a model is its high level of structure and monitoring. It is not possible for a student to go for a whole semester and for it to be discovered at the end that things didn't work out. There are a variety of supports and mechanism that are part of the IAP program to ensure the success of all students is being constantly tracked.

Typically, students in the IAP do 5-10% better in the IAP than in other subjects. Students typically improve grades of subjects concurrent with, or subsequent to their placement. It is not at all unusual for students who are barely scraping through their degree, or just pulling average marks, to do extremely well in the IAP. It provides students with a different way to "shine"

Future work

Because of the growing number of students I would like to put all assessment and monitoring processes on-line to reduce the quantity of paperwork that needs to be monitored in hard-copy. We are working towards this. As the program grows and student numbers mean we no longer no each student individually, we need to put processes in place that ensure the students are totally supported and monitored.