

Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Guidelines for Students with disability, long-term illness or mental health conditions

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CONTENTS

Overview

1. Preparing for WIL

- 1.1 Sharing of personal information and confidentiality
- 1.2 Why is it important to talk about WIL activities at the start of your program and/or each semester?
- 1.3 What are Inherent Requirements?
- 1.4 What are my options if I am unable to meet the inherent requirements due to the impact of my condition/s?
- 1.5 What are reasonable adjustment and how do they interact with WIL activities?
- 1.6 When do I disclose my disability/condition/s?
- 1.7 What are the benefits/risks of disclosing?
- 1.8 How are WIL activities coordinated in Schools?
- 1.9 Should I plan a meeting to discuss my WIL adjustments and who with?

2. During WIL

- 2.1 Do I need to disclose my condition/s to WIL Coordinators/Academics/Placement staff?
- 2.2 What is the process if I discontinue a WIL program/course?
- 2.3 Considerations for deciding whether to leave a placement

3. Supports

- 3.1 What support services are available for WIL?
- 3.2 Supports available for organising your own WIL activity

4. Contacts

- 4.1 Who do I contact about WIL activities in my program/course and who will be my contact while I am on placement?

5. Resources and Job Opportunities

For students living with disability, long term illness and/or mental health conditions, or primary carer of someone with a disability.

RMIT is committed to supporting diversity and inclusion and providing equal opportunities and support for students with a disability, long-term illness and/or mental health condition, and primary carers of individuals with a disability.

Equitable Learning Services (ELS) can be provided by RMIT Equitable Learning and Accessibility (ELA) and Career Development and Success to assist with students' participation and inclusion in WIL activities.

These guidelines are designed to assist students with information about the support services that are available when planning, organising and attending WIL Activities. Program or course information about WIL activities can be discussed with your School.

1. Preparing for WIL

1.1 Sharing of personal information and confidentiality

To register with ELS and organise reasonable adjustments for WIL activities you will need to provide supporting documentation from a health practitioner. Information about your disability or condition/s will not be shared outside of ELA unless you want to, and you have given written consent to do so.

If you believe your disability or condition/s may impact on your ability to complete a WIL Activity, you may require some support or adjustments to see you thrive and succeed. It is recommended that you notify the Coordinator of your WIL Activity well before starting your placement or project as well as seeking a WIL Activity Planning Meeting (see 1.9).

If you do decide to share personal health related information with the WIL Coordinator to discuss the impact of your condition during a placement or project and plan that placement or project, this information should not be released to WIL partner organisations without your written consent.

1.2 Why is it important to talk about WIL activities at the start of your program and/or each semester?

To ensure that you understand the inherent requirements of WIL activities, identify, and discuss any concerns before planning for your WIL activity, and have time to ensure that reasonable adjustments in your Equitable Learning Plan (ELP) align with these requirements.

1.3 What are Inherent Requirements?

Inherent requirements are the fundamental tasks of a program that require students to demonstrate non-academic abilities during a professional experience placement and on-campus learning activities.

It is important that you talk to your School about whether there are any inherent requirements that you need to consider for any of your WIL activities.

It is also highly recommended that you talk to your School about the inherent requirements in your program or course, or for any WIL activities at the beginning of each semester/term.

If you need assistance to have this conversation with the School and are registered with ELS you can ask that an Equitable Learning Advisor attend a meeting with you.

1.4 What are my options if I am unable to meet the inherent requirements due to the impact of my condition/s?

If you are unable to meet the inherent requirements of your program/course or WIL activities, the School will talk to you about whether there are alternative ways to complete your program/course or WIL activities, or whether you will need to consider other programs/courses.

1.5 What are Reasonable Adjustments and how do they interact with WIL activities?

A reasonable adjustment is a measure (or group of measures) implemented by an education provider to assist a student with a disability, long term illness and/or mental health condition to apply, enrol and participate in a course or program on the same basis as their peers.

While on a placement, you can also seek reasonable adjustments into employment, placement or WIL. These adjustments can be requested to specifically remove or reduce the impact of your condition and ability to engage equitably in the workplace. You can seek these adjustments in the recruitment process so you can put your best foot forward and into the workplace to see you thrive.

For more information, please book into a [monthly webinar](#) on reasonable adjustments or book in to speak with the ELS Career Consultant via [CareerHub](#) or email els.careers@rmit.edu.au

1.6 When do I disclose my disability/condition/s?

If you decide to disclose to your RMIT placement team and/or the placement facility, then earlier is generally better so that supports can be set up right from the start of placement. A WIL Activity Planning Meeting can be a good tool to use to discuss your needs and see what can be accommodated.

[See link to ELS Career Consultant webinar](#) on disclosure above for more information. (1.5)

1.7 What are the benefits/risks of disclosing?

Some things to consider when choosing to disclose:

- What is the desired outcome?
- Is there an impact on the allocation of the placement? For example, location of a placement
- Is there an impact on the placement itself? For example, needing a computer to write notes

Please see the table below explaining some Benefits and Risks of disclosing for consideration:

Benefits	Barriers, Concerns and Risks
<p>Allows you to discuss and put in place reasonable adjustments so that you can put your best foot forward and remove barriers you may face.</p> <p>You can speak freely and draw upon your experience as a strength and bring your whole self to work/placement.</p> <p>Creates a merit-based system of recruitment.</p> <p>Thriving at work – transition into work life and maintaining your job and health.</p> <p>Facilitating open and positive dialogue with supervisors, recruiters, and managers.</p> <p>Thirst in the job market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing the community the organisation serves. • Studies have shown diverse teams are higher performing, create more innovative solutions and are more empathetic. • Affirmative Measures jobs, only people living with disability can apply. 	<p>Unsure of how to or who to disclose/share your information with.</p> <p>Fear of discrimination or judgement.</p> <p>Difficulty articulating condition, needs, impact or adjustments.</p> <p>Not knowing what the recruitment process is or what the tasks of the WIL/Placement/Job might be, so how can I know if my condition will affect my placement?</p> <p>Uncertain of how the information will be used and who will have access to it.</p>

1.8 How are WIL activities coordinated in Schools?

Schools coordinate WIL activities in different ways. Examples of this would be:

- Placements are allocated to students
- Students source their own placements
- RMIT has training facilities where placements take place

It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with how your WIL works and who to contact at the beginning of your program.

1.9 Should I plan a meeting to discuss my WIL adjustments and who with?

If you have an ELP with WIL related reasonable adjustments, then you may want to take part in a WIL Activity Planning Meeting to clarify required supports and ensure your reasonable adjustments can be implemented for your WIL activity. This meeting should take place prior to placement allocation, as close to the start of the program/course as possible, to ensure timely support.

Although some Schools have processes where they reach out to students with ELPs, it is recommended that you be proactive in organising a WIL Activity Planning meeting if needed and invite an ELS Advisor if required.

The ELS Career Consultant can also be contacted for information and advice about how to approach the WIL Activity Planning Meeting in relation to how to disclose, articulate your condition and identify specific reasonable adjustments that remove/reduce the impact of your disability or condition/s. Book using [CareerHub](#) or email els.careers@rmit.edu.au.

2. During WIL

2.1 Do I need to disclose my condition/s to WIL Coordinators/Academics/Placement Staff?

It is your decision whether to disclose your condition. It can be helpful to discuss your needs with your RMIT placement team and the placement facility to have any reasonable adjustments accommodated. If you choose to disclose your needs to a placement supervisor, you can then discuss your needs with that specific placement facility in mind.

Generally, your RMIT placement team can assist in trying to find a placement that suits your needs based on the reasonable adjustments in your ELP. However, if the placement facility does not know about your needs, then it can be difficult to have adjustments accommodated during the placement.

For more information, please book into our [monthly webinar](#) on disclosure or book in to speak with the ELS Career Consultant using [CareerHub](#) or email els.careers@rmit.edu.au.

2.2 What is the process if I discontinue a WIL program/course?

If you are going to discontinue a WIL activity, particularly if it is a placement activity, you will need to contact your Course Coordinator or WIL/Placement Coordinator and the Placement Supervisor and let them know as soon as possible.

If you are considering discontinuing any WIL activity, please enquire with your Course Coordinator if there is a cancellation fee for some placements (preferably you would seek this information before organising your placement). If you are discontinuing due to health reasons you can apply and be considered for a waiver of any cancellation fee.

2.3 Considerations for deciding whether to leave a placement:

- Meet with School to discuss how placement is going
- Meet with ELS to discuss your ELP
 - Arranging further reasonable adjustments to support completion of WIL e.g. change attendance pattern from full-time to part-time
- Meet with the ELS Careers Consultant to look at other program options including exit or program change pathways
- Discontinuing WIL activity
- Deferring WIL activity
- Special Consideration
 - Late Course Withdrawal without Academic Penalty

3. Supports

3.1 What support services are available for WIL?

You can register with ELS to organise an ELP that includes reasonable adjustments for WIL activities based on your WIL requirements and individual circumstances.

Career Development and Success have an RMIT Careers Consultant dedicated to working with students registered with ELS and/or students with disability, chronic illness, mental health conditions or injury.

The ELS Careers Consultant can provide you with assistance with preparing your CV/resume, cover letters, job searching strategies, and practice interviews, as well as identifying inclusive employers, discussing any barriers you may have to gaining or participating in WIL, and reasonable adjustments related to this. To book your ELS Careers Appointment, please use [CareerHub](#).

3.2 Supports available for organising your own WIL activity

The information below can assist you in organising your own WIL activity.

Talk to your School or Program Coordinator about WIL requirements in your program/course and consider the important questions below from the ELS Careers Consultant:

1. If you have an existing ELP, does it include WIL adjustments that align with the WIL requirements of your program/course?
2. If not, make an appointment with an ELS advisor to review and update your ELP.
3. If you do not feel confident in organising your own WIL activity, then please arrange an appointment with the ELS Careers Consultant.

The information that you will need to know to determine the parameters of your WIL placement:

- Is there a deadline that you need to confirm and commence your WIL placement?
- Does it need to be paid or can it be unpaid?
- Does it have to be full-time? or can you gain a part-time role?
- Are there any specific work tasks that the WIL placement needs to include? (e.g. Learning Outcomes of the course)
- What are the time requirements? Number of hours? Or over a time period (e.g. a four-week placement or a semester)?
- Once a placement is found, who do you need to notify to have your WIL confirmed/approved?
- If WIL/Placement is compulsory and you can't find one, what are your options?

4. Contacts

4.1 Who do I contact about WIL activities in my program/course and who will be my contact while I am on placement?

There are different contact people for each Program/Course and School, for example:

- WIL coordinator / WIL practitioner
- WIL Team including WIL administration officers
- Placement Coordinator/Clinical Placements Coordinator

If there is no WIL contact person, then please contact your program manager to find out who the best contact is. It is important to know who your contact person is while on placement, and how to contact them. This is to ensure that if something goes wrong, you can notify the right person and discuss any required accommodations in a timely manner. For example: If you miss three days of placement and you are only permitted to miss two days due to course requirements, you will need to negotiate how to make up these hours as soon as possible.

5. Resources and Job Opportunities

General Resources for Students:

- Australian Network on Disability - www.and.org.au
 - GradWISE: Graduates with Disability - www.wiseemployment.com.au/gradwise-graduate-jobs/gradwise-graduates-with-disability/
 - Victorian Human Rights Commission - <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au>
 - RUSU: Student Rights - <https://www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/studentrights>
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763
 - Fair Work Ombudsman - www.fairwork.gov.au
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Job Platforms for Students:

- Jobseeker Toolkit: Australian Network on Disability - www.and.org.au/students-jobseekers/jobseeker-toolkit/
- GradWISE graduate disability employment - www.wiseemployment.com.au/gradwise-graduate-jobs/
- Internships: Australia Network on Disability - www.and.org.au/students-jobseekers/start-an-internship/
- Job Access - www.jobaccess.gov.au/home