

Charles Darwin University Professional Practice Manual Engineering

Faculty of Science & Technology

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General information

1.1 Foundations of Professional Practice Experience

Professional practice experience program has been developed under the policy of work integrated learning. The policy is intended to support the University's aim of providing work integrated learning opportunities for its courses and to provide a systematic and comprehensive framework for the development and operation. Work integrated learning is an intentional, organised, supervised and assessed educational activity that integrates theoretical learning with its applications in the placement.

1.2 Purpose of Professional Practice Experience

Professional Practice Experience aims to provide short-term placement experiences to the students enrolled in Engineering units [IPM202](#), [IPM303](#), [IPM304](#) and [PRT501](#) at Charles Darwin University. The experience exposes students to the context and requirements of professional practice. Another aim of this program is to provide students with the opportunity for:

- Refinement and application of their current knowledge and skills.
- Development of new skills, especially in areas such as communication and team placement.
- Awareness of placement culture and expectation from the role undertaken during the program.
- Development of practical skills to reflect upon their studies and placement in the future.

1.3 Terminology Used Throughout the Manual

- **Professional practice experience** – refers to the work experience opportunity provided to students enrolled in IPM202, IPM303, IPM304 and PRT501. Students are provided between 225 to 450-hour placement experience in one of the organisations available as a part of the unit.
- **Provider:** refers to the employer in whose organisation the student would be completing the short-term professional practice experience. Provider organisation is the company / firm, where the student would be receiving the placement experience.
- **Unit Coordinator:** refers to the faculty member who would be the Coordinator for this program.
- **Support Officer:** refers to the staff member responsible for sourcing opportunities, liaising with industry representatives, and providing administrative support to academic staff and students.

1.4 Student Information

The University (through the Unit Coordinator) must advise students undertaking professional practice experience, on the following:

- Any training required before the professional practice experience (For e.g., details of study prerequisite, short English course, MS Excel workshops, etc.).
- Conditions of placement or engagement in gaining professional practice experience.
- Student responsibilities, including expected standards of behavior and performance when undertaking professional practice experience.
- Responsibilities of the Provider.

- Occupational health and safety provisions.
- Employment agreements in relation to the placement.
- Provisions regarding suspension or withdrawal from the professional practice experience program.
- Any requirements for the students to submit reports during and on the completion of the professional practice experience program.
- Where the professional practice experience involves research, the University's research related policies and procedures.

1.5 Support for Students

The University (through the Unit Coordinator or Support Officer) would be responsible for providing adequate support to students in each phase of their program, including, where relevant, the identification of Provider and opportunity for an interactive review at the end of the program.

1.6 Student Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) guidelines would include responsibilities for the student, University and the Provider.

1.6.1 Student Responsibilities

Before starting their professional practice experience, the students must participate in appropriate induction program, if any, organised by the Provider.

During the program, students must comply with any reasonable safety instructions, rules, or procedures of the professional practice experience Provider organisation.

In the event of an accident, injury or safety incident whilst in the program, students must notify the Provider and the Unit Coordinator or Support Officer.

1.6.2 University Responsibilities

The university through the Unit Coordinator must ensure that the students are given an appropriate preparation before the beginning of their professional practice experience and that they are aware of their roles, responsibilities and rights in relation to the health and safety in the Provider organisation.

It should also be ensured that the students are aware of the procedures to be followed if they are concerned about any health/safety issue and for reporting any incidents.

Students should not be placed with any Provider who does not provide adequately for OHS or public liability insurance.

1.6.3 Provider Responsibilities

Under the OHS legislation, the Provider would be responsible for ensuring that their workplace is safe for students involved in professional practice experience program.

The provider would be required to ensure that the students are informed of relevant occupational health and safety requirements and procedures.

In the event of a student having an accident, sustaining an injury or being involved in a safety incident whilst in the program, the Provider would be responsible for contacting the Unit Coordinator or Support Officer and for providing a written report of the incidence as in line with the University OHS policies.

The Provider should have adequate public liability insurance cover in relation to loss, damage or injury suffered by the students because of acts or omissions by the Provider organisation, its employees and third party.

- 1.1 The Engineering Organisation will arrange appropriate orientation and induction for Students undertaking a Placement prior to commencement of the Placement, including instruction on reporting lines and the Engineering Organisation's expectations of Students while on a Placement.
- 1.2 The Engineering Organisation will provide Students undertaking a Placement with access to any directions, by-laws, policies, manuals, and rules of the Engineering Organisation which the Students must comply with while on the Placement including:
 - (a) safety and emergency procedures such as the Engineering Organisation's security and fire safety regulations
 - (b) work health and safety policies
 - (c) policies related to communicable diseases; and
 - (d) any forms or declarations which the Engineering Organisation requires Students to complete.

1.7 Withdrawal of Students from Professional Practice Experience Program

Conditions of withdrawal of a student from professional practice experience will apply when:

- 1) Student breaches the legal, ethical, or professional codes of the professional practice experience Provider organisation.
- 2) Student demonstrates negligence in the performance of the assigned duty during the program.
- 3) Student decides to withdraw from the course/ unit during the program.
- 4) Student faces any critical health or personal issues during the program.
- 5) Provider is unable or unwilling to maintain an appropriate professional practice experience for the student.
- 6) Due to some unforeseen circumstances, the University ceases to recognise the organisation as a Provider.
- 7) When the University withdraws a student from professional practice experience under the conditions 1 – 3 stated above, a fail result would be normally recorded for the unit.

For conditions 4 – 6 listed above, no fail result would be recorded for the unit. Students would be further assisted and supported to seek an alternative Provider for the successful completion of the unit and the program. Standard University procedures will be followed in the case of withdrawal from the program.

2. UNIT INFORMATION

2.1 Course Information

Professional practice experience will provide students an opportunity to test their theoretical understanding against the reality of the placement.

Engineering: For IPM202, IPM303, IPM304 & PRT501, core units totaling 0 credit points (cps) would be completed in consultation with the Unit Coordinator. The requirement is between 225 to 450 hours or 6 weeks to 12 weeks FTE, unit dependent.

2.2 Placement Allocation

Placements can be either in the public sector or private sector. Professional Practice Experience would normally be related to the study stream and particular interests of Engineering student (Civil & Structural, Mechanical, Electrical). Prior to commencing professional placement, the student must discuss and have approved the details of the placement with the Unit Coordinator.

2.3 Unit Coordinator and Placement Officer Contact Details

Unit Coordinator 2024 – Dr Luis Herrera Diaz, Lecturer/Course Coordinator - Engineering.

Email: luis.herreradiaz@cdu.edu.au

Phone (08) 8946 6508

FST Student & Academic Support Officer -

Email: fst-placements@cdu.edu.au

3. AGREEMENT

3.1 Introduction

A Practice Agreement is entered to deal with the use by CDU and its Students and resources provided by the Provider which are essential to the delivery of professional practice experience program.

3.2 Object of the Agreement

The objects of this Agreement are:

- To clarify the expectations, roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders to provide high quality professional experiences for students.
- Collaboration between key stakeholders, including the organisation, Charles Darwin University and the student is crucial to the success of the partnership and placement experience of the student.

3.4 Student Insurance

Students undertaking placements at the Provider Organisation, will be covered under the CDU Insurance Policy for students. This is applicable to voluntary work only.

Charles Darwin University has current General and Products Liability and Student Personal Accident Insurance. Copies are available to Provider Organisations.

This would cease to apply when the student has completed the placement requirements, i.e., completed 225 to 450 hours of work placement at the provider organisation.

4. PROVIDER (EMPLOYER) AND STUDENT INFORMATION

4.1 Program Description

Professional practice experience aims to provide a short-term placement experience to students enrolled in Engineering courses offered at Charles Darwin University. Professional practice experience is an integral part of the overall objective to increase industry knowledge and technical skills to nurture a confident and competent work ready graduate. Professional practice helps to refine communication skills, build

relationships, and acquire specific skills and knowledge whilst gaining an insight to the values, professionalism, and inherent requirements of employment within an organisation. Professional practice experience is supervised by the Provider and the Unit Coordinator, who will be a member of the Faculty's staff.

4.2 Benefits for Providers

Professional practice experience will be beneficial for the Providers in several ways:

- Providers will get an opportunity to work with better – trained graduates without any additional expenses or any remuneration to the students.
- While the students are completing professional practice experience, the Providers may gain access to the specialised expertise and facilities available at the university.
- Professional practice experience provides the opportunity for the Providers to evaluate the suitability of the student as a future employee of the organisation. If the student does eventually become a permanent employee, there is the added benefit that the student has already undergone their orientation. Also, they understand and accept their workplace targets, relationships, and discipline.
- The program is a flexible and a very cost-effective method for Providers to respond to fluctuating workloads. It doesn't involve any long-term liability for the Providers and only a short-term contract is made available for the students involved in the program.
- Because of regular and long – term contact and collaboration with the faculty and the university at large, Providers may become involved in the design and delivery of the academic program. Cooperative links in the areas of research and consulting are also fostered.

4.3 Benefits for Students

Professional practice experience offers the following benefits to the students:

- Primarily, the short-term placement experience in the business will give the students the opportunity to test their theoretical understanding against the reality of the business whilst establishing and developing relationships with industry representatives.
- Students graduating from this course will already have relevant industry experience in a workplace. This would significantly enhance their employability and gives them a distinct advantage in the competitive job market. Information from other similar programs shows that it is not uncommon for students to receive job offers from their former Providers.
- Students can sample the various areas of their industry before their graduation. This enables a chance to either reaffirm or change their preferences well before the end of the course.
- Having had experience of working in an industrial setting, the students would already be seasoned job applicants. They would have also successfully gone through the process of job search – portfolios, selection of Provider, etc.

4.4 Professional Practice Experience Process

Students are required to find placement independently, as part of their preparation for seeking employment. Students are encouraged to attend industry networking events and faculty's Engineering &

Environment Careers Fair (scheduled in April every year) to make connections with industry. The Faculty's role (Associate Dean Work integrated Learning/ADWIL, placement unit coordinator and Student & Academic Support officer/SASO) is to support the placement process by forging close links with existing and new industry partners and provide information/advice/support to students to find and retain placement. The faculty also liaise closely with CDU Careers Centre consultants, academics within faculty, to establish new relationships with industry. The process undertaken for professional practice experience program would involve the following steps:

4.4.1 Available Provider options offered to the student

Once the students have enrolled in the unit, students will be notified of available provider options. In some cases, the student is required to meet up with the provider for a formal interview session. If the student has been successful in the interview, the Unit Coordinator or support officer will prepare a practice agreement.

4.4.2 Formal acceptance and agreement

A formal agreement is required to be signed between the Provider and the University. The agreement will be prepared by the Unit Coordinator or Support Officer in consultation with the Provider.

4.4.3 During the program

Students would be required to perform all the tasks and responsibilities as guided by the unit requirement and professional partnership agreement.

Providers are required to engage the student in roles and responsibilities relevant to their field of study.

The Unit Coordinator would monitor the progress of the student as per the placement plan.

4.5 Role of students

The role of the students would involve:

- Following the procedure enlisted for the enrollment for the unit.
- Perform their role and duties as per the professional partnership agreement.
- Fulfill the requirements for the assessment for the units enrolled in.
- Recognise their obligation to their employers and observe all requirements set down by the Provider. These would include the hours of placement, breaks, working on tasks as directed.

4.6 Role of Unit Coordinator & Support Officer

The role of the Unit Coordinator and Placement Officer would be to:

- Assume the role of student mentor and provide administrative support during the professional practice experience program period.
- Provide consultation during the duration of the program.
- Provide information regarding the potential Providers available for the program.
- Organise and manage agreements between the students, Provider, and the University.
- Monitor the progress of the students as per the unit requirement.

- Assessment of the deliverables and preparation of the results for each unit.

4.7 Role of Provider

The role of the Provider would include:

- Provide insights on the project suitable for the student in question, when contacted by the Unit Coordinator or Support Officer.
- Provide an outline of the placement plan for the students in consultation with the Unit Coordinator or Support Officer.
- Once the student accepts the offer of professional practice placement experience with the Provider, a formal agreement will be signed by the Provider and the University.
- Organise induction sessions and wherever in line with the work environment of the Provider, an OHS training session for the students.
- To engage the student in the tasks and responsibilities as determined by the unit requirements for the student.
- Provide feedback and written confirmation of successful completion of placement.