Overview:
The Flinders University Tourism program offers WIL in the form of placements, research activities and projects (combining elements of placement and research activities). Each provide different learning outcomes in linking theory and practice and are highly valued by all stakeholders, so much so that, unusually, they are compulsory topics as defined the University, and not by the tourism industry. These topics are designed to provide students with practical experience working in Arts, Cultural or Tourism operations. They also aim to develop an empathy with, understanding of and relevant experience in the day to day issues confronting operators in the Tourism Industry. They aim to foster an appropriate work ethic during the course of the Industry Placement. These topics are central to gaining a practical understanding of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required in operating a Tourism/Arts/Events business.

Learning Outcomes and links to Graduate Attributes:
Graduate Qualities and Graduate Attributes have been identified by most Australian Universities to characterise their graduates. Flinders University aims to produce graduates of bachelor degrees and post graduate programs who: are knowledgeable; can apply their knowledge; communicate effectively; can work independently; are collaborative; value ethical behaviour; and connect across boundaries.

The assessment of all of the Flinders Tourism Work Integrated learning topics links the learning outcomes of the particular topic with the University’s Graduate Qualities. The Learning Outcomes include:
- apply skills and knowledge acquired in their course in a practical environment
- analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the placement (and project), whilst reconciling the obligations, responsibilities and actions of practitioners with their own values
- display a high level of professionalism and commitment towards Industry Placement - before, during and on completion of the actual placement
- formally communicate their industry placement experience to others
**Structure of the program:**
Placements will generally start any time from late November through to the end of February for the BITR and consist of 160 hours. Projects provide flexibility to work on or off site and include working in local Visitor Information Centre for credit towards their tourism degree. Research Projects are independent research which may be conducted for an industry partner both on or offsite.

**Special features:**
The Flinders Tourism work integrated learning program is unique. It provides a combination of WIL placement and non-placement activities, thereby maximising the student learning experience. Student numbers are relatively small, but closely managed by a small, experienced team that also maintains close, long-term partnerships with a relatively large number of host organisations. Placements occur at various times throughout the year, in metropolitan, rural, interstate and overseas locations. The success of the Tourism WIL activities has been noted as an exemplar of good practice within the University as a particularly effective model of delivering WIL as a non-professional requirement.

**Process for implementation of WIL activity:**

**Preparation**
Adequate preparation is fundamental in maximising the effectiveness of WIL. Examples within the Tourism models include: attending pre-placement seminars and presentations by students that have previously completed a placement; completing Pre-Place (an on-line student preparation program); and submitting resumes, Police Checks and Fitness for Placement documentation.

**Supervision**
Supervision is ongoing and takes the form of engagement/liaison with the host organisation and the student via regular email, phone and social media contact with University Supervisor.

**Assessment and Moderation**
Reflective Journal of entire placement process; Provider Evaluation by student; Student evaluation of the provider; Oral Student presentations

**Critical success factors:**
Relationships – both with industry providers and students. We have long term relationships with industry providers that we can trust but they also trust the calibre and match of students we are placing. Our program does not computer match, it is based on the knowledge of the organisation and of the students.

**Evidence of positive outcomes for: students, university staff and industry/employers:**

**Benefits for students**
The Industry Placement topic complements the students’ main academic programs, and provides them with a practical opportunity to put their studies into context. It prepares students for the future by enabling them (as appropriate) to:
- apply skills and knowledge already acquired in their course;
- acquire new theoretical and practical skills;
- appreciate the responsibilities, roles, attitudes, values, priorities, judgement and work methods of practitioners in industry;
- participate as a member of a team, and understand the roles and value of all members of that team;
• further develop their own professional attitudes, and reconcile the obligations, responsibilities and actions of practitioners with their own values.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my placement and it reassured me that I wanted to work in the events industry and particular festivals. It made me want more hands on experience too, rather than just class time” (Industry Placement Student)

“...I have found my research project an extremely useful learning experience as it has been an excellent opportunity as a final year student to apply 3 years of knowledge and understanding into the tourism industry.” (Research Project Student)

Benefits for Placement Providers
The program should also provide benefits to the Placement Provider, including:
• valuable contributions made by the students to given projects;
• recognition by enterprises of their role in the education and development of the next generation of key staff members;
• access to students who possess skills not present within the company;
• an opportunity to reflect on their own work practices;
• the opportunity to preview prospective employees;
• preferential access to staff and facilities within the University;
• opportunity to initiate and undertake collaborative research and development projects with University staff.

"Whilst I know you think this process is valuable for the students, I also think they are a great advertisement for the University and the proactive, hand on nature of the degree which is so very different to many other university courses. Well done and thank you for your support!" Tamara Bjordal, Adelaide Hills Tourism Project Officer

Particular challenges and resolutions:
Making a careful match of students and providers is always a challenge, to ensure the closest fit and best experience for all parties.

Additional insights:
Being able to establish and maintain good working relationships with students and providers is crucial. Wider involvement in the WIL networks is necessary, attending seminars etc. Telling the good news stories and widening the WIL network amongst colleagues within the School.

Future plans:
Using social media as a way of promoting WIL, our students and our ongoing engagement with the dynamic SA Tourism industry.
Encouraging greater understanding of WIL within the School community.
Developing WIL research collaborations.