# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Table of Contents**

Learning in Workplace Contexts – Teachers’ Guide to the Online Practicum Preparation Programme

- **Introduction** ................................................................. 1
- **Preparing students for the practicum** ............................ 1
- **Pedagogical basis for work placement** ............................ 2
  - What are students expected to learn? ......................... 3
  - How are students expected to learn? .......................... 5
  - What is needed to create the optimum learning environment? ......................... 7
- **The Programme** ........................................................... 8
- **How to use the modules** ................................................ 9
- **Activities/assessment** .................................................. 10
- **Learning outcomes** ..................................................... 10
- **Module map** ............................................................... 11
- **Conclusion** ................................................................. 16
- **References** ................................................................. 16
- **Appendix 1** Assessment activities ................................ 17

## List of Tables and Diagrams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table/Diagram</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Cold and hot learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagram 1</td>
<td>Effective workplace learning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagram 2</td>
<td>Model of Student-driven Three-way Learning Contract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEARNING IN WORKPLACE CONTEXTS – TEACHERS’ GUIDE
TO THE ONLINE PRACTICUM PREPARATION PROGRAMME

Introduction
Cooper, Jones & Orrell (1998) have found that many students are ill prepared for work placements. Engagement at conferences and in colloquia with other Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom universities has confirmed this. The significant educational, legal and ethical dilemmas highlighted by this lack of adequate preparation were the motivation for designing this Online Practicum Preparation Programme.

We have three arguments for better preparation for students undertaking work placements. Firstly, high quality preparation assists students to become agents of their own learning. It enables them to reduce the variability in learning quality in their placements caused by the host organisation’s unpredictable conditions and variable expertise in hosting and supervising students. Quality learning outcomes can be assured if students are well prepared prior to the placement so that they better understand the context in which they must learn, can assess their own strengths and limitations in relation to work placement expectations and demands, and have established personal learning goals.

Secondly, there are considerable potential physical and psychological risks involved in placing students in host organisations. Adequate duty of care requires that all students studying in areas not protected by their university’s policies must be well informed and prepared to manage potential risks.

Thirdly, organisations that are prepared and able to provide high quality learning placements for students are scarce, and there is a high, costly turnover in available placements. Cost in academic time and effort to establish and maintain effective, mutually beneficial partnerships between university disciplines and related host organisations is concurrent with the concern with locating appropriate placements. The optimum learning environment can only be achieved by creating strong partnerships with the workplace organisation. The continued willingness of organisations to take students depends on student behaviour and demeanour on these placements. It is important, therefore, that students behave professionally. This contributes to enhancing their university’s profile in the community, as its students’ social and learning behaviour shows that they are well prepared for the work environment.

Preparing students for the practicum
Students need preparation in work-based skills and awareness, specific workplace skills, their legal and statutory responsibilities, personal wellbeing and safety, safe workplace practices and work literacy. They also need orientation to the profession or industry in profession and industry structure, professional liability, ethics, supervision and marketing.

Students need to be prepared to enable them to observe and notice what is significant and learn from their experiences. They need to learn critical reasoning and problem solving skills as well as developing the ability to learn from their peers. Students also need to acquire awareness of the implications of their own cultural orientation and an understanding of the basis of cultural difference. Added to this they need to acquire the skills for managing difference sensitively. All of these attributes are essential in the workplace learning environment.

Lack of focused preparation can cause an increase in students’ stress levels and affect their performance during the placement. This lack of preparation for successful practicum learning could be construed to stem from an assumption that effective learning in the practicum would merely require an extension of traditional classroom strategies (Orrell, Cooper & Jones, 1998). The processes involved in teaching, supervision, learning and assessment in work placements, however, are quite different from learning in classrooms due to the following factors:
1. **The student is not necessarily the central concern.** The workplace learning context involves multiple and sometimes competing interests, including: the host organisation; their clients’ needs and interests; the workplace supervisor and their ongoing, work role responsibilities; the student’s learning needs; the university’s requirements; and sometimes professional organisation requirements. These need to be explicitly monitored and negotiated.

2. **The learning experiences are often unique, unpredictable, immediate and transient in nature.** This being the case, orientation, reflection and debriefing need to be central teaching/learning strategies.

3. **High risk situations are often involved.** This might involve patient care, the handling of dangerous chemicals or machinery, or the care of clients in treacherous environments. In classroom learning conditions, students can practice new skills or ‘be left to get it wrong’ in order to identify what they don’t know and have yet to learn. This is not feasible in high risk situations, and students may not get the opportunity to assume full responsibility for tasks or to identify their limitations.

The terms ‘cold learning’ (classroom) and ‘hot learning’ (work-place) are often used to illustrate the differences between classroom and workplace learning (see Table 1).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1 Cold and hot learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Cold Learning’</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Classroom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning-centred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All parties involved in learning, teaching, supervision and assessment in workplace learning need to be explicitly aware of these conditions. In addition, a shared understanding of the pedagogical basis for the work placement is needed. This supports an intentional approach. The modules in the Online Practicum Preparation Programme have been designed around Webber’s (1998a: 18) four key questions that elucidate the pedagogical framework for workplace learning:

1. What are students expected to learn?
2. How are students expected to learn?
3. What is needed to create the optimum learning environment?
4. How are students expected to link theory and practice?

**Pedagogical basis for work placement**

One of the risks of workplace learning is that many students give it pre-eminent status in relation to more theoretical classroom learning because they see it as being immediately relevant to their lives and future careers. Our aim is to ensure students can combine their theoretical classroom learning with the practical, situational learning that is necessary to survive and be productive in the workplace, and vice versa, since theory is derived from practice while at the same time challenging it, and practice challenges theory while enabling re-conceptualisation and theory building. Where this is achieved, students will become effective workplace learners (Diagram 1). ‘Linkage’ activities such as using specific theories to resolve practice dilemmas can help students achieve this.
What are students expected to learn?

As stated already, in the workplace the student is not necessarily the central concern; the learning experiences are often unique, unpredictable, immediate and transient; and high risk situations may be involved. This makes it difficult to establish a clearly predictable learning programme and optimum learning environment. Although a proposed work plan needs to be formulated for each placement, students will need to develop their own learning agenda (within limits), and demonstrate their motivation to learn and make this apparent to those around them. This requires anticipation of possible situations and preparation in relation to ‘knowing’ the host organisation. Thus, orientation, reflection and debriefing become essential teaching/learning strategies for positive, effective workplace learning experiences. The Programme modules endeavour to provide the orientation and reflection needed to prepare students for integrating theoretical (classroom and research) and practical (in the workplace) learning. Module 5 in particular contains strategies to help students debrief in the face of difficulties.

Although each of you will have different requirements for specific skills and attributes your students will learn, depending on the profession, the following model of student learning that is appropriate for the workplace learning environment can help your students, in conjunction with yourself and the workplace provider, establish a learning plan and create the best possible learning environment. This is the ‘Student-driven Three-way Learning Contract’, which states clearly the placement’s agreed expectations, criteria and learning outcomes, assessment and credit for the learning achieved. It is agreed between the student, the university and the workplace (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2  Model of Student-driven Three-way Learning Contract
(Adapted from Marshall & Mill, 1993, Fig. 24.1: 144)
In this model, the student negotiates with both the host organisation and the university to formulate a contract, signed by all parties, clearly stating the agreed expectations and learning outcomes. It is essential to have such a ‘road map’ as a guide to effective workplace learning, due to the often unpredictable nature of the workplace learning environment. It spells out what students are expected/expecting to learn and the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and opens lines of communication that need to be kept open throughout the placement and evaluation period. Knowledge of the relevant profession’s regulatory standards/rules will be part of the host organisation’s expectations of students. While responsibility rests with the student, it is the academic supervisor’s duty to ensure that the student is aware of what is required and what is or is not permitted, for example rights of appearance or to give advice (legal), the right to operate (medical), and the right to perform certain tasks or attend events.

The ‘Work-based Learning Process’ is another student learning model that incorporates preparation; negotiation and agreement of the learning plan; reviews and updates of the designated learning outcomes; and assessment. Again, this involves communication between the student, the university (through the student’s academic supervisor) and the host organisation to negotiate and clarify the learning plan and intended learning outcomes with the aim of creating an optimum learning environment.

Processes and learning plans will differ according to the university, topic and/or profession, but there are some areas of knowledge, attributes and skills that have been identified as essential if students are to become effective participants in the workplace. The Online Practicum Preparation Programme provides information and activities to help students, as workplace learners, research and reflect on these areas of knowledge, attributes and skills:

- **Organisational, professional, legal, ethical, work-based and career literacy**
  - understand organisational values and priorities;
  - understand Occupational Health and Safety, Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment legislation, and policies and procedures related to these in the particular workplace;
  - understand legal and ethical requirements, e.g. in relation to client records, client lists, trade secrets and intellectual property [IP] (patents, new inventions/discoveries, methods)
  - ‘fine line’ between experience gained ‘on the job’ and stealing a trade secret (engineering and computer science). Who has the legal right to ownership of IP;
  - understand the risks in the practicum;
  - understand the profession’s expectations;
  - understand career orientation through understanding organisational, legal, ethical and professional literacy, and how their experience in the workplace will fit with their job and future career.

- **Being prepared for uncertainty (being an ‘adaptive learner’)**
  - demonstrate flexibility and understand different pathways and compromises.

- **Diplomacy, power and etiquette**
  - recognise power relationships and their own situation as students who are guests in the agency;
  - respect status and roles, rights and responsibilities;
  - be aware of their own rights and responsibilities in the practicum.

- **Valuing difference**
  - affirm and understand different cultures;
  - respect perceptions, values and needs that are different from their own;
  - be able to suspend judgement and strongly felt personal views. For many students, the practicum may be the first occasion when they come into contact with Aboriginal people.

- **Working and learning with others**
  - listen, respond and collaborate;
  - seek and attend to feedback;
- be prepared to contribute.

**Effective teamwork and partnerships**
- practise mature, assertive and responsible behaviour in teams;
- be capable of adopting leading and following roles;
- demonstrate effective partnership skills.

**Learning from good and bad experiences**
- demonstrate a capacity to think ‘outside the square’;
- demonstrate initiative and creativity - are not ‘rule driven’.

**Being a responsible learner**
- know one’s own capabilities and limitations;
- practise safely, having regard for the safety of themselves and others when meeting the learning agenda.

**Being an intentional learner**
- establish what they are interested in learning;
- question how theory and practice fit together;
- consider how the experience will fit with their job and future career;
- direct the process and take initiative.

**Being a motivated learner**
- ensure they are knowledgeable about the host organisation;
- have a CV prepared;
- speak confidently to the supervisor – ask questions;
- can put themselves in the situation and thus anticipate and prepare.

**Self-awareness**
- able to generate affective, cognitive and social questions about the work context;
- question own emotional and behavioural responses to people, actions and situations;
- know personal values, strengths and limitations in the workplace context.

**Noticing**
- able to observe and comment about what are significant features in the work context;
- can make and justify suppositions in that context;
- notice what is ordinary as well as extraordinary in the workplace context.

**Problem solving**
- can frame and state a problem;
- can recognise the dimensions of a problem and use different lenses to analyse it;
- can recognise that there are different approaches to solving problems.

Examples of specific workplace skills include interviewing skills; communication skills; negotiation skills; clinical skills; development of web pages; designing business plans; quality assurance, risk management, asset management; and obtaining support.

**How are students expected to learn?**

**Negotiating a learning plan**
Students can be required to negotiate their learning by writing a student-driven learning contract (e.g. Diagram 2) that outlines their learning goals and indicates that:

- they are there to learn, not just to pass;
- they understand the supervision process and how it contributes to student learning by paying a pre-practicum visit to the host organisation and meeting with the supervisor;
- they understand their rights and responsibilities as students.
Action and reflection
Students learn not only by doing but also by reflecting on their experiences. This could be ongoing throughout the practicum, enabling students to relate theory to practice and in some instances to challenge theory by critically analysing it in the context of what they have learnt in practice. Thus they become effective, valuable workplace learners. Important strategies for helping students ‘learn to learn’ in the workplace setting include: reflecting on all learning (both theoretical and workplace practical); keeping log books and writing journals (a complete record of their work); thinking about reports and other required paper work; working with colleagues; and utilising student guides and handouts. The Online Practicum Preparation Programme has been designed to encourage students to create and keep a Portfolio of useful learning resources, based on research and reflective activities.

Peer learning
Boud (n.d.) suggests that groups of students, usually from the same organisation/host organisation, get together to learn how to set up learning contracts and negotiations, and to use peers as support for their ideas. A support network of learners is set up, rather than a network of employees. This idea is carried through in the tips for students throughout the Programme. Peers can help prepare students for feelings associated with learning in the workplace, such as being watched, not being perfect, not getting it right the first time and being dependent on others (Boud, Keough & Walker, 1985).

Observation
Observation and taking notice of a particular host organisation’s culture, new ways of practising, particular practice standards and personal reactions to new experiences are all useful in preparing students for their workplace learning experience. The reality of the learning environment and the learning strategies assist students to notice and intervene when necessary.

Case study method
Linking classroom work with experiential practice is necessary to help students learn about what to expect in the workplace (workplace literacy). The case-study method, where students’ practicum experiences are used in the classroom as the basis for critical reflection using new theoretical frameworks, has been found to be an effective strategy.

Evaluation
Supervisors should encourage ongoing feedback from students during the practicum regarding their ability to communicate clearly and provide effective, helpful instruction to the student. This student evaluation of the supervisor can then be used in a three-way discussion between the student, supervisor and coordinator as a strategy for ensuring the practicum learning goals are achieved. It is important that students understand they have the right, and should be encouraged to question supervisors’ feedback. This is a unique learning opportunity for the students and supervisors, and often the best learning results from the student questioning feedback.

Orientation and induction sessions for remote placements
Some students need special orientation sessions to give them a ‘taste’ of what it will be like to learn in their intended practicum setting. For example, nursing and teaching students undertaking placements in Alice Springs and the Pitjantjatjara lands undertake special classroom workshops on cultural safety, drug and alcohol issues and first aid before they go. When they arrive in Alice Springs, they participate in another week-long orientation program about cultural awareness, common health issues and outback occupational health and safety issues. Thus, the classroom situation is transported to the practical situation to enable students to learn through acclimatisation before the actual practicum.
What is needed to create the optimum learning environment?
Thorough preparation of students, supervisors and the host organisation is the key to creating the optimum learning environment. While we can only prepare host organisations to a certain extent, we can ensure our students are thoroughly prepared for positive learning experiences in those organisations. This is the main aim of the Online Practicum Preparation Programme. The following strategies aimed at creating the optimum learning environment take into account the added pressures on students when undertaking their work placements.

Effective communication and collaboration
High levels of communication and collaboration between the university (practicum coordinator), the host organisation (supervisor) and the student are necessary to enable an optimum learning environment. Establishing a good working relationship between the university and host organisation is essential. An environment in which students and supervisors are aware that they can approach the practicum coordinator openly to discuss any issues without fear of repercussions enables optimum learning.

Shared philosophy of student learning
Ideally, the host organisation will share the university’s philosophy about student-centred learning. In such an environment, the workplace supervisor will be given ample time away from their normal duties to supervise the student effectively and encourage them to take the initiative in their practicum learning. Support from the workplace supervisor, as well as from the coordinator and other academic staff creates an environment in which the student feels confident to learn. Where the organisation does not share this philosophy, thorough preparation of the student in what to expect from the placement can help the student create an effective learning environment.

Ongoing supervision, evaluation and feedback
In the optimum learning environment, the supervisor’s practice philosophy and framework is compatible with the university’s goals/objectives. He/she will engage in the formulation of a Learning Plan with the student at the beginning of the practicum, engage in a formal educational assessment with the student at the end of the practicum and provide the coordinator with an evaluation of the student. The supervisor will be routinely and regularly available to the student, will ensure a contingency plan is in place for times when he/she is not ‘reasonably’ available, will attend formal meetings with the student for the purpose of educational supervision and will be responsible for the student’s learning activities in the host organisation.

Safe environment
The optimum learning environment will be safe, not only in relation to Occupational Health and Safety issues, but also in relation to cultural safety and freedom from harassment or bullying.

Clarification of expectations of all parties – learning contracts
The amount of time involved in undertaking the practicum can become a major problem for some students if they are ill prepared to expect and cope with it. This can have a detrimental effect on their learning. Ambiguity about expectations has the potential to create a stressful learning environment. Therefore, the three-way learning contract between the student, the organisation and the university, stating clearly the intended time frames, expected and agreed learning outcomes and other agreed conditions (hour of work, remuneration etc.) is vitally important to creating the optimum learning environment. Unrealistic or conflicting expectations, anxiety levels and communication problems are reduced if both the organisation and the students are well prepared for the placement.

Reducing anxiety in beginning students
Anxiety can limit students’ learning in the practicum. Awareness of this problem and offering strategies to help students overcome anxiety are essential in creating the optimum learning environment. Some of these strategies include: clarifying expectations of student performance in
the practicum; stressing that the practicum is a learning experience, not a trial; explaining the rationale behind assessment; including stress-management as part of the curriculum; and using peers to counsel students (Mitchell & Kampfe, 1993). Asking past students to share their practicum experiences with current students is also an effective strategy in reducing student anxiety about the practicum.

Avoiding conflict in the practicum
Conflict is most likely to arise in the areas of dealing with theory and practice tensions arising from the different frames of reference of the university (education-oriented) and host organisation (service oriented) (Bogo & Vayda, 1998: 29). Thorough preparation of students, including making them aware of such potential conflict and giving them strategies to deal with it can help lessen its impact and the conflict can be used positively as a learning experience. The student’s ability to learn from negative as well as positive experiences in the workplace setting can help create the optimum learning environment, as the student must draw on their ability to use theory and practice in tandem to overcome problems.

Positive role socialisation
The student’s relationship with authority figures (the supervisor, the coordinator and other host organisation staff) has an important bearing on creating the optimum workplace learning environment. Age and power differentials, acceptance or otherwise of students airing different opinions, and making allowances for disabilities can all impact on the student’s learning experience. Preparing students for ‘difference’ prior to placement can help overcome these types of problems.

Preparing students for difference
‘Difference’ may also lead to conflict in the practicum. Students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse attitudes to learning, requiring coordinators to constantly review curricula and teaching/learning strategies; to liaise and negotiate more effectively with the students, the university and the host organisations; and to implement support for supervisors. The reverse of this is that the practicum may be the first time students have had any concentrated contact with people who they see as different. Affirming and understanding different cultures is an important capacity for students to acquire. Students can be prepared for this by undertaking cultural studies and workshops with their fellow students from diverse backgrounds.

Programme flexibility to accommodate students’ needs
Programme flexibility is essential in the interests of effective student learning. In most practicum programs across Flinders University, academic units make flexible arrangements in the way placements are organised so that they accommodate students’ needs. Arrangements include the integration of workplace learning and classroom learning, and group placement and collaborative learning.

Flexible delivery
Where students complete placements in rural and remote areas of Australia and overseas, ensuring there are opportunities for real-time teacher and student interaction helps create the optimum learning environment. This can be achieved through audio-conferencing, video-conferencing and online chat sessions.

The Programme
This 5-module web-based Online Practicum Preparation Programme is designed to provide a generic guide for teachers and students to explore some of the major issues in ‘preparation for practicum’ teaching and learning, based on the pedagogy discussed above. Common elements for all disciplines have been identified.

As a stand-alone programme, the five modules combined will:
• Prepare students to learn from experiences and improve the quality of their learning (noticing, observation, intention, dynamics, feelings).
• Provide a common set of learning activities that override the particularities of the placement (record keeping, portfolio preparation, self-monitoring, reflective processes and debriefing).
• Prepare students for safe and competent practice (first aid, personal safety, risk management strategies, awareness of bullying and sexual harassment).
• Ensure that students are responsive to the reality of organisational and workplace demands (legal, administrative, procedural and cultural workplace issues).
• Enable students to incorporate university learning into the workplace and to relate learning from the workplace to theory.
• Enable students to respond to difference in their industry placement (age, race, culture, gender).
• Provide an orientation to, and support for learning for Flinders students attending remote and overseas placements, and to orient overseas students to the realities of practicum learning in Australia.

Each module contains research and reflective activities relevant to the discussions presented, together with examples and additional resources for further interest.

Above all, these modules aim to provide students with a solid grounding in the above requisites for a rewarding practicum experience, enabling them to become intentional, effective learners in the practicum context because they are:
• Prepared for active, intentional learning in the practicum.
• Work literate.
• Able to demonstrate increased knowledge and skills including teamwork, appreciation of difference and cultural perspectives, problem solving and application of discipline specific knowledge in the workplace.
• Supported through a central web of academic assistance and the collaborative efforts of all students.
• Provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to respond safely and effectively to the social, emotional, psychological and physical risks endemic in the practicum.
• Provided with ongoing access to information, support, expert advice from staff, and interaction with staff and other students during their practicum experience (workplace supervisors are also provided with this support).
• Provided with a comprehensive introduction to practicum learning in South Australia - oriented to the cultural expectations and realities of the non-university learning environment so that they can improve their chances of having a successful and meaningful practicum (International students doing practicum in South Australia).

How to use the modules
These modules can be used in two ways:

1. As they are in WebCT as a stand-alone topic for all students (overseas, off campus and on campus) who are preparing for their practicum experiences.

2. As componential learning objects that can be selected and adapted (in form and content) for particular educational discipline, industry and professional requirements, and online platforms. They can also be adapted to off-line print medium in a workbook.

The modules have been set up to enable you to modify them to suit your specific purposes. You can also modify the introductory information to suit both your needs and those of your students.
Activities/assessment
A series of activities has been devised for students’ participation. These activities are also designed as assessment components for you to use in any way that suits your assessment requirements and methods. While some of the activities that demonstrate the discussion content are profession-specific, others are generic. You can adapt/replace any or all of these to suit your profession/workplace environment and intended teaching/learning outcomes. All of the activities are included in Appendix 1 for you to have a look at before you begin to use the modules.

When students have completed the activities, either for assessment, discussion or reference purposes, they should place them in the resource portfolio they will take with them to their placement. This portfolio will act as a ready reference resource, particularly in terms of ‘survival’ checklists, rights and responsibilities, and workplace scenarios/dilemmas.

Learning outcomes
The intended learning outcomes for each module are listed below. You may wish to adapt these to suit your student-specific and/or profession/industry-specific needs.

M1 Getting to know more about organisations - Understanding the host organisation and its contexts
• Refine choice of placement based on personal interests and knowledge of organisation.
• Profile the host organisation’s structure and functioning.
• Identify the host organisation’s global context.
• Generate questions to be investigated on the placement.
• Generate a resource of useful information and support for engaging with the host organisation.

M2 Preparing to go - Organising yourself and getting ready
Identify all practical matters that must be attended to prior to placement, including:
• Domestic, work and travel arrangements.
• Accommodation and services available.
• Pre-requisites such as first aid certificates, police checks, immunisations.
• Research overseas placements.
• Research Australian information (for foreign students doing placements in Australia).
• Research web information related to practicum preparation.
• Preparation of an up-to-date CV.

M3 Negotiating workplace cultures - Developing skills for effective workplace relationships
Review personal readiness for the placement in terms of culture and interpersonal skills in relation to:
• Workplace cultures.
• Workplace etiquette.
• Cultural diversity in the workplace and how to work well with this.
• Communication issues.
• Diversity, discrimination and client rights – fair and equal treatment.

M4 Learning in workplace contexts – Preparing to learn in the practicum
Review personal readiness for the placement in terms of understanding:
• The differences between classroom and workplace learning.
• How to use learning from the classroom in the workplace, and vice versa.
• Self as active learner: motivation; intentionality; self-awareness; adaptability.

M5 Surviving the work placement
Identify potential safety issues – physical and personal – and strategies for managing difficulties and ending the placement positively:
• Profile the risk factors in the host organisation.
• Identify the Occupational Health and Safety guidelines for the host organisation, and the strategies and resources for maintaining them.
• Identify potential legal and ethical matters of concern for the host organisation, and for its relationship with staff and clients.
• Identify strategies for managing personal difficulties, including organisational problems, workplace conflict and stress.
• Develop a strategy for ending positively the placement and the relationships with staff and clients.

Module map
A complete map of the modules is provided here to give you an overview before accessing them.

Module 1 Getting to Know More about Organisations – Understanding the Host Organisation and its Contexts
Aim: To assist students to become familiar with their host organisation and influential conditions. Resources are provided for gaining information about the range of economic, political, industrial and social issues that influence it. Additional resources are provided for: international students to investigate and understand the Australian workplace; Australian students going to placements in other countries; understanding rural contexts; and understanding Indigenous contexts.

Teacher’s Voice
Getting to Know More about Organisations

Discussion:
Basic information about organisations
Discussion:
Organisational contexts

Resources
Websites about organisations that take practicum students
Additional information about the structure of organisations

Activities
1a Web research – explore organisations to refine you choice of placement
1b Understanding the internal structure of organisations
1c Q & A about your host organisation
1d Getting to know your community
1e Reflection – impact of economic & political changes on your host organisation

Assessment
Module 2  Preparing to Go – Organising Yourself and Getting Ready

Aim: To assist students compile a ‘housekeeping’ checklist of practical matters they must attend to before beginning their placement.

Teacher’s Voice
Preparing to Go

Discussion:
Local/metropolitan placement

Discussion:
Rural/remote placement

Discussion:
Overseas placement

Discussion:
Foreign students doing placements in Australia

Resources
Guided checklists of ‘basics’
Websites and additional information resources specific to each of the above types of placement

Activities
2a Research the given resources and seek others to create a brief summary of the community you will be working in: demographic information

2b Using the research from 2a, information in the discussions and reference back to Module 1, create a personal preparation checklist relevant to your placement and an up-to-date CV.
Module 3  Negotiating Workplace Cultures - Developing Skills for Effective Workplace Relationships

**Aim:** To assist students to work with others in a way that is respectful of their rights and their culture. Students will be assisted to appreciate their own worldview and to perceive how diverse worldviews differ from their own.

**Teacher’s Voice**

**Negotiating Workplace Cultures**

**Discussion: Workplace etiquette**

**Discussion: Workplace culture**

**Discussion: Cultural diversity in workplace or professional settings**

**Discussion: Communication issues**

**Discussion: Working well with cultural diversity**

**Discussion: Diversity & rights**

**Resources**

Websites and additional information specific to each of the above discussions

**Activities**

3.1a Create a personal workplace etiquette chart.

3.2a Describe differences between workplace and university cultures. What is the impact of the differences? How will you deal with these?

3.3a & b Cultural diversity scenarios
   - a: race & ethnicity – what action would you take? What did you learn?
   - b: gender – discuss your opinion.

3.4a & b Communication
   - a: cultural audit Q & A.
   - b: ethnocentrism – describe an example. When did you recognise ethnocentricity in this? How/why did your attitude change?

3.5a & b Cultural competence – working well with cultural diversity
   - a: cross-cultural communication – read given resource and make suggestions for your practicum setting.
   - b: cultural safety in workplace – list examples, compare with Public Service resource.

3.6a Clients’ rights – select one cross-cultural situation described in the module. Explain relevance to this situation of charter items given in the activity.
Module 4 Learning in Workplace Contexts – Preparing to Learn in the Practicum

**Aim:** To assist students to identify the different learning challenges with which they will be confronted in the host organisation, and help prepare them for engaging in the supervisory relationship. They will be assisted in exploring their own attributes as a learner and adapting these to become effective, intentional learners in the workplace.

**Teacher’s Voice Learning in Workplace Contexts**

**Discussion:** Preparing to learn in the practicum

**Discussion:** Motivation

**Discussion:** Intentionality

**Discussion:** Self-awareness

**Discussion:** Adaptability

**Resources**

Websites and additional information specific to each of the above discussions

**Activities**

4a Orienting yourself to the practicum experience – Q&A

4.1a Reflect on Motivation - cite examples of motivation from your life experiences. Fill in the chart in relation to the 7 given habits of motivation.

4.2a Intentionality – identify and write 4 learning objectives in your practicum. Chart these.

4.3a Self-awareness – complete the self-awareness checklist.

4.4a Adaptability – preparing for uncertainty. Think about occasions when you have had to deal with unexpected situations. Use the charts for when you handled the situation well and when you didn’t. Compare. Log daily events.
Module 5 Surviving the Work Placement

Aim: To assist students to become familiar with the occupational health and safety guidelines for the host organisation; to understand the legal and ethical implications of these; to provide resources for maintaining constructive personal and interpersonal relationships; and to advance and end the placement positively.

Activities

5.1 Introductory activity – identify OHS issues in your practicum. Surf the Web for work safety issues or incidents identified in your profession/vocation. Can you identify any others? Reflect on how you might prevent such issues or incidents.

5.1a & b OHS
   a: Complete new employee OHS checklist.
   b: OHS scenario – choose your actions in the given situation and justify.

5.2a Privacy & its application
   Review privacy principles. How do these affect you in your profession? Complete chart.

5.3a, b, c Activities about organisational and interpersonal aspects of the practicum
   a: case study – organisational aspects of practicum – unsuitable work.
   b: scenario - interpersonal aspects of practicum – bullying.
   c: organisational & interpersonal - language and cultural difficulties.

5.4a Reflect on how to end the placement/relationships positively.
Conclusion
This guide provides the background information behind the reasons for creating the Online Practicum Preparation Programme, the pedagogy on which it is based and the ‘road map’ for using the Programme successfully. As with any project of this type, the Programme is a living document. We hope you are able to adopt it and adapt it so that both yourselves and your students enjoy the practicum and gain the maximum learning benefit from the experience.

References


Boud, D. n.d., *Work based learning in higher education: can we respond to the challenge?*


Appendix 1  Assessment activities

Module 1

1A Web research – explore organisations to refine your choice of placement.

1B Activity on understanding internal structure of organisations

1C Q & A about your host organisation

1D Getting to know your community

1E Reflection – impact of economic & political changes on your host organisation.
Module 2

2A&B

A: Research the given resources and seek others to create a brief summary of the community you will be working in: demographic information.

B: Using the research from 2A, information in the discussions and reference back to Module 1, create a personal preparation checklist relevant to your placement and an up-to-date CV.
Module 3

3.1A Etiquette checklist – identify new/strange aspects of the workplace and create personal rules to deal with these.

3.2A Describe workplace and university cultures. How do workers see University culture? How do you see workplace culture? What is the impact of the differences? How will you deal with differences?

3.3A&B Cultural diversity scenarios
A: (race & ethnicity) – what action would you take? What did you learn?
B: (gender) – discuss your opinion.

3.4A&B Barriers to communication
A: cultural audit Q & A.
B: ethnocentrism – describe an example. When did you recognise ethnocentricity in this? How/why did your attitude change?

3.5A&B Cultural competence – working well with cultural diversity
A: cross-cultural communication – read given resource and make suggestions for your practicum setting.
B: cultural safety in the workplace – list examples, compare with Public Service resource.

3.6A Clients’ rights – select one cross-cultural situation described in the module. Explain relevance to this situation of charter items given in the activity.
Module 4

4A Orienting yourself to the practicum experience – Q&A.

4.1A Reflect on Motivation - cite examples of motivation from your life experiences. Fill in the chart in relation to the 7 given habits of motivation.

4.2A Intentionality – identify and write 4 learning objectives in your practicum. Chart these.

4.3A Self-awareness – complete the self-awareness checklist.

4.4A Adaptability – Preparing for uncertainty. Think about occasions when you have had to deal with unexpected situations. Use the charts for when you handled the situation well, and one for when you didn’t. Compare. Log daily events.
Module 5

5.1 Introductory activity, working safely – identify OH&S issues in your practicum. Surf the Web for work safety issues or incidents identified in your profession/vocation. Add others. Reflect on how you might prevent such issues or incidents.

5.1A&B
A: Complete new employee OHS checklist.
B: OHS scenario - choose your actions and justify your choices.

5.2A Privacy and its application. Review privacy principles. How do these affect you in your profession? Complete the chart.

5.3A, B, C Activities about organisational and interpersonal aspects of the practicum
A: case study – organisational aspects of practicum – unsuitable work.
B: scenario - interpersonal aspects of practicum – bullying.
C: organisational & interpersonal - language and cultural difficulties.

5.4A Reflect on how to end the placement/relationships positively