Career Development Learning: 
Maximising the contribution of Work Integrated Learning 
to the student experience

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1. DRIVERS

• Successful transitions throughout the student lifecycle can be enhanced through Career Development Learning (CDL) which contributes to career clarity, engagement with studies, and reflective learning in relation to graduate attributes and employability.

• Research supports the view that students’ and graduates’ satisfaction with their higher education experience is related to their preparation for the world-of-work and CDL makes a positive contribution to that preparation.

• CDL contributes to the effective interface and partnership between higher education and the world-of-work, and teaching and learning within that space.

• A clear and coherent sector wide vision of how CDL can most effectively contribute to the student lifecycle and Work Integrated Learning (WiL) would present new avenues toward the enhancement of students’ experience and outcomes for higher education.

2. OUTCOMES

• An international literature review in the areas of: CDL; WiL; and their connections to student transitions.

• Consultations (online and in person) with key Australian and international stakeholders, such as university career development practitioners, WiL managers, field placement staff, co-operative education staff, and academics delivering for-credit subjects.

• A national action research Symposium, in June 2008, with national and international participation, including the production of related background papers in the domains of CDL, WiL, Service Learning and Graduate Attributes.

• A Forum to consult with employers/professional associations and students.

• Construction of a model for CDL which has the potential to be integrated into the curriculum in Australian universities, and maximises the leverage from WiL opportunities.

• The development of principles, exemplars of good practice, and common language which underpin the outcomes of the action research process to date.

• Pre production stages of a Practice Manual for Higher Education Institutions. This will be in the form of a summary print Manual and a supporting website with related documents and resources.

3. CHALLENGES

• Sufficient funds to facilitate the provision of resources and information to support sector wide good practice.

• Development of a common language to facilitate the engagement of academics, employers, and career development and WiL practitioners in dialogue to progress curriculum innovations which incorporate CDL processes.

• Acceptance that curriculum design for work integrated learning experiences should incorporate career development learning to maximise the experience and to empower students to manage their career transitions.

4. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

• The development of resources which can be utilised by academics, curriculum designers, careers services staff, and employers.

• Validation by the sector that extra curricular activities and other workplace experiences (outside of the curriculum) are relevant to the student experience.

• Adequate resources to further develop programs and resources which can be accessed and utilised by the sector.

• Government and industry support for further examination and sharing of ongoing good practice.