

College of Science and Engineering

Work Integrated Learning
Placement Host Handbook



JAMES COOK
UNIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA



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What is Work Integrated Learning?

The College of Science and Engineering (CSE) at James Cook University is committed to training and preparing students to be productive and valued members of the workforce. To achieve this aim, our undergraduate and Masters level qualifications have a Work Integrated Learning approach designed to develop employability skills throughout the degree by providing practical learning experiences and increasing the interaction of future employers and students through placement experiences.

Student Placement is a formal component of JCU degree programs that integrates theoretical and academic learning with application in a workplace. It aims to enrich the university experience and increase student employability with hands-on experience in a workplace relevant to the student's field of study. Students are assessed for successful completion of their placements.

This Handbook outlines the requirements for placements and details what Placement Hosts need to support a successful placement. The College of Science and Engineering sincerely hopes you can partner with us as a Placement Host to successfully mentor and foster the future workforce of our regions.

What are the benefits of Student Placements?

Student placements are intended to be a mutually beneficial arrangement. Placement Hosts benefit from the fresh and innovative ideas and cognitive diversity that students can bring to a workplace. They can expect that students they host will contribute meaningfully to workplace goals and missions. Additionally, Placement Hosts can benefit first-hand from the work readiness of future graduates and may identify promising candidates for future employment. Supervising a placement student can be a valuable professional development opportunity for Placement Host staff. Hosting student placements can also form a bridge to building research partnerships and other types of strong external relationships.

For students, a placement can improve employability and may provide a pathway into employment. Students will experience real-world workplace requirements and expectations relevant to their field of study.

Student Placements in the College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

Student Placements are central to James Cook University's learning and teaching approach. As part of the Academy, the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) promotes, supports, and administers quality teaching, hands-on experiences, industry placements, and research in the areas of:

- Anthropology
- Aquaculture Science & Technology
- Archaeology
- Biodiversity Assessment & Management
- Chemistry
- Corporate Environmental Management
- Data Science
- Disaster Resilience
- Earth Sciences
- Engineering*
- Environmental & Marine Geosciences
- Environmental Practice
- Geology
- Information Technology
- Land & Water Management
- Marine Biology
- Mathematics
- Molecular & Cell Biology
- Physics
- Zoology & Ecology

**Engineering placements are currently administered through a different process – please contact the [Student Placements Team](#) to discuss*

A Student Placement activity needs to meet at least three of the following criteria:

- integration of theory with workplace practice,
- engagement with industry/community,
- planned, authentic activities, and
- purposeful links to the curriculum.

Student Placements must be approved by James Cook University before the student undertakes the placement, and the placement must be formally recorded.

Types of Student Placements

JCU is seeking Student Placement opportunities that enhance and maximise the employability of our students. Placements can be completed as either full time or part time, unpaid or paid based on the Placement Hosts and student's needs. There are numerous options and styles of placements depending on the workplace and outcomes to be achieved. Some examples are listed below.

Degree	Placement Hours	Mode	Time Period	Possible types of Placement Activities
Bachelor of Science	130 hours	Full time or part time	flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • client-driven projects • industry-focused research (existing or new) • laboratory-based work • fieldwork • cadetships and internships • design sprint • group projects • multidisciplinary projects • internships
Bachelor of Marine Science				
Bachelor of Planning	140 hours	Full time or part time	flexible	
Bachelor of IT	100 to 130 hours	Full time or part time	flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must be in an engineering unit and be supervised by an engineer
Bachelor of Engineering	60 days	Full time or part time	flexible	
Master of Engineering (Professional)	130 hours	Full time or part time	Feb – May or Aug – Oct	
Master of Engineering Management	130 hours	Full time or part time	Feb-May; May-Aug; Sep-Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internship • client-driven project • industry driven project
Master of Marine Biology	420 hours	Full time	Feb – May or Aug – Oct	
Master of Science (Professional)	420 hours	Full time	Feb – May or Aug – Oct	
Master of Data Science (Professional)	2 x 100 hours or 1 x 200 hours	Full time or part time	flexible over 7 weeks	

The Placement Process

How to get started

The JCU [Student Placements Team](#) sources and administratively supports student placements across the Academy. This team is the first point of contact for any placement related queries. The [Student Placements Team](#) will contact relevant prospective Placement Hosts periodically to determine whether the Placement Host is interested in offering a placement opportunity.

Upon review of this document if a Placement Host is interested in supporting a student, they can complete the attached Expression of Interest form (EOI) providing details of a proposed placement opportunity. If a Placement Host would like to further discuss the suitability of a potential placement opportunity prior to completing an Expression of Interest, the Placement Host can contact the [Student Placements Team](#).

All EOIs will be reviewed and assessed for student suitability and to ensure the proposed placement meets the necessary criteria – some clarification or further information may be requested. All placement opportunities will be advertised to eligible students using the details provided on the EOI form. We encourage Placement Hosts to provide specific details about the proposed placement to attract students whose career aspirations closely align with the learning experiences that will be provided. Placement Hosts can choose to host one or more students either at the same time, or various times throughout the year.

Below is a timeline overview that indicates the timeline of most placements for starting with sourcing placements through their completion. Note that this timetable does not apply for Bachelor of Engineering or Master of Data Science students.

Study period	Start	End	Sourcing placements begins	Placement opportunities available for students to view and apply	Applications close and placement hosts receive student applications	Placement hosts to interview students by:	Placement Confirmed and all required docs completed	Mid review survey sent	Final review survey sent
SP3	02/01/23	17/02/23	12/09/22	07/11/22	28/11/22	12/12/22	19/12/23	27/01/23	24/02/23
SP1	20/02/23	26/05/23	12/09/22	12/12/22	16/01/23	30/01/23	06/02/23	31/03/23	02/06/23
SP7	19/06/23	21/07/23	10/04/23	24/04/23	15/05/23	29/05/23	05/06/23	07/07/23	04/08/23
SP2	24/07/23	17/11/23	10/04/23	29/05/23	19/06/23	03/07/23	10/07/23	01/09/23	01/12/23
SP10	20/11/23	12/01/24	11/09/23	25/09/23	16/10/23	N/A	06/11/23	N/A	N/A
SP11	20/11/23	09/02/24	11/09/23	25/09/23	16/10/23	30/11/23	06/11/23	29/12/23	17/02/23

There may be opportunity to host a student outside of these timeframes. Please contact the [Student Placements Team](#) regarding options for any upcoming placement opportunity.

There is high demand from industry for students, and there may be times a placement opportunity may not be filled. If this occurs, the [Student Placements Team](#) will communicate with the Placement Host to advise that the placement opportunity will not be filled for the requested study period and ask whether the placement opportunity should be re-offered in a subsequent study period.

Selection Process

In the EOI form the Placement Host is asked to indicate their preference on the student selection process from the following options:

- the [Student Placements Team](#) to shortlist candidates on behalf of the Placement Host and provide details of a limited number of suitable students to the Placement Host, or
- interested students can contact the Placement Host directly.

Consistent with a conventional workplace employment JCU encourages Placement Hosts to conduct a pre-placement interview with the student to ensure a successful and mutually beneficial placement.

Accepting a Student

If a student is selected, the Placement Host is to advise the [Student Placements Team](#) that the placement can be offered. Successful students will be contacted accordingly. Just as JCU cannot guarantee a student to match every EOI, Placement Hosts are not under any obligation to accept a student if they do not believe it is a suitable match.

The [Student Placements Team](#) will provide a Confirmation of Placement notice to the Placement Host and the student inclusive of all required legal documentation:

- Placement Confirmation Letter
- Student Placement Agreement, which needs to be signed by the Placement Host and JCU
- JCU Insurance details

The Student Placement Agreement requires authorised signing from both the Placement Host and JCU. This process can take 5 – 10 working days depending on the availability of authorised signatories (for the Placement Hosts and JCU). A placement cannot commence until the Student Placement Agreement has been signed by the Placement Host and JCU.

JCU students are also required to accept and sign a JCU Confidentiality Agreement and Student Guidelines and Conditions prior to the commencement of their placement. Students will access and agree to these via InPlace (Placement Management System).

During a Placement

Placement Proposal

The student's first requirement in the placement is to write a Placement Proposal which covers the learning goals and objectives for the placement. This task should be undertaken in consultation with the Placement Host to ensure consistency with the Placement Host's goals as well as alignment with the student's growth, learning, and skill set. This Placement Proposal is not a legally binding contract as placement roles, expectations, and conditions can vary as the placement develops. The Placement Proposal should be written within approximately a week of the confirmation of placement. Any significant modifications should be noted and agreed to by the student and Placement Host. All proposals will be reviewed by relevant JCU staff.

Placement Host Responsibilities

The Placement Host is to provide placement activities/tasks as outlined in the initial Expression of Interest and per the agreed Placement Proposal. These placement activities/tasks should reflect professional activities typically conducted within the Placement Host's workspace and meet the student's learning goals.

Placement Hosts are required to complete a mid-placement review of the student's progression, which will be accessed by an emailed link. This mid-placement check-in provides the Placement Host with opportunity to identify any areas of improvement or concern.

At the end of placement, Placement Hosts will be required to complete a final placement review with feedback on the student's overall performance. The short form will also be accessed by an emailed link. Both the mid- and end-of-placement reviews should be completed and returned within 5 business days of receiving the link so as not to affect the release of student's results.

The Placement Host should provide adequate supervision of the student ensuring that all practices, rules and regulations, including those relating to workplace safety and dress code, are as prescribed by the Placement Host for their employees.

Conflict of Interest

The assessment of a student's performance must not be subject to positive or negative bias. JCU avoids placing students at a host organisation where there may be a conflict of interest, such as where a family member or partner would supervise or influence the supervision of the placement student. Any potential conflict of interest is to be communicated to [Student Placements Team](#) who will be able to provide further advice.

Student Responsibilities

Students on placement are to conduct themselves as if they are an employee of the Placement Host. They are obliged to perform duties during work hours (full-time or part-time) as assigned by the Placement Host. They are to observe all rules, regulations, workplace safety protocols, and dress code as prescribed by the Placement Host. JCU has made students aware of expectations in line with JCU's [Student Code of Conduct](#). Expectations regarding [Student Professional Conduct](#) are also outlined, which includes placement settings.

Assessment

As part of placement, the student is required to submit several assessment items to their JCU Subject Coordinator. These assessments vary based on the student's placement subject. Placement Hosts are not required to mark or grade student assessments. Placement Hosts are required to provide reflections on the student's performance at the mid and end points of placement as outlined in Placement Host Responsibilities. Both the mid- and end-of-placement reviews should be completed and returned within 5 business days of receiving the link so as not to affect the release of student's results. For some of the Masters student placements, the Placement Host's end-of placement review contributes to the student's overall grade.

Detailed information concerning assessment of students involved in placements can be provided by the student or by contacting the [Student Placements Team](#).

Confidentiality and Privacy

Students must inform themselves about, and adhere to, principles of confidentiality contained in the relevant Codes of Ethics, standards, policies, and practices in the Placement Host workspace. Any serious breach of confidentiality may result in failing the subject. Students should note that confidentiality also applies to social media. Students must not Facebook, Tweet, or blog about their placement experiences in any way without approval, including references to the partner organisation and/or Placement Host.

The privacy of individuals and personal information is protected by government legislation and breaches of privacy can carry legal penalties. Please refer to the following federal and state privacy legislation:

- [Privacy Act 1988](#) (Federal Privacy Act)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009](#) (Queensland)

Travel and Related Expenses

Travel and other expenses related to getting to and from placement is considered the student's responsibility to arrange. Travel and expenses incurred while undertaking placement activities should be addressed in accordance with the partner organisation's policies and procedures for professional staff. In the absence of any formal policy, the student should negotiate anticipated costs, payment and/or reimbursement with the placement host prior to committing to any expense. The student should not suffer personal financial hardship in undertaking a placement.

Insurance

Students are covered by the University's insurance policies (including professional indemnity, public liability, and personal accident insurance) during placements, if working in an unpaid capacity, provided that pre-requisite conditions are met.

The pre-requisites for the insurance include:

- The student concerned is enrolled at the university in an approved course of study and subject
- The placement is recognised as a course related activity thereby bringing the activity under Public Liability in-service coverage
- The Student Placement Guidelines and Conditions have been acknowledged by the student prior to commencing the placement

None of the policies however, cover damage to placement organisational vehicles driven by students on placements. Students' personal cars are not covered by the university's insurance policies. The university discourages students from using their own vehicle while undertaking placement duties. If a student uses their personal vehicle to undertake any duties associated with the placement this is done at their own risk unless they successfully negotiate with the Placement Host for their vehicle to be noted on the placement provider's insurance policy.

Students placed interstate or overseas by the university are covered under the university corporate travel insurance policy for the duration of their placement. Further information regarding Student Insurance, including Certificates of Currency, may be located at [Student Insurance Information](#).

A copy of the insurance policy/cover will be provided prior to placement commencing or as requested.

Completion of Placement

At the end of placement, the Placement Host is asked to evaluate the student's performance via a survey sent by email. JCU encourages the Placement Host to also provide feedback directly to the student.

The [Student Placements Team](#) also welcomes all feedback on the placement process at any stage.

If problems arise during Placement

Despite everyone's best intentions, difficulties can arise during placement. Though these are generally rare, they tend to fall into the following categories:

- *Leave of absence of Placement Host* - where this occurs or is to occur for an extended period the [Student](#)

[Placements Team](#) should be contacted and the implications discussed. It may be possible for students to be provided with a different supervisor within the same organisation or relocated for the remainder of their placement time, if appropriate.

- *Change of Placement Host circumstances* - this covers a variety of circumstances but essentially where the student's learning program could be at risk, the [Student Placements Team](#) should be contacted and the implications discussed. It may be possible for students to be relocated for the remainder of their placement time, if appropriate.
- *Difficulties in supervision* - when these arise and cannot be resolved by the individuals concerned, it is important that, at the earliest signs of difficulty, the [Student Placements Team](#) should be made aware of them. Open discussion of the situation, before individual positions become entrenched, frequently leads to resolution. The [Student Placements Team](#) can provide a Placement At Risk form which works as a guide to support Placement Hosts and provides a document of events. Where necessary the [Student Placements Team](#) may involve the Subject Coordinator for assistance.
- *Difficulties with performance* - early action is essential if problems are identified with the student's performance. The [Student Placements Team](#) can provide a Placement At Risk form which works as a guide to support Placement Hosts and provides a document of events. Where necessary the [Student Placements Team](#) may involve the Subject Coordinator for assistance.

For any issues that cannot be resolved through discussion with the student, the matter should be raised with the [Student Placements Team](#).

Students are directed to contact the [Student Placements Team](#) if they are experiencing issues with their placement that cannot be resolved through discussion with the Placement Host.

Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment and discrimination on placement will not be tolerated. Harassment laws extend to all students on placement. Students have the right to notify the [Student Placements Team](#) if they are being harassed or treated unfairly including, sexual, racial, age, parental status, religion, marital status, and more. For further information on harassment and discrimination see:

- [James Cook University Discrimination](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland](#)

Premature Termination of Placement

The Placement Host may terminate a placement providing that:

- a Placement At Risk form has been completed. Please request form and submit to the [Student Placements Team](#)
- the student is counselled and given an opportunity to correct any fault that may exist
- the University is notified before the event through the [Student Placements Team](#). Notwithstanding, a placement may be terminated instantly for grave misconduct by the student

It is possible that problems such as balancing work pressures and demands arise with placements. If the student is having difficulties that impact their placement, the student must consult the Subject Coordinator to see what support can be offered to help the student complete the placement.

Students must not terminate a placement without first notifying the [Student Placements Team](#) that they have concerns about the placement.

Common questions asked by Placement Hosts

What preparation will the student have prior to placement?

Undergraduate students seeking placements are generally in their final year of study and will have completed a minimum of 4 subjects at the second-year level. Eligible students are expected to have developed the core skills and competencies in their applied field of studies.

Postgraduate students seeking placements will be enrolled in a coursework Masters program having already completed a cognate undergraduate degree. Prior to their placement these students are required to complete a Career Planning subject (e.g., [SC5200](#)) that covers detailed aspects of employability, professional development goals, industry trends and a gap analysis of their technical and soft skills. In the placement students are expected to further develop these skills and enhance the depth of their career planning.

All students receive a 'Work Integrated Learning Student Handbook' that explains the preparations they are expected to complete prior to commencing placement. Placement Hosts are encouraged to conduct a pre-placement interview, in which the Placement Host can ask students about skills and background relevant to the proposed placement as outlined in the EOI.

How is a student selected for a placement opportunity?

The recruitment and selection process is similar to a typical employee recruitment process. All students are required to seek and apply for an available placement opportunity by submitting their CV and a cover letter. A Placement Host has the option to receive either a shortlist of potential candidates or have students contact them directly. JCU recommends that all Placement Hosts conduct a pre-placement interview to ensure best fit for both the Host and the student. The Placement Host has the final say on whether a student is suitable and is not obligated to accept any student.

How much work will my staff have to do to support the student?

The Placement Host will be the main support to the student through the placement for the designated placement hours. This may not require one-on-one supervision for the entire placement. The Placement Host will have oversight of the tasks and duties the student will perform within the Placement Hosts guidelines. The Placement Host will help the student develop the Placement Proposal, and the Subject Coordinator will support if required.

How much will it cost?

A Placement may be paid or unpaid based on Placement Hosts requirements. If unpaid, the cost to the Placement Host will be providing appropriate resources for the placement to be undertaken, which will vary based on the type of placement. Because the placement will be approved and part of the student's university course, it will meet the requirements for unpaid Vocational Placement under the [Fair Work Act 2009](#). If paid, the cost to the Placement Host will be as per the Placement Host's recruitment/HR cost and process.

What if there are concerns about a student's work performance?

Students undertaking a placement are bound by the standards of performance conditions in the Placement Hosts workplace. It is suggested that issues should first be addressed by the Placement Host with the student, and if the issue(s) cannot be resolved, the [Student Placements Team](#) should be contacted for assistance.

What happens if the student is absent from placement?

The student is expected to work the full number of placement hours as outlined above and communicated in the Placement Confirmation Letter. If students must be absent from placement, they need to notify their Placement Hosts as soon as possible and ensure that they arrange to cover work scheduled for the day(s).

Contact Information

All enquiries can be directed to the [Student Placements Team](#) on (07) 4781 6333.