



**VAAL UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**

Inspiring thought. Shaping talent.

WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL) POLICY

2021

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY	3
DEFINITIONS	4
1. POLICY STATEMENT	6
2. SCOPE.....	6
3. LAWS AND REGULATIONS	6
4. POLICY MANDATE	7
4.1 Introduction & background	7
4.2. Principles	7
4.3 Methods of teaching and learning	8
4.4 Exposure of academic staff to industry	9
4.5 Organisation and management of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) ..	10
4.5.1 Centralised model	10
4.5.2 Decentralised model.....	10
4.6 Formal assessment of Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	10
4.7 Partnerships	11
4.8 Student orientation and Employability Improvement Programme.....	12
4.9 Advisory Committees.....	12
5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	12
5.1 Responsibilities of the host employer.....	13
5.2 Responsibilities of the student	14
5.3 Responsibilities of the university	15
5.3.1 Co-operative Education Department	15
5.3.2 Faculty Boards, Management and Academic Departments.....	16
6. RELATED POLICIES.....	17
7. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT	17
8. DEVIATION FROM THE POLICY	18

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

CHE	Council for Higher Education
CWIE	Co-operative and Work Integrated Education
EL	Experiential Learning
HE	Higher Education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQF	Higher Education Qualification Framework
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualification Sub Framework
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
Industry/ Employer organisations	Includes commerce, industry, government (central, provincial and local), small or informal businesses
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PBL	Problem-based learning
PjBL	Project-based learning
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit
SASCE	South African Society for Co-operative Education
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
Stakeholders	Includes VUT (management, faculties, service departments), industry, employer organisations, students
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
WACE	World Association for Co-operative Education
WBL	Workplace Based Learning
WDTL	Work Directed Theoretical Learning
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

DEFINITIONS

Advisory Committee	The body through which the relevant academic department and the workplace (industry, commerce, public sector, community organisation) and/or professional body cooperate closely in the planning, organisation, monitoring, assessment and review of WIL.
Assessment	Assessment is an approach to teaching and learning that creates feedback which is then used to improve students' performance.
Co-operative and Work Integrated Education (CWIE)	Cooperative and Work Integrated Education (CWIE) is a term created by the World Association for Co-operative Education (WACE) to acknowledge and embrace all forms of experiential learning utilised by industry and educational institutions to prepare the next generation of global professionals. CWIE is an encompassing term that includes cooperative education, internships, semester in industry, international co-op exchanges, study abroad, research, clinical rotations, service learning and community service.
Co-operative Education	A philosophy of learning that promotes the concept of enhanced learning based on the co-operation between education institutions and industry, commerce and the public sector.
Experiential Learning	Learning by doing, in a range of contexts, within different parameters.
Graduate	Someone who has been the subject of a graduation, that is, someone who has completed the requirements of an academic degree.
Graduate attributes	The values, attitudes, critical thinking, ethical and professional behaviours of graduates, which equip them to take the skills and practices they have acquired into the world of work and become active and informed citizens who can play a positive role in the upliftment of society.
Internship	An internship is an opportunity offered by an employer to potential employees called interns to work at a firm for a fixed, limited period of time. Interns are usually undergraduates or students and most internships last for any length of time between one week and 12 months.

Mentor	A person who performs the role of host, friend, confidante and advisor to the student, with the agreed-upon goal of having the student grow and develop specific competencies.
Placement position	A workstation or temporary position at a company or institution, where students are placed for periods of WIL.
Problem Based Learning (PBL)	A range of pedagogic approaches that encourage students to learn through the structured exploration of a research or practice-based problem. Students work in small self-directed groups to define, carry out and reflect upon a task, which is usually related to, or based on a real-life problem.
Project Based Learning (PjBL)	Combines PBL and WBL in that it brings together intellectual inquiry, real-world problems, and student engagement in relevant and meaningful work. Well-crafted projects should engage students, provide a meaningful and authentic context for learning and immerse students in complex, real-world problems that do not have a predetermined solution.
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an inter-governmental organisation headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. Its goal is to further regional socio-economic cooperation and integration as well as political and security cooperation among 16 countries in southern Africa.
WIL Coordinator	The WIL Coordinator is responsible for accreditation/ approval of the workplace and monitoring and assessment of all WIL programmes.
Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	A term used to describe a range of approaches, strategies and methods used to integrate theory with practices of the workplace within a purposefully designed curriculum, meaningfully.
Work Directed Theoretical Learning (WDTL)	An attempt to ensure that theoretical forms of knowledge (such as mathematics and physics in engineering programmes) are introduced and sequenced in ways that meet academic criteria and are applicable and relevant to the career-specific components.
Workplace approval	The workplace has received approval to offer the structured work experience component modules
Workplace Based Learning (WBL)	WBL involves the acquisition of work-related knowledge and skills both in the university and in the workplace, with the formal or non-formal involvement of employers.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy aims to provide a conceptual framework for aligning Co-operative Education practices and procedures at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) with national and international best practice, policy and imperatives.

This policy will serve as a framework for a Guideline Document for the implementation of co-operative work integrated education (CWIE) at the VUT. This policy further aims for the enhancement of producing quality social and technological innovations in socio-economic developments.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all credit-bearing, subsidised academic programmes that contains a WIL component and to all academic departments across all faculties and campuses offering such programmes.

3. LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- 3.1. Consumer Protection Act, Act No 68 of 2008
- 3.2. Council on Higher Education (CHE): Work Integrated Learning Good Practice Guide 2011
- 3.3. Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) criteria for programme accreditation 2004
- 3.4. Immigration Act, Act No 13 of 2002
- 3.5. Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No 85 of 1993
- 3.6. Policy Framework for Workplace Based Learning in an Integrated and Differentiated South African Post-School Education and Training System (DHET)
- 3.7. Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, Act No 4 of 2013
- 3.8. Skills Development Act, Act No 97 of 1998
- 3.9. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, Act No 58 of 1995
- 3.10. The Higher Education Act, Act No 101 of 1997, as amended
- 3.11. The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)

4. POLICY MANDATE

4.1 Introduction & background

Co-operative Education is a philosophy of learning that promotes the concept of enhanced learning, based on the co-operation between educational institutions and industry, commerce and the public sector. It is a structured method of combining classroom-based education with practical work experience. Co-operative Education experience, commonly known as a Work Integrated Learning, provides academic credit for structured job experience. WIL is taking on new importance in helping young people to make the university-to-work transition. WIL falls under the umbrella of Co-operative Education but is distinct as it alternates a university term with a work term in a structured manner, involves a partnership between the academic institution and the employer and intends to advance the education of the student.

This policy framework is introduced against the background of economic and social expectations of growth and employment where Workplace Based Learning (WBL) is seen to be the vehicle for enhanced learning in order to prepare students for the real world of work.

Thus, this framework shaped by the nexus of theory and practice where WIL is known to deepen learning and employability skills through the curriculum and non-curriculum features. The combination of these elements builds the student technical competence, innovation and renewal, facilitate learning about the world of work, and assist student ability of fitting in as new entrants to the workplace.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is the distinguishing feature of universities of technology and has been practiced by the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) since its inception. WIL is a prerequisite and essential for standardised quality assessment and implementation of WIL across the university sector.

WIL provides a close link to the vision, mission and strategic operational statements of VUT to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills and hands-on experience to prepare employable graduates that make an impact on socio-economic development. WIL provides a mechanism to approach and forge strategic partnerships with commerce, industry and the public sector.

This aspect of the curriculum must take into consideration the following essential elements:

4.2. Principles

The following principles underpin this WIL Policy:

- 4.2.1 WIL Policy should be implemented across the entire university as well as in the curricula and should be aligned to university priorities and strategic plan (2020 – 2024).
- 4.2.2 WIL should be implemented in line with the policy and is a priority for the university in terms of the mandate as a university of technology.
- 4.2.3 The relationship with industry and commerce should be professionally managed and maintained for the long term.
- 4.2.4 WIL is regarded at VUT as a shared responsibility between the university and students to adhere to the requirements of appropriate workplaces and WBL.
- 4.2.5 Financial resources for students that the Co-operative Education Department receives should be handled in line with the policies and procedures of the university.

4.3 Methods of teaching and learning

WIL is a teaching and learning strategy aimed to provide the student with an optimum learning experience within his/her career.

The methods of teaching and learning of an integrated Co-operative Education curriculum can and may take on many forms of practice. In order to ensure that the specific and critical cross-field outcomes of programmes are achieved, it will be necessary to utilise, as far as possible, a variety of methods of teaching and learning. The assessment of each of the learning methods must also be articulated for the student, employer and university.

The total WIL experience is normally stipulated by a minimum time, but the success of completion is determined by the attainment of predetermined skills and competencies as outcomes for the programme, both quantitatively and qualitatively in the minimum time.

The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF 2013:11) states: “WIL may take various forms including Simulated Learning, Work Directed Theoretical Learning, Problem Based Learning, Project Based Learning and Workplace Based Learning.”

The teaching and learning methods and strategies for Co-operative and Work Integrated Education are as follows:

FIGURE 1

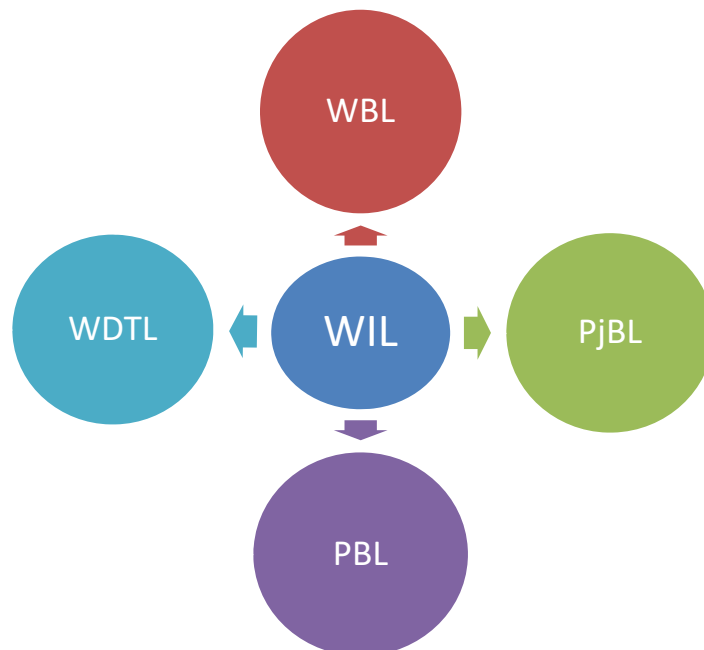


Figure 1 shows the four modalities of WIL, namely WBL, PjBL, PBL and WDTL.

Universities of technology are mainly known by the WIL feature, differentiating them from traditional institutions and, therefore, serving the purpose of integrating two worlds, namely theory and practice to produce the desired workforce.

WBL is commonly used in VUT as a registered modality of WIL (how the qualifications are registered). The proposed modalities at hand are PjBL and PBL. The two mentioned modalities are perceived to be practical and solving the limitations we are experiencing. WBL will still remain as the core WIL modality for VUT.

4.4 Exposure of academic staff to industry

It is very important for university academic staff to have appropriate and sufficient depth of industry experience. The term industry, used here, includes commerce, industry, government across the SADC countries and, where applicable, small or informal businesses. Faculties have undertaken to visit industry during monitoring and assessment of the students in order to rejuvenate their experiences and remain abreast on the changes within the disciplines they teach.

4.5 Organisation and management of Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Whilst the organisation and management of WIL is governed essentially by the institutional mission, vision and structure, a dedicated department is necessary for its effective implementation. WIL programmes are administered in centralised and decentralised departments.

The VUT adopted the centralised-decentralised model. This is sometimes known as an integrated model (hybrid model).

4.5.1 Centralised model (Co-operative Education Department).

The Central Office is responsible for finding suitable placements for the students and making sure that the students are placed in industry. The department is also responsible for administration and professional student support services. The central office is also responsible for the protection of the personal information of students according to the POPI Act. Before student information is sent to industry and any external stakeholders, students must sign an indemnity form to give permission to send their information.

4.5.2 Decentralised model (Faculties)

Work Integrated Learning is a credit bearing module and is part of the qualification. The WIL Coordinators in the decentralised model are responsible for monitoring and assessment of all WIL programmes. Each faculty should have a WIL coordinator reporting according to the specific faculty structure and who will report the monitoring to Co-operative Education Department. Ideally, the WIL coordinator will be a person who is already appointed in a full-time lecturing position.

This approach lessens or eliminates the barriers that often develop between lecturing staff and Co-operative Education Department staff.

4.6 Formal assessment of Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

Like any other aspect of curricula, assessment of WIL must be aligned with the purpose and outcomes of the programme and the student attributes linked with WIL programmes. Learning outcomes, assessment criteria and assessment methods (summative and formative) for WIL must be clearly articulated in the Learner Guideline Document (logbook), the Partner Guideline Document (industry guidelines) and the institutional Prospectus for the relevant programme.

The university, through the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) and Faculties, will ensure that internal quality is maintained. Faculties are responsible for assessment of the workplace, and monitoring and assessment of students during WIL.

Moderation is done by both internal and external moderators, depending on the academic programme of the Institution. In some cases, student WIL reports are marked by the company representative (examiner) and further moderated by the academic staff (moderator). In other instances, the company only evaluates the student WIL report and the academic staff allocates the final marks. It is important to note that the qualification of the mentor must be at least one level higher than that of the student.

Workplace assessment needs to be conducted. The workplace should be assessed before the student starts with the training (if it is a new company) in order to ensure that the company is fit for the purpose for the student(s) to conduct WIL.

4.7 Partnerships

An integral part of Co-operative Education is the establishment of approved and accredited partnerships for implementation of a quality programme. The partnership may vary according to the needs of the specific learning programmes. A database of all partners must be documented and maintained.

The following are considered to be parties in this policy:

- University
- Student
- Industry.

The following are considered partners in terms of this policy and all partnerships should be guided by the specific legislation:

- Communities
- African countries
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Higher Education and Training
- Other relevant government structures
- Professional bodies, institutes and councils
- SETAs.

In terms of the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998), VUT is responsible to adhere to the National Skills Authority, Sector Education and Training Authority and national strategy guidelines.

4.8 Student orientation and Employability Improvement Programme

Companies require students to be prepared for the real world of work, therefore, the Co-operative Education Department uses the Employability Improvement Programme as a work readiness programme to prepare the students before they enter the real world of work. Placement of students is an ongoing process; therefore, the programme continues throughout the year, depending on availability of eligible students for WIL, as well as third-year level students who are doing their internship in industry.

The department participates in the first-year orientation programme, as well as conducting classroom orientation with students when the lecturers provide dates when orientation can take place. The WIL orientation programme not only targets WIL students, but also third-year students. This can be seen as a learning unit prior to employment. It is strongly recommended that all students should undergo the Employability Improvement Programme.

4.9 Advisory Committees

An Advisory Committee should be operational for each instructional programme or group of programmes offered by the university. Regular meetings or other forms of consultation should take place frequently enough to ensure continued relevance of the programmes concerned. The composition of the Advisory Committee (or consultation process) must be representative of the client base of the programme. Co-operative Education, with specific reference to WIL and academic staff remaining abreast, must be a standing point on the agenda of an Advisory Committee meeting. The consultation procedures employed (Advisory Committee meetings or other) should cater for ample and quality input concerning changes and anticipated developments in industry. Refer to the Terms of Reference from faculties.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Where the entire WIL component or any part of it takes the form of Workplace Based Learning, it is the shared responsibility of institutions and students requiring credits for such learning to be placed in appropriate workplaces. Such workplace learning must be appropriately structured, properly supervised and assessed.

5.1 Responsibilities of the host employer

- 5.1.1 The employer must make available training facilities and staff to mentor and supervise students for the purpose of WIL.
- 5.1.2 It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure adherence to the WIL guidelines of the university.
- 5.1.3 The employer is responsible to orientate or induct students on the company's code of conduct.
- 5.1.4 It is the responsibility of the employer to inform the university of any injuries that the student may suffer while doing training.
- 5.1.5 The employer must ensure that they have been accredited by the university before training the student.
- 5.1.6 In the case of a disciplinary action against the student, the employer must inform the university and invite the university to be part of the process.
- 5.1.7 The employer must inform the university in the case where a student absconds from training.
- 5.1.8 The employer should inform the university on decisions to take students for training so that the university is able to follow the correct procedures and processes with regard to placement.
- 5.1.9 Adherence to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act No 85 of 1993 that regulates the workplace for the employees, persons other than employees and contractors. In the case where a student is injured, the employer must inform the university and also ensure that the student gets the necessary treatment. Where needed the employer must call emergency services.
- 5.1.10 The employer must verify all information from the student regarding placement.
- 5.1.11 The protection of the student's personal information according to the POPI Act, Act No 4 of 2013.

5.2 Responsibilities of the student

- 5.2.1 Students must make sure that they have their prescribed logbooks or learner guides when attending training.
- 5.2.2 It is the responsibility of the student to attend all the awareness campaigns, orientation and the employability improvement programmes facilitated by Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.2.3 During WIL, students are required to submit reports to VUT as part of their assessment.
- 5.2.4 Students may approach companies to negotiate opportunities for WIL, after consultation with the relevant industrial liaison practitioners, but these opportunities are subject to the approval of the relevant academic WIL coordinator and/or Industrial Liaison practitioners.
- 5.2.5 In cases where students have been placed for WIL with employers by the Co-operative Education Department and the student is dismissed by the employer due to misconduct, attitude problems or unsatisfactory work performance, it is the responsibility of the student to find further opportunities for WIL where he/she can complete the required WIL. Each case will be dealt with on merit by the head of the academic department in collaboration with the Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.2.6 Students must also register for WIL like any other subject. Failure to register within the first month of placement will result in the student not receiving credit for the WIL completed.
- 5.2.7 Since WIL is a pre-diploma requirement, students cannot, as of right, demand remuneration during this phase of their training. However, some companies/organisations do offer some form of allowance or stipend.
- 5.2.8 WIL funding from SETAs is discretionary and not mandatory.
- 5.2.9 Students are subject to the rules and regulations of the relevant company/organisation where they do their WIL and must abide by them. Students must also display a positive attitude at all times. Any perceived injustices must be reported to the relevant head of department and Co-operative Education Department.

5.2.10 In cases where the student has a medical condition and at the same time is due for WIL, they must disclose the medical condition to the Co-operative Education Department so that special arrangements can be made.

5.3 Responsibilities of the university

VUT makes provision for medical insurance for all students placed for WIL. This is not medical aid, but medical insurance, therefore, in case of hospitalisation or any claim, the student will be covered up to the value prescribed for the particular year. The medical insurance only pays after the service rendered (pay-by-claim). Refer to the student insurance guideline from the Finance Department.

5.3.1 Co-operative Education Department

5.3.1.1 Where the entire WIL component or any part of it takes the form of WBL it is the responsibility of Institutions that offer programmes requiring credits for such learning to place students into appropriate workplaces. Such WBL must be appropriately structured, properly supervised and assessed.

5.3.1.2 The Co-operative Education Department should promote Co-operative and Work Integrated Education (CWIE) by negotiating suitable placement positions for students in companies and institutions in collaboration with faculties.

5.3.1.3 The department should assist employers in the selection process.

5.3.1.4 Drafting of policy and procedures regarding WIL at the VUT.

5.3.1.5 Placement of students to industry and on campus for WIL purpose and for internship (graduate placement).

5.3.1.6 Secure funding from various funders for stipends, PPE and toolboxes.

5.3.1.7 Assist academic departments with the drafting of WIL guidelines and programmes (logbooks and learner guides).

5.3.1.8 Liaising with the various faculties and departments on an ongoing basis in order to review and maintain effective systems of WIL.

5.3.1.9 Preparation of students for WIL, such as classroom orientation, awareness campaigns, employability workshops and job readiness programs.

- 5.3.1.10 Approval of employers for WIL in collaboration with academic departments, namely accreditation.
- 5.3.1.11 Co-operative Education, in collaboration with the faculties, must ensure that industry is well represented during Advisory Board meetings.
- 5.3.1.12 WIL coordinator meetings to be conducted by the Director: Co-operative Education as the Chairperson.
- 5.3.1.13 Liaison is required with national and international organisations, such as the Southern African Society for Cooperative Education (SASCE), the World Association for Cooperative Education (WACE), Universities South Africa (USA).

5.3.2 Faculty Boards, Management and Academic Departments

- 5.3.2.1 Academic Departments should develop and maintain a relevant curriculum that reflects the needs of employers.
- 5.3.2.2 Drafting suitable WIL guidelines and programmes (logbooks and study guides) for WIL students.
- 5.3.2.3 The identification of students who are to be placed for WIL in collaboration with the Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.3.2.4 Approval of employers for WIL in collaboration with the Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.3.2.5 Monitoring and assessment of WIL placed students.
- 5.3.2.6 Complete information regarding approved employers must be made available to the Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.3.2.7 Maintaining records of visits to employers and students for WIL purposes and submit copies to Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.3.2.8 All appointments of students for the fulfilment of WIL in VUT laboratories and workshops must be reported to the Co-operative Education Department.
- 5.3.2.9 Working with employers in assisting in the development of suitable workplaces for WIL programmes.

5.3.2.10 Working with employers to develop evaluation techniques and instruments to monitor and assess the progress of the students during WIL.

6. RELATED POLICIES

- 6.1 Assessment Policy
- 6.2 Teaching and Learning Policy
- 6.3 Deviation Policy
- 6.4 RPL Policy
- 6.5 Procurement Policy

7. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Co-operative Education Department is dependent on the following stakeholders for the fulfilment of the mandates as stipulated in this Work Integrated Learning Policy:

Stakeholders	Responsibility
Faculties HoD's, WIL Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees Terms of Reference • Exposure of academic staff to industry • Approval of the workplace • Assessment and monitoring of students during WIL
Finance Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance claims, procedures and processes
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of student information • Insure safety of students while on their premises • Assign qualified mentors/supervisors • Assessment of students • Need to fulfil their responsibilities
QPU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the process of quality assurance are put in place
Registrar's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of WIL

8. DEVIATION FROM THE POLICY

Any deviation from this policy must be referred to the Faculty Management Boards. Thereafter the matter will be referred to Senex and ratified at Senate.