

Partner organisations



Students in the workplace

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a university for the **real world**®

Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

QUT prepares work-ready graduates by providing students with real-world learning experiences. Real-world learning integrates theory, knowledge and skills of a discipline with professional and contemporary practice.

The Science and Engineering Faculty provides WIL in many of its academic programs for students to engage with industry at numerous stages throughout their degree. WIL provides real workplace challenges that are related to students' future careers and provides a valuable transition to their next career stage.

WIL can be one or more of the following:

- Capstone projects
- Internships/Work placement
- Industry based project
- Community based project
- Mentoring and shadowing
- Guest lecturing





Capstone Projects

Case Study: Energex

Third year electrical engineering/mathematics student Caitlin Nicholas joined Energex's protection systems team for a 12 week vacation program to work in power transmission distribution systems during the QUT summer break. She was one of four QUT students selected by Energex for vacation work based on leadership skills, community involvement and interest in the power industry. As part of the protection systems team, Caitlin signed up to ensure public safety by testing and maintaining the systems Energex has in place to cut power to homes in emergency and power surge situations.

Caitlin's Energex supervisor and power systems engineer, Daniel Dwyer says vacation work allowed students the opportunity to decide if they really liked the power industry, and gave them a foot in the door for future employment. "Vacation work helps bring new and talented people into the Energex pool. A lot of graduates who come to work with us have worked with Energex before on similar placements. "It's also good exposure for students to understand what they are signing up for," he said.

A Capstone project involves a project-based activity that closely relates to professional work in the field. Capstones are experiences that build students' confidence and capability by providing large and complex challenges. Capstone projects are relevant and engage students in work that is meaningful and contextualised.

Typical projects to consider would be projects that have been delayed by other work priorities in your organisation. It could be a design project that may involve a team of four students or an individual student. The students will have a designated academic staff member to assist with advice and technical direction.

Benefits for your business

Companies benefit from engaging with final year students as part of their university studies.

The benefits include:

- receiving an injection of new thinking and fresh ideas from technologically savvy students
- assistance with short-term projects that otherwise would not be possible
- boosting the mentoring skills for your existing employees
- connecting with students who will be future work-ready graduates for your company
- trialling a potential recruit at your company
- building a talent pipeline
- developing connections with universities for research and development
- connecting with Masters of Research and PhD candidates to scope research projects
- improving your branding by giving back to the university and the industry sector

Frequently asked questions

Do I need to pay if I am placing a student in the company?

The student can be unpaid as part of an approved and recognised curriculum activity i.e. Work Integrated Learning. It must meet the following criteria:

- the placement must be undertaken as a requirement of a student's course or training
- the placement must be approved by QUT.

What is the duration of a capstone project?

The Capstone projects are offered in February and July of the academic calendar year. Each project will typically require the students to dedicate 140 hours and are completed as a formal unit of study. Final year engineering students are required to complete two capstone units in their final year of study.

How do I organise a capstone project?

It is important to provide the scope and title of the project. Once you have provided this information we will source an academic lead. We require the project proposal and title to be finalised by November for commencement in February of the following year. Projects starting in July should be finalised by April.

What are the expectations of industry partners?

Students may not be familiar with the workplace so they will require guidance, support and feedback on their performance. It is expected that students are supervised for one hour a week over a 26 week period. This is the equivalent of two capstone projects. At the commencement of the project it is necessary to brief the student of the company's expectations and the types of tasks/projects that they will undertake. It is important to assign an experienced employee as a mentor/supervisor whom the student can approach for advice.

Is the student covered by insurance?

QUT provides insurance for unpaid student placements that are a requirement of their course. Students attending your workplace for tours or other activities are covered by your public liability.