

## ALTC LSES Environmental Scan

### 1. Institution

Deakin University

### 2. Contact Person (and contact details)

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### 3. Name of Program/Initiative

Work Placement Program

#### 3.1 URL:

3.2 Start Date/Duration: 29 October – 23 November 2012

### 4. Brief outline of program

The Work Placement Program was developed in response to a thorough analysis of the issues faced by low SES students in obtaining the full benefit of a university education with respect to their future careers. Central to this is the fact that low SES students are often time poor in relation to undertaking the kind of extra-curricular activities that provide an edge in the graduate recruitment process and do not have the connections within the broader community to obtain professionally related experiences. They often have part time jobs to support their study at university that preclude the possibility of undertaking unpaid internships or other 'resume building' activities. The Work Placement Program aimed to remedy these disadvantages, by offering paid, course specific, project focused, 116 hour placements to low SES students.

### 5. Purpose/Aims

1. Provide participating students with an opportunity to undertake meaningful, project focused, paid work within a professional organisation thereby developing their understanding and practice of appropriate workplace behaviours
2. Provide participating students with the opportunity to develop the "Attributes of a Deakin Graduate"
3. Provide participating students with the career development skills necessary for them to manage their careers upon leaving Deakin University and beyond
4. Improve the potential for a satisfactory graduate employment outcome for participating students
5. Further develop the positive profile of Deakin University with the surrounding community

**6. Breadth of program**

It is focused at penultimate and final year low SES students across all campuses.

**7. Category (please select all that apply and provide explanation where necessary)**

Category	Y?	Explanation
Policy		
Curriculum		
Program	Y	
Other (please specify)		

**7.1 Resources**

**7.2 Start up budget: \$11,000**

In the current project, we recruit a Project Officer to support the Coordinator in the initial marketing to potential host employers for project briefs, advertising the program to student and throughout the shortlisting of candidates.

**7.3 Ongoing budget: \$??**

The students are paid a HEW1 rate while they are on their 116 hour placement plus we pay each host a Supervision Refund of \$500 per student. Each placement is worth \$3938.24. In this years program we are offering 59 placements = \$232,356.16.

**8. Outcomes**

**8.1 Uptake:**

First program – 40 placements offered by 25 organisations. 90% of students attended the Pre Placement session and 47% attended the Post Placement session  
Second program – 35 placements offered by 17 organisations. 69% of students attended the Pre Placement session and 43% attended the Post Placement session  
Third program – we have funding for 59 placements.

**8.2 Evaluation(s) conducted to date - Informal or formal) – and details of findings:**

The evaluations were conducted at the Pre and Post Placement Career Development workshops, and via an online questionnaire sent to all student participants and the host employers at the completion of the placements. Results for both of the programs are at the end of this document.

### **8.3 Evidence of success:**

Going back and addressing the original objectives of the project:

1. We have used the majority of the funding on the student placements and have offered 75 placements in total. Students are well supported before they go out on placement, and know how to make the most of the time that they are out with the host organisation.
2. During the Pre Placement session the facilitator mentions the 'Deakin attributes' and completes activities where the students discuss how they are developing these in the classroom, and how these could be used and improved while out on placement. This gives the students a much better understand of what the attributes are, and how they are more employable because of them.
3. The Pre and Post Placement sessions are our opportunity to have conversations with students about their future career goals, and run activities on their skills and values and evaluate how their placement helped them discover what they like and dislike about the work/organisation. All of this is to help students understand that they are in control of their future career, and that self-reflection and continued learning can improve their chances of developing a sustainable career.
4. 49% of students were offered ongoing paid or volunteer work after the placements. Now that many of the students from the first program have graduated we are calling them to discuss whether the placement has made a difference to their graduate employment prospects. Before this evidence is available, we can only guess that it has to have had a positive impact, as many of the students had never written a resume or completed a formal interview before the Work Placement Program.
5. By contacting 200 organisations about this program, and about Deakin students we are increasing the positive profile of Deakin. All of the host organisations have been thrilled with the candidates we short listed, and some had a lot of trouble making a final decision on who to recruit. I think word of mouth about how great our students are can only have a positive impact. For both programs we have had a 100% positive response to the question 'Would you get involved in the Work Placement Program next year?'.

### **8.4 Evaluation(s) planned (and dates for this/these):**

The evaluations are conducted at the Pre and Post Placement Career Development workshops, and via an online questionnaire sent to all student participants and the host employers at the completion of the placements.

### **8.5 Major challenges:**

1. Offering placements in low graduate outcome areas. We made a concerted effort to develop links with employers who could offer these types of placements in the second program. Some of these organisations did get involved in the program but they offered

placements to business and arts students.

## 8.6 Other (Please specify):

## 9. Publications/Reports (including links to those publically available)

### Evaluation conducted to date:

#### Student evaluation

	% for both programs	
	Pre Placement	Post Placement
<u>Self-assessment of students, during and following placements on their level of understanding and competence against a range of employability skills.</u>		
I am clear about my career direction.	33%	60%
I know what steps I need to take to reach my career goals	51%	63%
I am aware of the eight employability skills and why they are important skills to gain.	45%	84%
I am aware of why networking is so important for my career development.	98%	99%
I can identify specific examples of when I have demonstrated specific employability skills from my previous experiences.	72%	93%
I can write an effective achievement statement in my resume.	39%	79%
I know how to describe an achievement during an interview, (STAR technique).	47%	93%
<u>Was the 116 hours of the placement appropriate?</u>	Yes	No
	82%	18%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working four days a week 9-5 really gave me a taste of life as a full time employee and the effects it can have on your life outside of work. Simultaneously, this helped me with time preparation and organisation as I had to manage many different commitments at the one time.</li> <li>Wish it could have gone for longer!</li> <li>Needs to be longer especially for engineering placements. 4 weeks is just long enough to scratch the surface.</li> </ul>		
<u>Did the placement meet your expectations?</u>	Yes	No
	89%	6%
<u>How many career informational interviews were you able to complete on placement?</u>		
0 career informational interviews	29%	
1 career informational interviews	29%	
2 career informational interviews	18%	
3 career informational interviews	12%	
4 or more career informational interviews	12%	
<u>Will the experiences you have gained whilst on placement be useful in your future career?</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitely. I hope to work with new media in the future so I gained lots of knowledge working a website giving me invaluable experience.</li> <li>Yes. Especially for grad job interviews.</li> <li>Definitely! The placement was very related to my studies and gave me more insight into the areas I would like to pursue a career in.</li> </ul>		
<u>Have you been offered ongoing casual or volunteer work with the host organisation?</u>	Yes	No
	49%	51%
Host employer		

Can you please comment on the \$500 supervision refund? Was it needed? Was it not enough?

- We're a not for profit charity. Any funds to support our organisation and the provisioning of support resources is very much appreciated and needed.
- The students needed a lot of supervision initially, but as they became more involved in the projects the need to supervise them lessened. I think \$500 is an appropriate amount.
- Oxfam relies on volunteers in every department so the \$500 was a great boost. However, we would probably have still contributed without the \$500 incentive as it was a necessary position that needed filling. I am pleased that the student also received a wage for their time and effort.

Was the 116 hour placement an appropriate length of time?

Yes	No
82%	18%

- Wouldn't mind if it was a bit longer - but we like the intensive timeframe as it means they and we can focus on a discrete piece of work which we need done.
- It went extremely fast, and we did feel we could have gone further with the project.
- I think a month is a good time-frame, as it allows students to build up rapport and become comfortable in the workplace.

Would your organisation be interested in being contacted about the next Work Placement Program?

Yes
100%

Were you adequately supported by the Careers and Employment team before and during the placement/s?

- Yes, Belinda is a wonderful resource as a contact for the host employers.
- Belinda was always responsive and very helpful. I have full confidence in the work that she put into this project. Belinda was also very flexible with our times and understood that we could sometimes not get everything in by the closing dates.
- Yes - brilliant.

Do you have any comments or feedback about the program?

- This program is fantastic. We're a NFP charity providing services nationally and the student placements provided by Deakin were invaluable. Thank you so much. We would love to be part of this program in the future.
- The program for Colac Otway was a huge success this year. In particular, the Engineering placements proved that successful that both students have now been placed on as staff - engaged in full-time (where possible) work between now and the end of February 2012. Once again, a big thanks to Belinda for managing such a smooth and successful Work Placement Program!
- Very enjoyable and I look forward to continuing the experience for another student in the future
- I was quite surprised at the very basic level of computer literacy that the students had. They were not familiar with conducting Google searches nor using spread sheets. Throughout the placement they became more adept at using these tools, however I think they could have worked more effectively if they had these tools from the outset, or if we had realistic expectations as to the capacities of the students.
- I think this program provides value for both the hosting organisation but also, as importantly the student on placement. This is often the first time that a student experiences/is exposed to any significant 'learning' outside lecture halls. Hopefully the placement contributes to a deeper appreciation of a student's course content in the context of their community/broader society in general.
- I would prefer all work experience students to come via the Jobshop (versus some Deakin students approaching Council directly) as not all Deakin faculties have the same/necessary paperwork.