

# Strategies for managing risk in work-integrated learning: A New Zealand perspective

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The immersion of students into a workplace environment, as part of a deliberate pedagogy for integrating theoretical and practical knowledge, is not without risk. In order to safely provide such work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, the responsibility for managing these risks should be shared by all stakeholders. The purpose of this study was to explore strategies to manage different types of risks in WIL for students, host organizations and universities. Data was collected using an online survey, and interviews with university staff involved in WIL. Twenty-eight disciplines and a range of models of WIL from across the eight New Zealand universities were represented. Key strategies identified included: appropriate pre-placement preparation for students and hosts; clear contractual arrangements; good internal systems and resourcing (especially staff); and strong relationship management. Practical guidelines to help WIL stakeholders further develop their understanding and awareness of risk are presented.

Key words: risk, risk management, work-integrated learning, placements, health and safety.

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Work-integrated learning (WIL), as the name implies, involves learning in both academic and work environments. While a wide range of WIL models exist (Wood et al., 2020), the most common is placement-based WIL, where learning experiences occur in a diverse range of workplaces and community settings. A fundamental principle of WIL is that the experience is authentic (Smith et al., 2016), and that students have an opportunity to engage in the everyday activities of the workplace (Fleming & Haigh, 2018). However, the immersion of students into a workplace environment, as part of a deliberate pedagogy for integrating theoretical and practical knowledge, is not without risk.

As Cameron (2017) bluntly points out, “WIL is a risky business” (p. 243). Across the breadth of WIL experiences undertaken in higher education, there is a wide range of workplace contexts, and as such, while there is some commonality in many of the risks, there is also variability across disciplinary, organizational and institutional contexts. Risk for WIL can be defined as “any issues that might affect, either positively or negatively, the achievement of WIL objectives for students, host organizations and the university” (Fleming & Hay, 2021, p.177). As it is not realistic to remove all risks associated with WIL, managing them appropriately is important for higher education institutions (HEIs), in order to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

A clear understanding of the extent, probability and nature of risk in WIL is needed (Cooper et al., 2010; Effene, 2020), in order for WIL staff to be able to design institutional risk management practices and to prepare resources for students and hosts to help mitigate risks. Earlier work by the authors (Fleming & Hay, 2021) has shown that in many situations this understanding is lacking, university staff involved in WIL had a varied level of perceived understanding of risk, and even some of the more experienced staff lacked awareness of some of the common risks to students, hosts, the university or themselves.

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This article is the third in a series by the authors, investigating risk in WIL in New Zealand universities. The focus of the study presented in this article is to explore strategies that manage different types of risks in WIL. In the context of this study, risk management strategies are considered as practices, procedures or actions used to manage risks. Practical guidelines to help WIL staff and other WIL stakeholders to further develop their understanding and awareness in this important area are presented.

## BACKGROUND

When students, industry and universities engage in WIL, they are exposed to a range of potential issues, or 'risks'. Risks are not limited to the three main WIL stakeholders but can also involve industry employees, clients, or patients depending on the context. Effective risk management is needed to maximize student and host experiences; a strategic opportunity that can enhance the reputation of the institution (Cameron, 2020). Risk management is commonly conceptualized as a process which involves four key steps: identifying the risk, analyzing the impact and probability of the risk, developing and implementing methods to manage the risk, and reviewing the process and methods (Cooper et al., 2010).

There are several studies that have contributed towards identifying risks in WIL. Cooper et al. (2010) surveyed the WIL literature between 1982 and 2008 and identified a number of potential areas of risk, difficulties, concerns and issues. These were summarized into nine categories: safety of student, personal injuries including work-related stress, discrimination, other student concerns (e.g., financial, travel), standards of care to clients, consumers or patients, learning in the workplace, learning guides (i.e., supervisors, mentors), preparation for learning in the workplace, and university policies and procedures (see Cooper et al., 2010, p. 148). While not all areas were labelled specifically as 'risks', the authors stressed the importance and necessity for developing and implementing effective strategies for responding to, or managing these areas. It was also advised that any strategies developed need to be consistent with the legal, ethical and cultural frameworks relevant to the specific context of the WIL experience.

Further to the work of Cooper et al., (2010), Cameron (2016) examined risk in WIL using an Enterprise Risk Management lens, where he identified 34 issues or 'risks' and categorized these as strategic, legal, ethical, operational, reputational or financial risks. Strategic risks are those that affect the organization's (or a person's) ability to achieve their own goals (Cameron, 2017). Legal risks are, "events or circumstance that exposes the university to the possibility of liability or non-compliance with external or internal rules and regulations" (Cameron, 2020, p. 30). Issues that are contrary to ethical practice, or presents a conflict between two or more characteristics of ethical practice (i.e., an ethical dilemma) can be categorized as ethical risks. Sources of ethical risk relate to the workplace setting, student misconduct, and gatekeeping by academic staff who teach, coordinate, monitor and assess WIL courses (Cameron et al., 2019). Operational risks are any issues that affect the day-to-day activities (or processes) of the host, institution and student necessary to achieve their respective goals (i.e., participation in the WIL program), (Ackley et al., 2007). These risks can occur before, during and after the WIL experience and are closely related to legal risk. Reputational risk are issues that affect the image, brand, standing or public perception of the institution (Cameron, 2016), host organization and potentially the specific WIL program in which the student is enrolled. This risk is generally a consequence of the stakeholder failing to manage another risk type (Cassidy et al., 2001). It is worth noting, that while some issues sit clearly within one category, some may cross over and contribute to other risk types. While Cameron (2016) categorized different risks, he points out that it is being able to

identify the risks, rather than categorizing them that is the important part of the risk management process.

Ethical risks have been further examined, in the Canadian context, by Cameron et al. (2019). WIL practitioners from HEIs identified ethical risks related to their own conduct as well as that of students and the host organizations. Four themes of ethical risk were highlighted in the case studies: making exceptions to rules, disclosure of stakeholder issues, negotiating competing stakeholder interests, and cooperative education versus employment (Cameron et al., 2019). The authors recommended the application of these ethical risks to existing risk management frameworks in HEIs and to raise awareness of these risks in different WIL contexts.

Effeney (2020) undertook a systematic review of risk in WIL and commented that the topic was under-researched, and the majority of articles he found were related to risks in medical or allied health disciplines (mainly nursing). In New Zealand, the limited literature associated with risk and WIL has focused on specific aspects of risk, usually within one of the professional health disciplines (see for example, Adamson, 2006; Apaitia-Vague et al., 2011; Minton & Birks, 2019). The identified risks have primarily focused on the student including exposure of students to critical incidents or trauma, the suitability of students for specific WIL environments, discrimination of students, and bullying in the workplace.

Recently, the authors have added to the discourse (Fleming & Hay, 2021), examining how risk was defined and perceived by those involved in WIL, from 28 disciplines, across eight New Zealand universities. Health and safety, conduct and characteristics of students, conduct of the host organization (including exploitation and physical safety of students), and reputation of the university were perceived by WIL staff as high risk. Other risks identified included intellectual property, contracts or agreements, and the educational quality of the WIL experience. These issues expose the university to operational and legal risks. Exploring these further, with a focus on the students as a priority stakeholder, the authors found that significant risks for students undertaking WIL related to the readiness and suitability of the student, the learning environment, and student safety (Hay & Fleming, 2021).

As Cameron (2020) advises, managing risks in WIL is an important issue for universities, bearing in mind the strategic value of WIL. Responsibility for assessing and managing risk in WIL should largely be a shared function across all stakeholders. As a finding from his cross-institutional and interdisciplinary study, undertaken in Australia, he identified six interrelated characteristics for effective risk management: balance, collaboration, relationship management, resourcing, risk literacy and systems-driven risk management (Cameron & Orrell, 2021; Cameron et al., 2019). These characteristics emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement and relationships in WIL, to ensure that opportunities are maximized, and possible hazards minimized.

Other approaches to managing risk are described in higher education literature: risk avoidance, risk control (or reduction), risk transfer (or shifting), and risk acceptance (Cameron, 2020). A combination of these may be used to address different risks. In the context of WIL, risk avoidance would mean not having WIL opportunities within curriculum, so is not a realistic management strategy. Risk control (or reduction) involves ensuring that there are clear policies and procedures, due diligence processes in place and good internal systems. Risk transfer, involves shifting responsibility, through insurance and waivers and contracts and is not consistent with the shared responsibility model. Risk acceptance

acknowledges “that if the university wishes to pursue the activity that creates the risk, the risk cannot be avoided, controlled or transferred” (Cameron, 2020, p. 35).

It is important to be aware when developing risk management strategies, the boundaries of responsibility can blur depending on factors such as the length of placement, whether a student is also an employee of the host organization and who is organizing the placement (Cameron et al., 2019; Newhook, 2013). Accreditation or regulatory requirements can also impact on lines of accountability within and external to the HEI and the policies and procedures required to ensure safe and appropriate WIL experiences (Emslie, 2010).

It is clear from the paucity of literature in the New Zealand context, and from the authors’ previous research, (Fleming & Hay, 2021), which indicated a high percentage of staff had little or no understanding of key strategies for managing risk, there is an urgent need to advance knowledge about risk management. Therefore, the focus of this study was to explore strategies to manage risks for students, host organizations and the university.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was undertaken using a mixed methods sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), to enable multiple perspectives, elaboration and triangulation. One important consideration for sequential designs is the order of data collection and analysis. In this study, a survey was initially administered to collect predominantly quantitative data, and this was analyzed in the first phase. Through the analysis, the highest risks in WIL were identified across a wide range of different contexts. For the second phase, an interview guide was developed, with questions designed to collect qualitative data to substantiate and elaborate on the survey findings and to explore further the strategies used to manage specific risks within different discipline and organizational contexts. In this study, the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data was considered equally important in the interpretation of the findings.

### *Context*

The context for this study was WIL undertaken as part of a university education in New Zealand. As there are multiple models and practices of WIL (Wood et al., 2020), the focus of the research was on placement-based WIL, embedded as a curriculum requirement and contributing credit towards a university qualification. In the majority of the WIL programmes described by the participants, students completed at least 100 hours of placement, with some completing over 450 hours. Terminology used to describe the WIL experiences included: practicums, field education, cooperative education, work placements, and clinical practice.

### *Survey*

An online survey was undertaken by WIL staff. Survey participants were recruited through the researchers’ professional networks, using a snowball technique, where participants shared the invitation with their colleagues and networks. Surveys were completed by 64 WIL staff in 2019. The roles of the staff included: placement coordinators (professional and academic staff), WIL course leaders (academic staff), and academic supervisors. For some, they indicated that their role covered more than one of these areas. The majority of participants (59%) had been in their role for over five years, with 4.6% less than two years. Twenty-eight disciplines were represented with the most common being: business, health-related, sport and recreation, arts, science, and social work. The university

where the participants were employed was not disclosed to help ensure anonymity of the survey responses.

A list of risk management strategies (adapted from Cameron, 2016) was provided to participants to indicate their frequency of use (never, sometimes, always, unsure). Participants were also asked to indicate whether they had sought advice about risk in WIL, the type of advice and who this advice may have come from. Descriptive response categories were provided based on the nature of the question. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate frequency distributions as a percentage of total responses. Open ended questions related to resources that participants used, or suggestions for resources that would be helpful. The responses were collated and summarized.

### *Interviews*

The interview participants were recruited in a similar way to the survey participants using researchers' professional networks. The researchers' sought participants from all eight New Zealand universities and endeavored to gain representation from a range of disciplines as well as from legal and health and safety staff in the universities. During 2019 and 2020 eighteen staff were interviewed. Participants included five staff whose work responsibilities related to health and safety, risks or contracts and 13 WIL academic and professional staff. Ten different disciplines were represented; however, these are not identified to help guarantee confidentiality. Individual universities are not identified for the same reason.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted either face to face, or by video call, depending on the location of the researcher and the participant. Participants were asked to describe scenarios related to specific risks and to describe strategies they used to manage these risks. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was undertaken to specifically identify key strategies for specific risks and the data was summarized, by one researcher, and incorporated into the findings in Tables 1-3. To ensure rigour and consistency, the data summaries were then cross-checked by the other researcher.

Ethics approval was granted by each of the authors' university ethics committees (Reference numbers: 19/110 and 4000020718).

## FINDINGS

Initially, survey findings are summarized, focusing on the advice WIL staff received in relation to risk, and the risk management strategies they used (from a list provided to them). The key themes from the interview participants are identified and strategies used for managing risk for students, host organizations and universities are presented.

Risk management in WIL is a complex process and so it was not unexpected that 71% of WIL staff surveyed had sought advice in relation to managing risks in WIL. The most common source of advice came from university staff within their own institution (31%), or other staff involved with WIL (19%), but these staff were not lawyers or in roles related to health and safety. Interestingly, only a small percentage of participants had sought advice from a university lawyer (15%) or from a health and safety officer (13%). Very few indicated they sought advice external to the university or directly from host organizations.

The advice WIL staff received was typically related to processes and systems, clarification about risks and how to address these, or clarity on university policy. Advice on guidelines, policies or practices related to health and safety were most frequently mentioned. Also, it was common to seek advice related to a specific incident or case, or for approval of WIL related documents. These examples were consistent responses from both survey and interview participants.

Less than half the WIL staff surveyed, (41%), indicated they had used specific resources to help them identify or manage risk. Of those that had used resources the following were mentioned: workshops, journals, texts, online resources, webinars, legislation, policies, government websites, and networking. However, there was a common theme across the survey and interview findings about the need for clear and concise guidelines that cover key risk management strategies that WIL practitioners could apply in their own practice.

### *Risk Management Strategies*

A list of risk management strategies, (adapted from Cameron, 2016), was provided to survey participants to indicate their frequency of use. Seventy eight percent of participants always used placement agreements or learning agreements. Other common strategies were codes of conduct (always = 54%), privacy guidelines (always = 51%) and health and safety assessments (always = 45%). Only 30% indicated they 'always' used site visits (either before or during placement), yet over 45% indicated 'sometimes'. The use of guidelines as a risk management strategy was variable, with privacy guidelines the more commonly used (always = 50%). However, the least common use was of guidelines for sexual and workplace harassment (never = 41%), or equity and inclusion (never = 35%). Participants were asked to suggest other strategies for managing risk in WIL, and their responses included: clear communication; developing strong relationships with host organizations, and effective pre-placement preparation.

Interview participants described scenarios from their experiences, and shared the practices they used for managing specific risks. Using the key themes identified from this data, along with the current literature related to this topic (see for example Cameron, 2016, 2017; Cameron et al., 2020), strategies that can be used for managing risk have been determined. Key strategies are presented for the common risks in WIL for students (Table 1), host organizations (Table 2), and universities (Table 3).

The risks listed in the tables were previously identified by the authors in an earlier phase of this study (see Fleming & Hay, 2021), and aligned with specific examples provided by the interview participants. The key risks for students, and strategies for managing these risks, are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Managing risks for students.

| <b>Risks for students</b>   | <b>Strategies to manage risk</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Health and safety</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-placement preparation on health, safety and risk in the workplace.</li> <li>• Require health and safety induction and document completion.</li> <li>• Site visit or due diligence/vetting process undertaken by university.</li> <li>• Appropriate supervision.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Conduct of host organization</b><br>(e.g., appropriate activities, exploitation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear guidelines provided for host that describes expectations and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Placement agreements/other contractual arrangements.</li> <li>• Appropriate due diligence/ vetting of host.</li> <li>• Regular communication from the university.</li> <li>• Feedback on student experience.</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Student conduct</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-placement preparation: expectations/ responsibilities clearly documented.</li> <li>• Pre-placement preparation includes student/professional conduct guidelines.</li> <li>• Learning agreements.</li> <li>• Alignment of student with host requirements for skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• Appropriate supervision with feedback.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Intellectual Property (IP)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student aware of university policies and/or guidelines.</li> <li>• IP clause included in learning agreement or separate agreement negotiated prior to starting placement.</li> </ul>   |

The comments shared by interview participants highlighted an overarching concern that the student was the stakeholder most at risk in a WIL experience. For example,

a risk to the students will be that it doesn't actually offer the range of learning experiences that they need in order to evidence their learning... and that they don't have the people around them to coach, mentor and grow their ideas.

Further comments highlighted risks to the student in the workplace environment, "there are some organizations that aren't gender, transgender friendly, they aren't accessible, disabled friendly ... so there is a risk to students so that's why we need to ensure that we have approved these partner organizations." The risk of physical or psychological harm are specific areas that need to be managed well. Good pre-placement preparation and workplace inductions were identified as essential strategies to help minimize these risks. Equally important is the suitability and preparation of the host organization, to ensure expectations and responsibilities are clear so that the student learning experience is maximized, while minimizing risks to the student. For example, as one participant commented, "we have guidelines... for students around expectations, ... and the work place supervisors also have a handbook... to reinforce expectations right from the start."

Similar to the risk for students, a significant risk for host organizations (see Table 2) related to health and safety. There are clear government regulations (Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 2016, LI 2016/13(N.Z.) that guide the management of risks related to workplace health and safety. However, what is important in the WIL context is ensuring that the student, particularly when on an unpaid placement, is given the appropriate induction and training, to ensure that the host organization meets their workplace health and safety obligations.

TABLE 2: Managing risks for the host organization.

| <b>Risks for host organization</b>         | <b>Strategies to manage risk</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Health and Safety</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk management practices adhere to the Health and Safety at Work Act.</li> <li>• Health and safety induction for students and clear processes for incident reporting.</li> <li>• Clear policies and practices for preventing harassment, workplace bullying and discrimination.</li> <li>• Appropriate training, mentoring and supervision.</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Conduct of student in the workplace</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear expectations of knowledge and skills required.</li> <li>• Selection process - student alignment with expectations.</li> <li>• Learning agreement, including specified activities and outcomes.</li> <li>• Workplace induction process</li> <li>• Appropriate supervision.</li> <li>• Timely communication with university if issues arise.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Privacy and Confidentiality</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear expectations described in student agreements.</li> <li>• Include expectations in workplace induction.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Intellectual Property</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear agreement negotiated with student consistent with university policies.</li> </ul>   |

Risks for the host organization were also focused on the conduct or characteristics of students, such as, student competency for the required tasks or un-professional behavior. As one participant explained,

you have got young people coming through who are learning. For some it might be the first time they have had engagement in a professional workplace and might not really know some of the expectations. Some may have found their behaviours were fine during study but these are not fine in the workplace.

Student conduct was a key concern from participants in the disciplines where students were interacting with clients, patients or the public. Strategies suggested to manage these risks included clear selection processes to ensure alignment with capabilities required, pre-placement preparation, and clear workplace induction processes. These are all aimed to ensure students are aware of the expectations for professional behavior.

Some participants, particularly in science, technology and health disciplines raised concerns about the risks to host organizations related to confidentiality of information, commercially sensitive material and intellectual property. For example, “an employer trains a student, invests in them, and when they leave, they may take with them commercially sensitive information that then subsequently comes into

their competitors hands.” Having clear expectations or contractual arrangements between the student and the host organization around ownership of intellectual property and confidentiality was seen as a strategy to help manage these risks.

Risks for universities, and strategies for managing these risks are presented in Table 3. The most common risk for universities was perceived as reputational risk. Any of the risks for students or host organizations, if not managed appropriately, can result in reputational risk for the university.

TABLE 3: Managing risks for universities.

| <b>Risks for university</b> | <b>Strategies to manage risk</b>   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Reputational</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process for assessing students’ suitability for placement due to health, disability or other factors.</li> <li>• Appropriate policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Clear communication and relationship management strategies.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Operational</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate course design.</li> <li>• Recruiting and due diligence processes for hosts</li> <li>• Student suitability and preparation.</li> <li>• Adequate resources (time and staff).</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>WIL staff capability</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate risk management guidelines/ resources for WIL staff.</li> <li>• Support and guidance provided by university health, safety and risk staff.</li> </ul>   |

Important strategies for managing reputational risk include the internal processes for assessing a student’s suitability for placement. As one participant acknowledged, “our students are representing the university through their ability, behaviour and conduct.” In addition, having clear policies and procedures in place, and good relationship management approaches are also critical to managing reputational risk. The survey findings presented earlier, highlighted that the use of formal strategies such as learning agreements, university policies and guidelines was inconsistent and at times non-existent. Instead, many participants aligned themselves with a more relational approach to managing risk, for example pre-placement preparation for students and host organizations.

Operational risks, affecting day to day activities, are linked closely to both reputational risks and WIL staff capability, and can occur before, during, or post placement. Strategies for managing operational risks for the university also closely aligned with the strategies described earlier for students and hosts. However, additional strategies to minimize operational risks include having appropriate curriculum design, host recruitment strategies that ensure suitable hosts that align with curriculum requirements, internal systems that support the operations, and good student pre-placement preparation processes.

While not often considered in risk management strategies, WIL staff are also exposed to risk through their roles. Therefore, WIL staff capability is an important consideration for universities. The findings of this research are consistent with studies conducted in other contexts (Cameron, 2020), and clearly indicate that there is a need to provide better support and guidance for staff, in order to improve their ‘risk literacy’.

## SUMMARY

Universities in New Zealand are becoming increasingly concerned with managing their exposure to risks related to WIL activities. However, identifying risks is not enough and a deeper understanding of these risks and relevant management strategies needs to be considered from the perspectives of all stakeholders (Effeney, 2020).

Strategies for managing key risks have been identified through this research, for students, hosts and the university, and have been presented in Tables 1 to 3. While the focus of the strategies was on managing the common risks for each stakeholder, many of these strategies can be applied to multiple risks and also for more than one stakeholder. In summary, the key strategies include:

- Pre-placement preparation
  - Students (expectations and requirements, guidelines for conduct)
  - Hosts (expectations and responsibilities)
- Internal systems (for host and student suitability, incident reporting, communication)
- Host responsibilities (e.g., health and safety induction, supervision, protection of students, alignment, feedback loops)
- Contractual arrangements (e.g., learning agreements, university-host contracts)
- Adequate resources (WIL staff and time, supervision; access to guidelines and expertise)
- Relationship management (communication, feedback processes for all stakeholders)

The strategies presented above align well with the effective risk management characteristics, described in the literature (Cameron & Orrell, 2021; Cameron et al., 2020). Characteristics include: collaboration, balancing opportunities and hazards, relationship management, resourcing, risk literacy and systems driven risk management (Cameron & Orrell, 2021). Stakeholders need to collaborate and share responsibility for managing risks and this aligns with the findings, where strategies are described for students, host organizations and universities. Importantly, collaboration also needs to occur within universities, where knowledge and expertise is shared, particularly between the staff in legal and health and safety roles with those managing WIL programs. The findings of this study indicated that in many universities there is a disconnect between these staff and this needs to be addressed to ensure WIL staff receive the advice and support they need.

Risk can be depicted on a continuum (Cassidy et al., 2001), where it can be positioned on one end as managing a hazard, through to the other end where risk can be viewed as an opportunity. Thus, the risk management strategies presented for each stakeholder, in the tables, help to create the balance, in order that successful WIL experiences and mutual benefits can be achieved. Concurrently potential risks are minimized or managed.

Good relationship management processes are fundamental (Cameron et al., 2020), and critical for the implementation of many of the strategies suggested. These processes include clear and timely communication, and clarity of expectations and obligations. It is also important that internal university systems are designed and supported with appropriate technology to help facilitate relationships and the operational processes involved in WIL, in order to minimize risk. Risk management should be a continuous process (Cooper et al., 2010), including ongoing feedback loops with all stakeholders, as part of regular reviews. Adequate resources are also needed to enable these relationship management approaches to be implemented, along with other strategies such as robust due diligence processes. Such resources need to include money, time, people and technology (Cameron et al., 2020).

The need to improve risk literacy was also another key finding of this study. WIL staff who do not have a basic 'risk literacy', which is built on the concept of 'legal literacy', (see Cameron & Orrell, 2021), create a risk for themselves, students and the university. WIL staff need to be aware of the legal rights and obligations of stakeholders, especially related to university policies and any agreements they sign with host organizations, including areas such as intellectual property, indemnities or insurance (Cameron, 2020).

### *Implications*

While the strategies presented align well with the principles and characteristics of effective risk management, interestingly, and of concern, is that the survey findings indicated that management of different risks appeared to be somewhat ad hoc, often individualized and discipline-specific rather than university-wide. Also of concern, was that while WIL staff had sought advice about managing risk, it was often from their WIL colleagues, with very few having made contact with university health and safety or risk management staff. Clearly there is a need for a more consistent and coordinated approach across many universities that links together the expertise within health, safety, risk management and legal staff and the WIL staff involved at the course level.

Further to internal coordination and development of risk management strategies, the role of external regulators, accrediting bodies and professional associations should also be explored. Disciplines with programme requirements set by these external bodies, for example, nursing, social work and veterinary science, may have additional or specific risks that need to be addressed in any risk management framework. A collaborative and coordinated approach to risk management within the disciplinary boundaries of a jurisdiction would therefore have considerable value (Emslie, 2010).

WIL staff within HEI's are encouraged to draw on the guidelines and strategies provided in this article to help improve their understanding and practice. However, it is also advised that these strategies need to be evaluated in conjunction with the HEI's policies, as well as the legal requirements that impact WIL within their own specific contexts, including, health and safety legislation, labor or education law, as well as any rules prescribed by external professional or regulatory bodies. Failure to do so may expose staff or the HEI to significant legal or ethical risk.

### *Limitations and Further Research*

A limitation of this research lies in the recruitment of participants. Only university staff engaged in WIL were invited to participate. Further, staff who were concerned about their own understanding of risk, or risk management practices, may not have volunteered for the study. The risk management strategies were summarized from the examples provided by the participants, all who were based in New Zealand. However, these are not necessarily the only strategies that could be implemented to minimize risk, particularly in other countries that have differing legal requirements, and this needs to be noted as a limitation of the study.

There is considerably more work that can be done in the New Zealand context around risk in WIL including developing further resources and guidelines for all stakeholders. While the strategies presented here were drawn from university WIL staff experiences, gaining a deeper understanding from the host organization perspective about the risks they consider most important and the strategies they use to manage these risks, would further add to the risk in WIL discourse.

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## About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues dealing with Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE). Since then the readership and authorship has become more international and terminology usage in the literature has favored the broader term of WIL, in 2018 the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning.

In this Journal, WIL is defined as "an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum. Defining elements of this educational approach requires that students engage in authentic and meaningful work-related task, and must involve three stakeholders; the student, the university, and the workplace". Examples of practice include off-campus, workplace immersion activities such as work placements, internships, practicum, service learning, and cooperative education (Co-op), and on-campus activities such as work-related projects/competitions, entrepreneurships, student-led enterprise, etc. WIL is related to, but not the same as, the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training.

The Journal's main aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

The Journal is ongoing financially supported by the Work-Integrated Learning New Zealand (WILNZ), [www.nzace.ac.nz](http://www.nzace.ac.nz) and the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and received periodic sponsorship from the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and the World Association of Cooperative Education (WACE).

## Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL is primarily of two forms: 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of work-integrated learning and, 2) *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider best practice submissions.

*Research publications* should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed description and justification for the methodology employed. A description of the research findings - tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data, and a conclusion preferably including suggestions for further research.

*Topical discussion articles* should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical and scholarly discussion on the importance of the issues, critical insights to how to advance the issue further, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.

*Best practice and program description papers.* On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of best practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or was situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.



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