

Learning in the Workplace and Community Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Victoria University (VU) recognises and applauds the diversity and quality of Learning in the Workplace and Community (LiWC) practices currently in place across the University. This policy recognises LiWC as an important conceptual framework for strengthening learning and teaching at VU. LiWC will enable the University to become a leading 'engaged university', through strategic linkages with the professions, industry and the communities it serves as well as through engaged teaching and learning practices.

(2) This policy provides a University-wide approach to embedding LiWC activities into courses to enhance the student experience and enable our students to become work, future and career ready.

(3) The implementation of this policy is intended to:

- a. provide a context for LiWC with a view to enhancing learning experiences for VU students and staff, and enhanced engagement for industry, the professions and community organisations;
- b. provide a framework for embedding experiential and rich learning activities, integrated with discipline-based curriculum that improves employment and career outcomes;
- c. facilitate students' ongoing development of broad ranging skills and knowledge including Graduate Capabilities, Employability Skills and Student Leadership in the University, workplace and community; and
- d. contribute to the implementation of the Making VU Commitments, in particular Commitment 2: Learning in the Workplace and Community.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(4) Nil

Section 3 - Definitions

(5) Learning in the Workplace and Community (LiWC) - LiWC is an umbrella term that encompasses the many models and integrated approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that involve learning in and through the workplace and community. These LiWC models and approaches may include but are not limited to, projects in a workplace, practical, co-operative and clinical placements, fieldwork, simulated learning environments, apprenticeships, traineeships or internships and enterprise initiatives.

(6) Learning in the Workplace - A teaching and learning approach where individuals conduct work activities (paid or voluntary), including research combined with intentional educational activities. Workplaces may be in the private, public or not-for-profit sectors, ranging from multi-nationals, government agencies, to small to medium enterprises (SMEs), community based agencies and Victoria University itself.

(7) Learning in the Community - A teaching and learning approach that combines community based initiatives with

intentional educational activities. The key emphasis in community learning is that of mutual benefit and reciprocity for the student, the University and the community agency or enterprise.

(8) Simulated learning environment - Students may learn and be assessed in a range of simulated learning environments. This is defined as an environment that closely resembles the real workplace in its function and operation and provides access to a broad range of related experiences and scenarios. In order to qualify as a LiWC activity, the simulation must also be supported by industry/community representatives. The simulated work environment should involve a range of guided activities that reflect real work experience.

(9) Appropriate workplaces - A workplace is considered appropriate for VU Students engaged in LiWC activities if it meets all course/unit of study requirements, all insurance and regulatory requirements, complies with the law and provides a quality learning experience for students.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

Policy Principles

(10) Victoria University is dedicated to ensuring that students experience high quality learning activities that integrate practical experience with the application or development of theoretical knowledge. To this end, all courses will include a focus on integrated LiWC assessment activities. LiWC activities will be flexible and suited to the needs of various disciplines and students and be characterised by:

- a. student preparation for LiWC and subsequent debriefing;
- b. engagement with stakeholders underpinned by mutual benefit;
- c. negotiated learning and assessment that is planned and intentional; and
- d. the provision of rich and contextualised learning experiences that promote reflection and self-directed, action learning.

(11) The key aims of LiWC activities linked to learning outcomes are to deepen students' knowledge of practice in realistic contexts; to further develop their employability and generic skills; and make a significant contribution to graduate work and career readiness.

(12) The LiWC good practice principles underpin the implementation of this policy and must be considered when designing learning in the workplace and community activities. These principles are:

- a. The activity is beneficial for all parties: learner, university and partner organisation.
- b. Learning in the workplace and community is an integral part of the curriculum.
- c. Intended learning outcomes that include generic skills and attributes are clearly defined.
- d. Critical reflection and debriefing on learning from experiences in the workplace and community is an integral part of the activity.
- e. Assessment tasks accurately reflect intended learning outcomes and emphasise authentic products and processes.
- f. Assessment criteria, including levels and standards, are clearly defined.
- g. All parties are adequately prepared for the activity.
- h. Learners are supported in the workplace and community.
- i. The quality of the activity is subject to continuous review and improvement.
- j. The activity is resourced appropriately.

Application

(13) The University is committed to making a minimum of 25% of course assessment apply to learning in the workplace and community activities as a proportion of the total course assessment. To this end, all courses will embed LiWC learning and assessment activities as an integral part of the educational process. The staging of LiWC assessment across a course and the overall time devoted to learning in the workplace and/or community activities will vary greatly depending upon choice of models, professional accreditation and industry-based certification requirements and regulations.

(14) This policy applies to all courses in Higher Education, Vocational Education and Further Education, on-shore and off-shore.

(15) The minimum 25% requirement applies to a whole course and not to each of the units of study that constitute the course. The exception to meeting the required minimum of 25% of LiWC course assessment is for:

- a. those courses where the purpose is clearly identified as return to study or preparation for further study (which may include Honours programs);
- b. courses which are less than 12 months duration (full time equivalent); and
- c. higher degrees by research.

(16) In these courses, where the minimum 25% of course assessment is potentially not achievable, the inclusion of LiWC activities into learning and assessment strategies aligned with stated learning outcomes is encouraged and expected where applicable. Endorsement of these LiWC activities is at the discretion of Faculty of Boards of Studies.

Assessment of LiWC

(17) Formative or summative assessment of LiWC activities may include but is not limited to: individual or team project reports, reflective journals or diaries, practical demonstrations, and oral or written presentations. The assessment must be designed to ensure the engaged learning experiences from LiWC activities are measured. The design of learning and assessment criteria for LiWC may, where applicable, occur via negotiation with workplace supervisors, students and teaching staff.

(18) The directly related preparation and debriefing of students, pre- and post- LiWC activities, should also contribute to the quantification of LiWC assessment requirements.

Settings for LiWC

(19) LiWC activities may take place across a broad range of settings, including but not limited to: industry workplaces or community enterprises, on campus where projects are being completed for a workplace or community enterprise, and or on campus working on a VU-specific project. Utilising a range of LiWC contexts throughout the course will provide diverse opportunities for experiential learning for students.

(20) Simulated and virtual environments are also acceptable sites for learning and assessment within the 25% requirement, in cases where:

- a. courses are preparatory and/or provide a transition for students (this includes work referenced learning where it is more appropriate to achieve learning outcomes);
- b. this is mandated, explicitly or implicitly, by legal and regulatory factors — eg Training Package requirements, OH&S requirements;
- c. shorter course requirements and particular types of curriculum make it appropriate; and
- d. industry or appropriate community representatives have supported the simulated environment as being authentic (including industry-certification assessments that occur on-site at VU).

VU as a LiWC setting

(21) The VU Community is also a valuable site and context for LiWC learning and assessment activities. Where VU students are engaged in LiWC activities at VU, including Student Leadership and other initiatives such as peer mentoring, consideration must be given to: potential conflicts of interest; confidentiality applied to university data; and whether the work is paid or unpaid.

(22) Inappropriate settings for LiWC include those that do not comply with the law or meet VU's insurance or other relevant requirements or are considered unsafe. When designing LiWC activities students may not undertake clinical or other placements in the private businesses of any of their current teaching staff so as to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest. When making professional judgements about what constitutes a suitable and/or appropriate workplace for VU students, staff need to consider the:

- a. mutual benefits, expectations and obligations of the various parties;
- b. quality and relevance of the student learning experience; and
- c. potential risk management issues.

Learning in the Workplace and Community Agreements

(23) The LiWC Guidelines (provided as a separate document) provide relevant information regarding expectations of each party to a LiWC agreement and legal and contractual issues that must be complied with when entering into student-host organisation-Victoria University 'LiWC Agreements.'

(24) A tri-lateral LiWC Agreement must be entered into between VU, the host organisation (which may be VU) and the student and this must specify the learning outcomes to be achieved and the nature of VU's assessment. LiWC Agreements are to be used for all cases where a student and third party are involved, regardless of whether it is an external workplace or not.

(25) When undertaking Learning in the Community opportunities the insurance position of the parties must be investigated and the risks appropriately allocated prior to the student commencing the activity. It is acknowledged that workplaces as legal entities will have the appropriate insurance coverage.

Section 5 - Procedures

(26) See Learning in the Workplace and Community Procedures .

Section 6 - Guidelines

(27) Nil

Status and Details

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