

# Parliamentary internships for rural and regional students

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This paper reports on a work-integrated learning (WIL) internship program: a partnership between the Australian University of New England (UNE) and the New South Wales (NSW) Parliamentary Internship Program (PiP). In particular, it examines and proposes a tailored partnership or cooperative learning approach between university and industry with the student being central to the partnership so as to achieve the maximum fit and relevance to the environment in which the WIL operates. The paper recognizes and advances a rural-centric approach for rural and regionally based university interns in an effort to contribute to development of consensus of the WIL experience. (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 2015, 16(1), 1- 11)

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Work-integrated learning (WIL) at a university level provides students with the opportunity to apply their undergraduate/graduate learning in the workplace. It provides workplace supervisors with an opportunity to engage with university education. WIL is 'designed to assist a student to make the transition from dependent institutional learner into the role of autonomous, interdependent professional practitioner' (Bates, Bates & Thompson (2013, p. 20). However, there is a lack of consensus in the preparation of higher education students for employment (Patrick, Peach, Pockness, Webb, Fletcher, & Pretto, 2008). To contribute to development of consensus of the WIL experience this paper reports on a non-metropolitan or rural-centric WIL internship program: a partnership between the Australian University of New England (UNE) and the New South Wales (NSW) Parliamentary Internship Program (PiP). Unlike generic university WIL programs, the PiP was tailored toward one industry: NSW Parliament, and involved work placement with rural and regional Members of Parliament (MPs). This paper provides an introduction to the literature details the PiP model including its outcomes and implications for practitioners plus identifies future research. An argument is made for improving WIL through a single industry partnered internship program.

## BACKGROUND

Studies on WIL are found in the academic literature; however, it is unique to narrow WIL to the specific requirements of a rural-centric experience for and by rural and regionally located university students. This paper reports on an internship program that aimed to address this gap by delivering a university parliamentary internship experience, specifically for rural and regional students, placed with a rural and/or regionally located MP in New South Wales.

An identifying feature of the WIL literature is that it is divided into two broad segments: one focusing on the experience - theory aspect (Cooper, Orell, & Bowden, 2010; Howard 2004; Poell & van der Krogt 2006; Watts, 2009), and the other on the politic and public policy motivation of governments (see Emslie, 2011; Franz, 2008; McLennan & Keating, 2008). This study falls into the former group. Of this group, Cooper et al. (2010, p.43-54) identify three

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distinct WIL styles; professional work-integrated learning, service learning, and co-operative learning. In particular, the cooperative learning model emphasizes that:

Strong and effective relationships with employers are characteristic of cooperative learning. Employers are key participants in the delivery of cooperative education placements. Employers participate if the cooperative programmes provide access to students who meet their needs as employers, that is, students who have a strong understanding of their discipline or vocational area, are work-ready and able to respond to competitive workplace challenges. These partnerships are reciprocal: in turn, employers provide student access to employment and opportunities to apply current theories to the workplace, and can provide feedback to the academy about the relevance and strengths of various programmes for business and industry. (Cooper et al., 2010, 51)

When applied to internships, co-operative learning emphasizes the need for a partnership between employers, students and university. In the case of an internship this extends to the need for a strong reciprocal tri-way relationship between the intern, industry supervisor and university. Program success is dependent on having formed and implemented a partnered or collaborative approach (Choy & Delahaye, 2011; Haddara & Skanes, 2007; Lampe & Rothman, 2004; Rizzetti & Smith, 2005; Streumer & Kho, 2010; Watts 2009). This partnered /collaborative approach was identified as an important element for the PiP model as was the matter of rurality.

Issues of rurality, equality of access and opportunity are dominated in the literature by professional learning theory (Gum 2007; Mollenkopf, 2009; Playford, Larson, & Wheatland, 2006; Richards, O'Neill, Jones, Davis, & Krebs, 2011; White & Reid, 2008). A theme of the literature is the focus on metropolitan students experience in rural settings (Campbell & Yates, 2011; Goodnough & Mulcahy, 2011; Grant, Bainbridge, Copeman-Stewart, Rosemin, & Shelly, 2008; Pasley & Poole, 2009; Peach, Trembath, & Fensling, 2004; Webster, Lopez, Allnut, Clague, Jones & Bennett, 2010) as well as rural university students undertaking rural nursing or education practicums (Molinari & Monserud, 2009; Ryan, Jones, & Walta, 2012; White & Reid, 2008). A theme in this later literature is the importance ascribed to a person's rural or regional background and the likely success of their rural or regionally located experience (Molinari & Monserud, 2009). Theorists identify rural educated and located nurses, teachers and professionals as belonging to a distinct rural academic field (Cloke, 2006). Rurality, and its maxim metro-centricity, is a core attribute to the PiP as it sought to recognize the legitimate place of rurality within the internship experience, as well as enabling access for rural university students to achieve the same level of opportunity to politics, namely internships involving MP's and NSW Parliament House. The PiP provides rural based students with opportunities currently restricted to their metropolitan counterparts and counter the perception that,

Regional values are perceived as crude or rustic, certainly as inferior, and this may extend to the implication that regional residents do not have the same standard of needs as their city-based cousins. From this follows the assumption that they can make do with less. (Archer, 2000, para. 18)

As the literature on WIL and rurality is limited, elements of each component were drawn together to inform the PiP approach. To this was added the matter of leadership. Lampe & Rothman (2004, p. 13), state, the "key to a successful internship is leadership" and thereby a

“passion” for “real-world work employment” experience. Collectively, these elements shaped the PiP model.

#### THE MODEL IN PRACTICE

Following its initial launch, the UNE-NSW Parliament Internship Program (PiP) began with raising academic awareness and recruitment of students and supervisors. Final year students from the rural and regional university campus were invited to engage with this innovative program. Common attributes of students seeking participation in the PiP were an academic and career interest in law, education, community, politics and public policy. As suggested by Lampe & Rohamn (2004, p. 14), a natural selection process can occur and this could explain who does and who does not choose take on an internship.

The availability of an internship that was ‘rural on rural’ or rural-centric was unique and generated immense enthusiasm for the PiP amongst students and MP’s. Choy and Delahaye (2011, p. 170) assert, “WIL is premised on a learning partnership where the power over the curriculum and pedagogy are shared. It invariably involves learning by both partners (university and organization)”. Watts (2009, p. 65) states that a “third [essence exists. It] is the active involvement of students in such learning experiences, including explicit attention to processes designed to inform, support and enrich their aspirations and goals: this is the essence of career development learning, and it is what such learning distinctively brings to the table.” Hence, the PiP’s emphasis on collaboration and partnership made it attractive to student and supervising MP, which acted to further tighten the tri-way relationship between the intern, industry supervisor and the university.

Over the course of a semester students were placed with a NSW MP. Administered by UNE Careers, students were interviewed and if successful placed in a participating MP’s office. From the university’s perspective, and to ensure that the internship counted in the student’s award, students were enrolled in either the UNE’s generic six credit point WORK [experience] 300 (undergraduate) or 500 (postgraduate) papers. As the PiP was a pilot program - no unique six-credit point unit was sought.

WORK 300 and 500 required the students to assign 120 hours to their internship. This resulted in exposure of PiP students to a significant amount of on-the-job electorate experience followed by time at NSW Parliament House. This structure facilitated opportunities for the PiP students and the MP and his/her office staff to invest considerable resources of time and effort into the PiP student, the experience, and student’s assessment. This links to Watts (2009, p. 65) who asserts that “attention is needed to ways of giving such [WIL] experiences value in terms of the currency of higher education, which is assessment and accreditation”.

The PiP’s key academic assessment focused upon a research project. Being a final or post-graduate student, it was expected that he/she would then bring to the internship a capability to research and as a rural/regional student, a specialized awareness/empathy for rural and regional matters. This shared attribute between student and rural or regional MP was important as it enabled a common understanding and bond to be forged between the two parties. A concern for rural-centricity was expectantly a common focus to intern research projects. This extended to on-the-job reported observations and experiences by and between the intern and the MP for instance, matters raised and discussed with constituents, fellow rural and regional MPs, within the local media, lobbyists and parliamentary debate. As

Atkinson, Rizzetti, and Smith (2005, p. 38) state “WIL provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in the workplace where they apply the problem-solving skills and discipline-based theory learned in their formal education to an authentic context as a colleague and employee, with all the responsibilities and expectations such a role entails.”

A key aim of the PiP was to forge a rural-centric approach. In doing so, a rural university and political leader or ‘champion’ for the PiP was deemed important (Lampe & Rothman, 2004). Richard Torbay then MP for Northern Tablelands (where UNE is located), NSW Speaker of the Legislative Assembly between 2007-2011 and Chancellor of UNE (2008-2013) was the PiP’s industry advocate and mentor. Richard Torbay as a champion of interns and proponent of politics as a career, stated in the NSW Parliament:

Regional universities offer many advantages and opportunities for students. However, until now, students seeking a real boost for a career in politics through an internship program have been obliged to enrol at metropolitan universities. Until this year, metropolitan universities exclusively provided New South Wales political internships. With the creation of this new Rural and Regional Student Internship Program the UNE has become the flag-bearer for work experience in politics in regional New South Wales. It is the first of its type for a rural university and offers an excellent opportunity for country students wishing to pursue a career in politics... this is a positive initiative. I urge members of all political persuasions representing regional electorates to consider signing up, becoming involved in the program and introducing the next generation of politicians to the challenges and rewards of representing regional communities in Parliament. (Torbay, 2009, p.18082)

As the above quote highlights the PiP’s industry advocate believed in the program and of its importance in providing a WIL opportunity for rural and regionally based university students. This also provided internal industry support (within Parliament and from fellow MPs) for the program and thereby legitimization. Nadar (1998) informs that such people:

have an ability to see how different aspects of a situation fit together and influence each other. They seek out alliances, opportunities, and approach goals in a proactive way. They have a positive effect on others, which attracts support from those who have similar needs for accomplishment. Their self confidence creates a belief in other people’s abilities. (p. 8)

Added to this, the PiP benefited from the administrative support of NSW Parliament. The high level of interest, ongoing support and educational merit ascribed to the PiP by the NSW Parliamentary Education and Community Relations office provided the necessary industry engagement and involvement in the program. As highlighted by Lampe and Rothman (2004, p. 13), the “key to a successful internship is leadership” and thereby a “passion” for the program. Hence a ‘team’ leadership approach was developed. Interns especially liked this arrangement as it enabled them to maintain a university link and hence academic supervision and at the same time be actively connected and engaged within the political workplace.

### *Academic component*

The academic component of the PiP was structured upon UNE's generic WORK 300 and 500 unit (University of New England 2010a & 2010b). At the start of the internship period, the student met with their university administrative (UNE Careers) and academic supervisor either virtually or in-person. This involved more than one meeting where student and UNE staff were able to pose questions, establish the expectations of the program, distribute assessment information and identify direct lines of communication. In sum, actively build a rapport or 'community' with one another (Choy & Delahaye, 2011). With the official appointment of an internship, the 'community' would include their industry supervisors. Building and upholding a sense of community or relationship is an important attribute of rurality (Barlow & Cocklin., 2003; Neal, 2009, Chapter 5; Ryan et al., 2012, p.59) as community represents the "key knot... [in] the... relationship between the personal, rural identity, inclusion and belonging" (Neal 2009, p. 11) it was important that the PiP relationships were constructed to reflect these matters. Subsequently, a sense of community was a highly regarded PiP attribute reported on by the interns and MP supervisors.

A core goal of the PiP assessment was the experience needed to be meaningful and purpose orientated (Lampe & Rothman, 2004). The students were required to complete 120 hours of experience plus 30 hours of additional study and preparation time as set out in the WORK 300 and 500 unit. The unit:

enables students to apply their academic knowledge in a workplace context, and to reflect and report on the experience, thus increasing their level of career readiness. The work includes: (1) not less than 120 hours of directed investigation, project work or other appropriate academic or professional activity in a host workplace; and (2) not less than 30 hours of additional study and assignment preparation.... Before enrolling, a student must (a) contact Careers Advisor, Student Assist (careers.service@une.edu.au); (b) negotiate with an academic supervisor the assessment tasks to be undertaken; (c) identify and contact a prospective host employer; (d) register with the Student Assist Workready(sic) Program and complete the WorkReady Preparation Program. (University of New England 2010a & 2010b, para.11)

PiP's model acts to: (a) fulfill the academic requirements of the unit and (b) of the expectations had by the industry partner: NSW Parliament and supervising MPs.

To facilitate this, the MP and his/her office staff had a significant input into what would be the focus of the intern's research project. In the first 20 hours of the internship, the intern and the MP and his/her office staff, through discussion and negotiation, finalized the operational details of their relationship. Typically the intern would agree upon a number of electorate issues they would research. The MP would then discuss this with the intern in light of his/her need or interest along with the expectation that the research be achievable and completed within 120 hours. These details were reviewed by the academic supervisor for comments and suggestions. This proved to be a successful approach as it enabled the parties to identify priorities for research, afford the opportunity for an early and strong interaction between the intern and the MP and/or office and academic supervisor. This enabled a sense of community to arise. Tackett, Wolf, & Law, (2001, p. 54) purport that "for ...[an] internship to be a success, both the employer and employee must share the same perceptions about the internship and what the student can bring to the internship experience."

To facilitate the progression and undertaking of the project two other elements were included in the assessment. The first being an initial report on the first 20 hours of the internship by the student which was a 1000 word submission weighted at 20% of the overall assessment result. The purpose of the initial report was to identify that the internship had begun, what the research project was, and that it had been agreed to by student and supervisor. At the same time, UNE Careers were in regular contact with each student and the MPs Offices to ensure that any matters of concern were identified and addressed.

The required information was to be organized around specific, measurable, agreed to, realistic and time bound (SMART) goals (see Haughey, 2009, O'Neill & Conzemius 2006). The purpose of SMART goals is to narrow and thereby focus projects around four key attributes for example, demonstrating that it is realistic and time bound. Somerick (2001, p. 25) highlights that structuring assessments so that they "enable [the student] to apply knowledge learned in class and to perform professional quality work in a real-world situation" is important. It then "must be documented, and its quality must be assessed if the intern's performance in the workplace is to be managed effectively."

The second element was comprised of an e-portfolio designed to reflect the 120 hours of internship experience. The intern was required to frame their submission around the SMART goals they had presented on in their first assessment; though this time, through the lens of completion as opposed to starting and shaping their research submission. Barrett, (2005), (as cited in Barbera, Almirall-Hill, Ahumada, & Mora 2007, p. 3) states:

The portfolio can be understood as an educational resource, the principal aim of which is to provide evidence for, and evaluate the progress made by a student during his or her learning process. It is essentially made up of a collection of evidence of learning that the student selects analyses and presents with the aim of displaying or demonstrating the achievement levels reached in terms of process and product.

The e-portfolio enabled the student to identify and explain why the project could not achieve or why, for example, a lack of data or an outcome was at variance with expectations. It was a 3,000 - 4,000 word submission and represents a substantial piece of work. The significance of the assignment was reflected in the 50% overall assessment weighting ascribed to it. A second element to the assessment was the student's self-reflection on their internship experience. In particular, students were asked to provide in a narrative form a detailed appraisal or self-review. The assessment necessitated students reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their project plus the internship experience. This enabled the "experience to have true meaning. Reflection is the *filter* through which students can make relevant conceptual connections between what they are trying to learn and what they have already learned or experienced" (Fifolt & Searby, 2011, p. 61). The final element required students keep a diary (or timesheet) of when the 120 hours of their internship was undertaken. The record needed to be validated with the supervising MP or his/her office manager's signature.

Ensuring the academic integrity of the internship program was paramount. To achieve this; (a) all assessments were monitored and then evaluated in accordance with the university's six credit point requirement and then that of the unit's learning outcomes and graduate attributes (University of New England, 2010a and 2010b), (b) there was written and verbal evidence that the student could draw from so as to attest to their internship experience including workplace accountability within the MP's office and Parliamentary environment, and (c) there was a record of the intern's and the MP's experience of having supervised them, in the final research report. Hence it is important that an internship reflect a strong

relationship between industry and academia by each responding to the needs of the other. (Cooper et al., 2010; Lord, Sumrall, & Sambandam, 2011).

In addition to spending the majority of the internship time in the MP's office, students travelled to NSW Parliament House. This normally took place in the last three days of the internship in order to coincide with Parliament sitting days. A co-share financial support arrangement existed (funded by the PiP and the student) and enabled the rural and regional based student to attend NSW Parliament. Financial support of \$1000 per student by the PiP enabled the student to stay in close-proximity to NSW Parliament House and in moderate hotel accommodation as well as travel to and from Sydney. Students paid for other costs that included meals, local travel and personal expenses. Students viewed time spent at NSW Parliament House as the pinnacle of the internship. Requiring the students to undertake their parliamentary experience at the end of the internship was deliberate so that they could: (a) draw on their prior learning/experience they had had in the electorate office, (b) for the MP to share the student's research report with other MP's, or in Hansard and (c) enable the student to view and learn about parliamentary politics and the significance of parliament to the rural/regional politician. It introduced the student to the administration of politics namely the role of the media, parliamentary staff, political party administration, ministers, debate and the passage of legislation. Being at NSW Parliament House equipped the intern to move from localized electorate matters to state ones as well as observe and be part of, the administration of parliamentary politics. To facilitate this, the academic coordinator or UNE Careers (hence university partner) would travel to NSW Parliament to meet with the interns as well as the MP and his/her staff, the Parliamentary Education and Community Relations office and Richard Torbay. This was done so that a continuum of academic support for the student, as well as to uphold or maintain a continuum of community or relationship, had been the intern, industry supervisor and the university, which is an important attribute to rurality and establishing a PiP community.

## OUTCOMES

To demonstrate the effectiveness of WIL reflective assessment using self-efficacy, comments were collected from students and their supervising MPs at the end of their PiP (Woodley & Beattie, 2010).

To demonstrate the effectiveness of WIL, reflective assessment using self-efficacy comments were collected from students and their supervising MPs at the end of their PiP (Woodley & Beattie, 2010). This feedback was predominately written with verbal comments documented. The researchers were attuned to comments that revealed a growing self-efficacy and work-efficacy of students. That is, the intern had been treated professionally, been assigned interesting and substantial tasks, been provided with opportunities to interact with MPs (Pecorella & Stonecash, 2013) and expressed a sense of identification with the cultural and professional norms of MPs (Bates, Bates, & Bates, 2007). Participants reported on their experiences, the PiP model and the positive learning gained from the WIL experience. As an experience, students and supervising MPs described the experience as, "satisfying", "exciting", "amazing", "invaluable", "confirming", "exceptional" and "worthwhile". This suggested that the participants' experience of the PiP model was positive and beneficial. In terms of the construct of the PiP model; a rural-centric construct tailored to a single industry, interns commented on the cooperative learning or relationships of the experience. For example, Student A reported, "There was a strong sense of community... the

Parliamentary Internship Program has enriched, [my] university experience 10 fold. It has been a fantastic opportunity and I am proud to say that I was part of". And Student B wrote:

I believe that the Parliamentary Internship Program provides a very positive experience for both the Intern and the Mentor. I would encourage any student considering applying for the Parliamentary Internship Program to do so, and take full advantage of the exceptional opportunities and personal development that comes with participating.

Of the learning gained from participation in a WIL politics experience a strong focus was placed on how the assessment design supported this experience and how WIL enabled the student to ascertain if politics was a career for them. In terms of assessment design comments included; "I have thoroughly enjoyed the research project and feel that I have achieved some good outcomes... I appreciate the extra responsibilities given to me within the...[MPs] office, this accelerated my learning and allowed me to apply my degree." Another stated that: "everyone I met was so encouraging and helpful in terms of my current study and the prospects of my future career". Also a MP commented:

having studied politics myself at university, as a late aged student, I saw the theory and practical application in reverse in the sense that I had been undertaking the practical application for some years and as such I was able to look at the theory from a practical viewpoint. Likewise I would believe that the internship program can assist students in the sense that they have theory impressed upon them by the university regime and can catch a glance at the practical application of that theory as part of the Parliamentary Internship Program.

In terms of how WIL enabled the student to ascertain if politics was a career for them interns comments included: "I cannot recommend the Parliamentary Internship highly enough for those people hoping to enter into an aspect of politics or government, or even thinking about it as a career option", "the PiP has been a career confirming experience"; "the Parliamentary Internship Program has been the most satisfying experience of my university life" and from an MP "I believe the program is very worthwhile particularly for those who might consider a career in politics whether it be at the cutting edge of becoming a Member or within the policy making or public affairs of politics."

Together these findings suggested that the PiP model, including the academic assessment criteria, plus the day-to-day opportunity for the intern to engage in the electorate and parliamentary setting with an MP, enabled a strong relationship to be then forged. It also enabled the intern to apply their academic research skills to a project that was desired by the MP and one that he/she was able to engage in and supervise of significance to him/her. Students reported that the experience gave them a high level of satisfaction and for many, insight into and subsequent motivation to pursue a career in politics or public administration. For the MP, the PiP enabled them to have someone to share his/her 'trade'. Further, the constant stream of rural and regional MP's requesting to have, or when approached, willingly accepted a PiP intern reflects on the merit and value ascribed by the industry's MP's to the program. In addition, the NSW Parliamentary and Community Relations office reported that metropolitan MP's had asked to join the program.

The idea of expanding the model to a metropolitan setting, whilst plausible, would challenge the tailored rural-centric WIL internship program. Where scope could possibly exist to do this and thereby extend the PiP to reach to the metropolitan environment, it would be in creating a metro-centric PiP for UNE's online metropolitan students or have them engage in



the rural-centric designed PiP. The challenge would be to ensure the model's theory and provide a basis for further research into sustained benefits to and influence upon participants.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

The PiP model reveals that a single industry tailored approach can boost the chance of a WIL success. That is, success in terms of value ascribed by student and supervisor, and the ongoing demand for it. Further, the PiP demonstrated that a rural-centric WIL program that places significant value on co-operative learning and a strong relationship approach among the intern, industry supervisor and the university is essential to achieving success, plus evaluation needs to be contextual and realistic (Deves, 2011).

#### CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STEPS

As universities, students and professional based entities seek to explore new WIL ideas and opportunities, a case for tailoring a program toward a single industry has been made. Such tailoring is about ensuring maximum fit and relevance to the environment in which the WIL operates in, for example, a rural-centric approach for rural and regionally based university interns. At the same, a one on one or collaborative relationship between university and industry must be forged. In this research, the case of the UNE-NSW Parliamentary Internship Program (PiP) the university and the parliament depended on the contribution and input of the other. Sharing the premise that the student is central to the partnership essentially bound the two together. Added to this, an important aspect was the role of the champion's voice advancing the benefits the program.

The continuance of the PiP however is uncertain, as the pilot phase is completed. It requires further funding to support students. Finally, it is recognized that scope exists for research to be undertaken, for instance expanding the PiP to another rural and regional university or universities exploring how the model could cater for metropolitan located students while ensuring its currency with higher education through demonstration of its worth.

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## About the Journal

The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education publishes peer-reviewed original research, topical issues, and best practice articles from throughout the world dealing with Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Work Integrated Learning/Education (WIL).

In this Journal, Co-op/WIL is defined as an educational approach that uses relevant work-based projects that form an integrated and assessed part of an academic program of study (e.g., work placements, internships, practicum). These programs should have clear linkages with, or add to, the knowledge and skill base of the academic program. These programs can be described by a variety of names, such as work-based learning, workplace learning, professional training, industry-based learning, engaged industry learning, career and technical education, internships, experiential education, experiential learning, vocational education and training, fieldwork education, and service learning.

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

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Before submitting a manuscript, please ensure that the 'instructions for authors' has been followed ([www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors](http://www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors)). All manuscripts are to be submitted for blind review directly to the Editor-in-Chief ([editor@apjce.org](mailto:editor@apjce.org)) by way of email attachment. All submissions of manuscripts must be in MS Word format, with manuscript word counts between 3,000 and 5,000 words (excluding references).

All manuscripts, if deemed relevant to the Journal's audience, will be double blind reviewed by two reviewers or more. Manuscripts submitted to the Journal with authors names included will have the authors' names removed by the Editor-in-Chief before being reviewed to ensure anonymity.

Typically, authors receive the reviewers' comments about a month after the submission of the manuscript. The Journal uses a constructive process for review and preparation of the manuscript, and encourages its reviewers to give supportive and extensive feedback on the requirements for improving the manuscript as well as guidance on how to make the amendments.

If the manuscript is deemed acceptable for publication, and reviewers' comments have been satisfactorily addressed, the manuscript is prepared for publication by the Copy Editor. The Copy Editor may correspond with the authors to check details, if required. Final publication is by discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. Final published form of the manuscript is via the Journal website ([www.apjce.org](http://www.apjce.org)), authors will be notified and sent a PDF copy of the final manuscript. There is no charge for publishing in APJCE and the Journal allows free open access for its readers.

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The Journal does also accept *best practice* papers but only if it present a unique or innovative practice of a Co-op/WIL program that is likely to be of interest to the broader Co-op/WIL community. The Journal also accepts a limited number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.

*Research reports* should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry, a 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 for practitioners, and a conclusion preferably incorporating suggestions for further research.

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