



Charles Sturt  
University

Engineering

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Workplace Learning

Faculty of Business, Justice & Behavioural Sciences  
Charles Sturt University

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# 1. What if I can't find an answer here?

Further details can be found in the [Student Guidebook](#)... If you have any concerns, please [contact us](#).

# 2. What is workplace learning?

Workplace learning (WPL) involves students undertaking placement with a host organisation for purpose of linking theoretical learning with its application in the workplace. This enables students to extend professional knowledge, enhance employability skills, and reflect and evaluate their own work practices. WPL provides industry with experienced work-ready graduates.

The [WPL](#) team manages placement processes for the WPL subjects. Students are allocated a Workplace Learning Officer (WPLO) at commencement of each subject to assist with administrative matters.

# 3. Workplace learning subjects

## 3.1. Are the WPL subjects compulsory?

**Yes.** All CSU Engineering courses include at least one or more WPL subject(s) (refer [section](#)).

## 3.2. Do I have to go on placement?

**Yes.** Placement is a compulsory component of WPL subjects. Students currently in the workforce and/or with extensive experience are still required to complete placement, which can be undertaken in their current workplace, although type of activities must align with the requirements of a cadet's currently placement level.

Information regarding WPL stream types are outlined below (refer [section](#)).

## 3.3. When should I start placement?

Placement commences in July or August each year and will carry through until the following June.

# 4. When are the subjects available?

## BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY (CIVIL)/MASTER OF ENGINEERING (CIVIL)

Workplace Learning is a key focus of this course. Cadets will complete a total of 4 years paid workplace learning activity.

SUBJECT	LEVEL	DURATION	ENROLMENT SESSIONS
ENG281 Performance Planning & Review	Junior Cadet	1-Year	20XX62
ENG381 Performance Planning & Review	Intermediate Cadet	1-Year	20XX62
ENG481 Performance Planning & Review	Senior Cadet	1-Year	20XX61
ENG581 Performance Planning & Review	Professional Cadet	8 months	20XX30
ENG592 Engineering Portfolio	Professional Cadet	4 months	20XX30

## MASTER OF ENGINEERING (CIVIL)

This course is for students who already have an Associate Degree in Engineering or a Bachelor of Engineering Technology with relevant work experience. There is no on-campus study required and students undertake their workplace learning with their existing employer. The subjects are as follows:

SUBJECT	LEVEL	Duration	ENROLMENT SESSIONS
ENG481 Performance Planning & Review	Senior Cadet	1 Year	20XX62
ENG581 Performance Planning & Review	Professional Cadet	8 Months	20XX61
ENG592 Engineering Portfolio	Professional Cadet	4 months	20XX30

### BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING (CIVIL) (HONOURS)

Students spend the first 18 months on-campus in Bathurst. Following successful completion of the first 18 months, students then undertake one year of workplace learning. The subjects are as follows:

SUBJECT	LEVEL	DURATION	ENROLMENT SESSIONS
ENG281 Performance Planning & Review	Junior Cadet	1-Year	20XX62

## 5. Finding a placement

### 5.1. How do I find a placement?

Students are responsible for sourcing their own placement. The [WPL](#) team have a range of processes to assist in this process. Further information is available in the Student Guidebook (refer [resources](#)).

### 5.2. What is the do not contact list?

CSU Engineering have a list of organisations that student and cadet engineers should not approach directly about placement. The reasons for inclusion on this list include:

- Long term host partners who are part of our regular facilitated placement rounds. Placements with these organisations will be handled directly through the facilitated placement process.
- Organisations that are geographically desirable and due to high demand, receive many requests about placements. These organisations have requested that we filter the volume of contact through our system.
- Rare cases of organisations who have been assessed as not meeting the duty of care requirements to be able to host a Charles Sturt cadet.

Students and cadets who are intending to self-place are required to check with the [WPL](#) team that an organisation they are contacting is not on the Do not Contact list.

### 5.3. What if I can't find a placement?

Students having trouble securing placement are encouraged to:

- Review the WPL website for a register of available direct placement opportunities (refer [resources](#)).
- Contact the [WPL](#) team for advice, suitable host organisations and letters of introduction.
- Students still unable to source placement should consider withdrawing before HECS census to avoid incurring a debt (refer [Principal Dates on the Student Portal](#) for annual date) and re-enrol in a future session to enable sufficient time to find a placement.

### 5.4. Can I split my placement across organisations?

**Generally, No.** Once you commence placement with an organisation it is expected that you complete a minimum of a one-year placement with them.

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to split a placement, and should this occur, you need to contact the [WPL](#) team early to discuss proposed split placement arrangements. A new set of forms is required for each placement.

### 5.5. Can I undertake additional placements?

**No.** The only permissible reason for a student to undertake an additional placement is if they fail one of the concurrent WPL subjects and must repeat.

## 6. Placement activities

### 6.1. What activities do I need to do on placement?

It is important that cadets undertake activities that are appropriate to the level of cadetship they are undertaking. A list of suitable activities assigned to each level of placement is available on the WPL Engineering website (refer [Placement Aims and Expectations](#)).

If you are concerned that the types of activities being asked of you are not appropriate for the level of placement you should contact the [WPL](#) team. In extreme cases, this may result in a cancellation of your placement (e.g. if a cadet is being asked to work excessive hours or undertake unsafe activities).

### 6.2. What types of organisations are suitable for placement?

Appropriate organisations might include some of the following types of organisations:

- Local councils
- Private engineering consultancies
- State and Federal transport agencies
- Rail authorities
- Roads

## 7. Employment and placement

### 7.1. Are employment and placement the same thing?

**No.** An employment agreement is between a student and their employer. A placement is an agreement between the student, their employer, and CSU Engineering. To be on placement, you must be employed by the host organisation. However, for your employment to be eligible for a placement, it must meet placement requirements by CSU Engineering.

### 7.2. What about flexitime or recreational leave?

Flexitime or recreational leave days do not count toward placement hours and should be negotiated with your supervisor and place of employment.

### 7.3. What if I need time off?

Sick, bereavement, carers or any other kind of leave should be part of your employment conditions and should be negotiated with your supervisor and place of employment.

### 7.4. Can I stay with my host organisation if I don't meet the requirements to proceed to my next placement hold point?

It is possible to remain employed with your current host while you complete the necessary subjects to proceed to your next placement. This situation may arise for students who have failed a subject, or who are enrolled in a less than full-time study load. This will require agreement between you and the host but does not constitute a Placement Agreement under our procedures.

## 8. Placement arrangements

### 8.1. What are the standard placement arrangements?

The standard placement arrangements are a set of conditions that all placements must meet. Any host offering a facilitated placement must meet these conditions. These have been derived to:

- Provide cadets with a suitable balance between work and study obligations.
- Provide appropriate remuneration for cadets.
- Ensure host organisations are provided with value for money; and
- Meet Charles Sturt University's duty of care requirements for workplace learning.

Placements which do not meet one of these arrangements may be approved, subject to a variation request being submitted and approved. Placements which do not meet two or more of these arrangements will not be approved.

Students who are seeking to self-place are strongly advised to clearly communicate the standard placement arrangements to potential host partners early in the placement process.

## 8.2. How does the placement variation process work?

If a potential placement is assessed as not meeting one of the standard placement arrangements, a [Placement Variation](#) will be required to be submitted along with the [Placement Application](#). The variation form must set out the item that is proposed to be varied, what the proposed variation will be, and how this will be managed to ensure the student is not unduly disadvantaged.

## 8.3. What is considered when assessing a placement variation?

General advice is provided below to assist a student in the decision as to whether to submit a request for variation. However, it is important to note that each request to vary the standard placement arrangements will be considered on its own merits.

- **Placement Duration:** Placements are designed to align with the study of concurrent WPL subjects. Placements that start too early or finish too late will not provide sufficient coverage to meet the learning outcomes of concurrent WPL subject(s).
- **Days or hours of work per week:** Any variation to the standard number of hours or days of work per week needs to outline how the student will meet their study obligations under this arrangement.
- **Paid Study Leave:** The paid study day is designed to ensure that appropriate value is placed upon the cadet's ongoing study by the host organisation. A higher than benchmark salary may preclude the need for a paid study day.
- **Benchmark Salary:** The benchmark salary is a guide to ensure cadets are provided with appropriate remuneration and are not taken advantage of. A cadet may undertake a placement with a salary less than the benchmark provided there are no duty of care concerns, and the salary is paid in accordance with relevant industry award rates.

It is important to reinforce that a variation to a placement agreement will only be considered when one of the standard arrangements is sought to be varied. Those which seek to vary two or more (e.g., working 5 days for less than benchmark salary) will not be considered.

# 9. Course requirements

## 9.1. How are the subject requirements checked?

To be eligible for placement, students must be eligible to enrol in all the concurrent WPL subjects. The [WPL](#) team will check with the relevant subject coordinators that students are on track to successfully complete all pre-requisite subjects prior to approving the [Student Placement Agreement](#). If a [Student Placement Agreement](#) is approved, but a student subsequently fails a pre-requisite subject, the placement will be terminated immediately.

# 10. Supervisors

## 10.1. What is my host supervisor's role?

The host supervisor is an important part of any work placement. The host supervisor provides guidance and direction to you from the perspective of the host organisation. They also provide input to your academic progress from a workplace perspective. Finally, each host supervisor acts as a contact for Charles Sturt to ensure your safety whilst on work placement. In order to meet Charles Sturt's accreditation and duty of care requirements, each cadet on placement must have a suitably qualified and experienced supervisor.

## 10.2. What qualifies a supervisor as suitably qualified and experienced?

The suitability requirements for supervisors depend on the level of placement, generally increasing as you progress through your degree. This ensures that your supervisor has an appropriate level of understanding

and experience to be able to act as your mentor as your studies progress. The minimum level of qualification and experience for a host supervisor is:

PLACEMENT LEVEL	MINIMUM QUALIFICATION	MINIMUM EXPERIENCE
Junior Placement	BTech or equivalent	2-years post-graduation
Intermediate Placement	BTech (Civil) or equivalent	3-years post-graduation
Senior Placement	BEng (Civil) or equivalent	4-years post-graduation
Professional Placement	BEng (Civil) or equivalent	5-years post-graduation

### 10.3. What should I do if my supervisor leaves the host organisation?

If your supervisor leaves the host organisation for any reason, please notify the [WPL](#) team as soon as possible. Your host organisation will need to nominate a new host supervisor to cover the remainder of your placement. If a new host supervisor is not available, it may be necessary to cancel or transfer your placement to another organisation or outsource the supervision requirement.

## 11. Commercial in confidence

### 11.1. What is commercial in confidence?

Commercial in confidence information is any commercially valuable or sensitive information which may affect the legal responsibilities or competitive advantage of an organisation. Examples include client details, financial information, contractual agreements or unique product or process designs.

Whilst on placement you may be exposed to information of a confidential nature. Students are expected to maintain such information with the strictest confidence, in accordance with your host organisation's information management procedures.

### 11.2. How are commercial in confidence considerations treated on placement?

One of the main mechanisms by which cadets on placement demonstrate their attainment of skills and knowledge is through the sharing of work-related items for assessment purposes. It is therefore essential that you can share information on work-related activities you have completed, as without doing so, you cannot meet the requirements of your studies.

As part of the placement approval process, host organisations can identify any items which may be commercially sensitive prior to the placement commencing.

During placement it is also advised that you ask your host supervisor to review the information you intend to share for an assessment prior to submission, to ensure that the items being shared don't breach any commercial in confidence obligations.

## 12. Streams

### 12.1. How do I know what stream I will be in?

Students can undertake placement in one of two streams. The streams are as follows:

#### STREAM 1

Stream 1 placements are with organisations which the student or cadet engineer has not worked with before:

- Self-placement: Student approaches and negotiates directly with a potential host organisation. Before approaching a potential host organisation, students must check with the [WPL](#) team that the organisation they are considering is not on the Do Not Contact list. It is also advised to provide the potential host organisation with a copy of the Host Guidebook (refer [resources](#)).
- Facilitated placement: Student identifies a potential placement through an advertisement on the Placement Opportunities website. Students respond directly to the potential host organisation, who will coordinate with the student on their recruitment process.



## STREAM 2

Stream 2 placements are with organisations which the student or cadet engineer has worked with before:

- Self-placement: Student negotiates with their current employer (not current host organisation) directly. This option is most applicable to students who, prior to commencing their junior placement, are already working or who have previously negotiated for a former employer to be their host organisation.
- Continuing placement: Cadets who are currently placed with a host organisation may be able to continue with that host organisation for an additional placement, provided the requirements of the new placement can be met by the host organisation (refer [Placement Aims and Expectations](#)). It is recommended to notify a host organisation of the intention to continue or otherwise as soon as practicable.

# 13. Process overview

## 13.1. Flowchart

Further details can be found in the [Student Guidebook](#).

# 14. Recognition of prior learning

## 14.1. I am currently employed - can I get credit for the WPL subjects?

**No.** Credit is not available to students for the WPL subjects based on previous experience and/or employment. Students are expected to undertake placement with either their current employer or a new host organisation. Students with extensive work experience are encouraged to undertake higher duties, a role within another department or a specific project.

# 15. Responsibilities

## 15.1. What are my responsibilities on placement?

Students' responsibilities on placement include (but are not limited to) the following:

- attend workplace as per the agreement
- adhere to workplace dress code
- not reveal any confidential information about individuals, or commercial and organisational matters
- to behave in a professional manner as representatives of the university
- report critical incidents (refer [Student Guidebook](#))
- refer to [Student Guidebook](#) in relation to social media use.

## 15.2. What if I'm absent?

Absences, due to illness of student or immediate family member, must be communicated as per the standard sick leave arrangement of the host organisation.

## 15.3. What are my hosts/supervisor responsibilities?

Host organisations/supervisors responsibilities on placement include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a safe working environment
- a variety of placement activities
- adequate and professional supervision
- regular feedback regarding performance
- complete the [Placement Evaluation](#).

# 16. Insurance

## 16.1. Am I covered by Charles Sturt insurance on placement?

**Yes.** As an employee of the organisation, you will be covered by their insurance (refer [Student Placement Agreement](#) Agreed Terms Clause 9 for further details).

# 17. Financial assistance

## 17.1. Is there any financial assistance available?

Students can apply for financial assistance to assist with associated placement costs. For eligibility and further information, refer to the Charles Sturt Professional Placement Equity Grant and other scholarship opportunities websites (refer [resources](#)).

# 18. Payment

## 18.1. Will I be paid for my placement?

**Yes.** All CSU Engineering placements are paid positions. It is expected that host organisations will pay cadets in accordance with the CSU Engineering salary benchmark (refer [resources](#)).

# 19. Workplace learning contacts

## 19.1. Who should I contact if I have any questions?

Enquiries should be directed by email. Include name, student number and relevant subject code in the subject line to assist allocating your enquiry to the appropriate team member:

[engineering-wpl@csu.edu.au](mailto:engineering-wpl@csu.edu.au)

## 19.2. Professional team

The WPL professional team can be contacted as follows:

NAME	POSITION	DETAILS
Jenny Grainger	Manager, Workplace Learning ( <i>host organisations</i> )	Phone: 02 6933 4280 Email: <a href="mailto:engineering-wpl@csu.edu.au">engineering-wpl@csu.edu.au</a>
Kirrily Welsh	Senior Workplace Learning Officer ( <i>cadet engineers &amp; placements</i> )	Phone: 02 6933 2911 Email: <a href="mailto:engineering-wpl@csu.edu.au">engineering-wpl@csu.edu.au</a>

## 19.3. Academic team

The WPL academic team can be contacted as follows:

NAME	POSITION	DETAILS
Shara Cameron	Course Director / Engineer in Residence	Phone: 02 6338 6309 Email: <a href="mailto:CourseDirectorEngineering@csu.edu.au">CourseDirectorEngineering@csu.edu.au</a>
Peter Thew	Course Director WPL and Industry / Senior Engineer in Residence	Phone: 02 6338 6313 Email: <a href="mailto:pthew@csu.edu.au">pthew@csu.edu.au</a>
Jim Morgan	Director CSU Engineering	Phone: 02 6338 6301 Email: <a href="mailto:DirectorCSUEngineering@csu.edu.au">DirectorCSUEngineering@csu.edu.au</a>

## 20. Forms

### 20.1. Where can I access the forms?

Forms are available from the WPL website (refer [resources](#)).

### 20.2. When are forms due?

- [Placement Application](#) due last business day in April.
- [Student Placement Agreement](#) due last business day in May.
- [Student Review](#) due with the [Student Placement Agreement](#) for the next placement or 14 days prior to the conclusion on a final placement.
- [Placement Evaluation](#) due with the [Student Placement Agreement](#) for the next placement or 14 days prior to the conclusion of a final placement.

### 20.3. What applications are required to complete the forms?

To submit forms electronically, access to the internet and current version of Adobe Acrobat Reader will be required (refer [resources](#)).

### 20.4. Why do you collect information on placement salaries?

Information on placement salaries is collected for several reasons:

- To check the salary against salary benchmark conditions. This is done to meet Charles Sturt's duty of care obligations to our students by ensuring they are not being taken advantage of by host organisations.
- To help in the setting of the salary benchmark figures for future placements. Salary benchmarks are an aggregated figure based on the value of past placements.

## 21. Resources

DESCRIPTION	LINK
Adobe: Acrobat Reader - Desktop Version	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/adodepdf">rebrand.ly/adodepdf</a>
Adobe: Acrobat Reader - Mobile Version	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/adobepdfmob">rebrand.ly/adobepdfmob</a>
Charles Sturt: Career Development Service	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csustudcar">rebrand.ly/csustudcar</a>
Charles Sturt: Disability Services	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csudissup">rebrand.ly/csudissup</a>
Charles Sturt: Division of Finance - Insurance Certificate (Domestic)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csuiinsdom">rebrand.ly/csuiinsdom</a>
Charles Sturt: Division of Finance - Insurance Certificate (International)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csuiinsint">rebrand.ly/csuiinsint</a>
Charles Sturt: Professional Placement Equity Grant	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csufinequ">rebrand.ly/csufinequ</a>
Charles Sturt: Scholarship Opportunities	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csuschol">rebrand.ly/csuschol</a>
Charles Sturt: Student Charter	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csupolstudchart">rebrand.ly/csupolstudchart</a>
Charles Sturt: Student Misconduct Rule 2020	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csupolstudmisc">rebrand.ly/csupolstudmisc</a>
Charles Sturt: Student Portal	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/csustudpor">rebrand.ly/csustudpor</a>
Form: Placement Application	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engforma">rebrand.ly/engforma</a>
Form: Placement Variation	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engformv">rebrand.ly/engformv</a>
Form: Student Placement Agreement	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engformb">rebrand.ly/engformb</a>

Form: Student Review	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engformc">rebrand.ly/engformc</a>
Form: Placement Evaluation	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engformd">rebrand.ly/engformd</a>
WPL: Cadet Engineer Benchmark Minimum Salaries	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engsalary">rebrand.ly/engsalary</a>
WPL: Frequently Asked Questions (Student)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engfaq">rebrand.ly/engfaq</a>
WPL: Guidebook (Student)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engstudguide">rebrand.ly/engstudguide</a>
WPL: Guidebook (Host)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/enghostguide">rebrand.ly/enghostguide</a>
WPL: Placement Aims & Expectations	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engrequire">rebrand.ly/engrequire</a>
WPL: Placement Opportunities	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engopps">rebrand.ly/engopps</a>
WPL: Website (Host)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engwebhost">rebrand.ly/engwebhost</a>
WPL: Website (Student)	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/engwebstud">rebrand.ly/engwebstud</a>

*\*Web addresses are listed as Tiny URLs to minimise line wrapping and provide details if typing link direct into browser is required.*