Building Institutional Capacity to enhance access, participation and progression in work integrated learning (WIL)

Background

Successful WIL activities offer many benefits to students and can contribute to a sustainable workforce for future economic growth. Yet some students face barriers in gaining access to full engagement with such activities. The aim of this project is to translate inclusive education principles into the WIL context in order to improve student access, participation and progression. The project uses a strategic approach across four levels: principles, policies, guidelines, and processes to support students from diverse backgrounds in the disciplines of built environment, business and health.

Outcomes and Achievements

- a community of over 200 like-minded people who are actively contributing to the project
- an extensive survey of available literature to inform the rest of the project and a bibliography for those who would like to follow up the ideas
- discussions with practitioners about the perceptions of barriers and enablers of inclusive practice and to share effective strategies and practices; these include a National webinar, ACENQ symposium, and presentations at the New Zealand Association of Cooperative Education and
- the Practice Based Education Summit
- data collection is underway to examine the practical and policy issues affecting inclusive practice
- a set of draft Principles for Inclusive WIL is ready for testing in different disciplines and Higher Education contexts
- The most important achievement to date is focusing attention on this little talked about, but important aspect of WIL, that affects all that are involved.

Website

For more information about the project visit our website: http://acen.edu.au/access-participation-progression/
The website contains resources (which we are progressively updating), information about up-coming events and about how you can contribute to the project. We are looking for people to join our Community of Practice and to share their experiences and ideas about how to improve practice for the benefit of all who are interested in work integrated learning.

Phase 1 Review
COMPLETED Extensive review of available literature; pilot sites and data sources identified; established project systems and confirmed project staff (including Project Officer, Reference Group and Evaluation)

Phase 2 Engagement
COMPLETED National webinar with 97 participants; Focus Group conducted as part of Brisbane-based symposium; Project website set up; bibliography made available; Community of Practice established with over 200 members; consultation on barriers, enablers, and exemplars of inclusive practice at conferences and forums including NZACE, PBE Summit, ACENQ symposium
ONGOING Feedback and testing of draft principles and guidelines; development of case studies in 5 pilot sites gathering vignettes and exemplars; HERDSA Roundtable

Phase 3: Implementation
Test principles and guidelines; conduct interviews, focus groups and student survey; review evidence from pilot sites and finalise case studies; develop self assessment tool; National webinar; ACEN Roundtable final report

Phase 4: Dissemination
National webinar; Sydney-based symposium; broadcast project outcomes; final report