



# Work placements for international student programs: The **WISP** Project

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# Overview



- Work placements for international student programs – *the WISP project*
- Office of Learning and Teaching Innovation Grant - August 2014-2016
- This project seeks to take a *cross-disciplinary* and *contextual* approach to improving work-placement (e.g. internship, practicum, clinical placement, work integrated learning) for international students, their mentors/supervisors and other people who support them

# The WISP team

Team Members	Institution and Discipline
Dr Georgina Barton and Dr Kay Hartwig Team leaders	Griffith University - Education
Associate Professor Liz Jones	Griffith University - Psychology
Dr Marleen Westerveld	Griffith University – Speech Pathology
Professor Marie Kavanagh	USQ - Business
Professor Marilyn Campbell, Dr Donna Tangen	QUT - Education
Ingrid Larkin	QUT - Business
Dr Erin O’Connor, Leith Harding	QUT - Psychology
Theresa Harvey	QUT - Nursing
Associate Professor Marilyn Chaseling	Southern Cross University - Education
Dr Dawn Joseph	Deakin University - Education
Dr Anna Podorova	Monash University - Education
Professor Dawn Bennett, Sonia Ferns	Curtin University – Engineering and OT

# The WISP support team

Name	Role
Dr Melissa Cain	Project Manager
Dr Ann Kelly	Independent Evaluator
Jill Ryan	Research Assistant
Eric Wilson	Research Assistant
Natasha Berrell	Research Assistant
Tatjana Dordic	Research Assistant
Jill Bamforth (Deakin)	Research Assistant
Elsie Chipper (Curtin)	Research Assistant
Kathryn Garnier (Monash)	Research Assistant
Joy Reynolds	Graphic Design and web and resource development

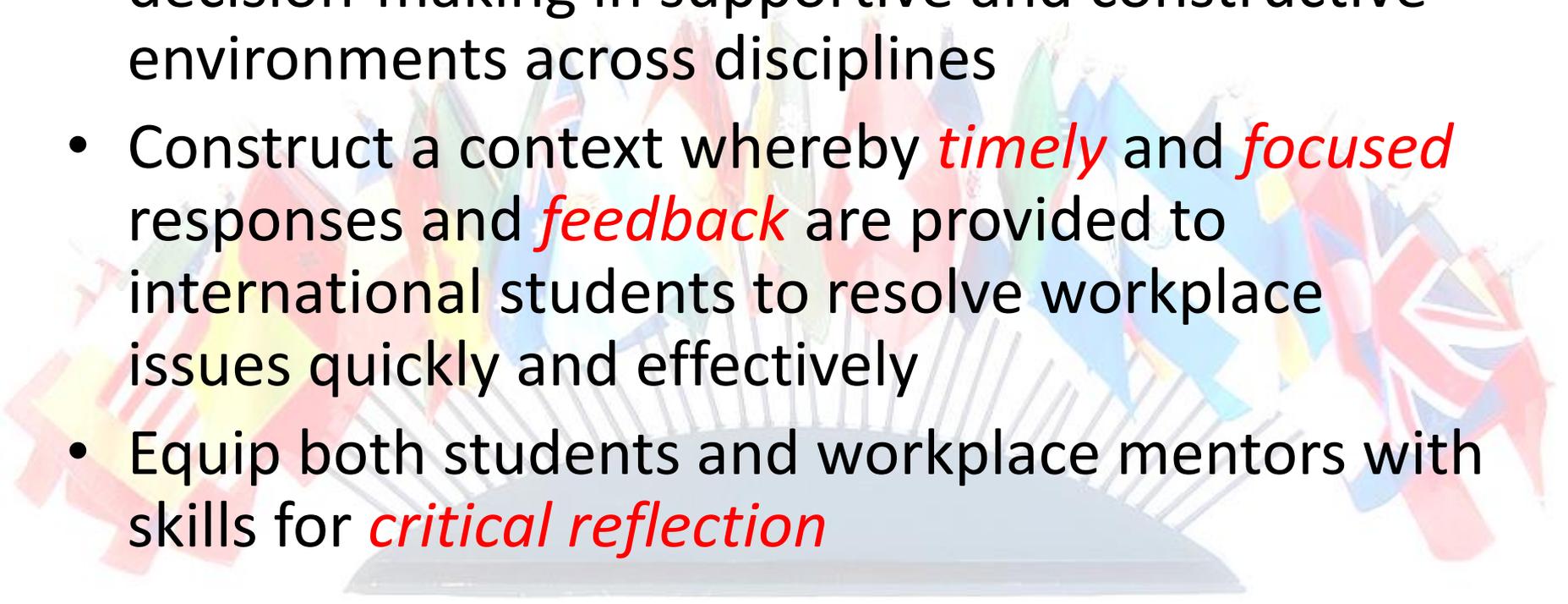
# What we know

- International students face *different challenges* in relation to work placement
  - Issues may include cultural, social and language differences, homesickness, limited resources, timing
- *Professional socialisation* across *disciplines* will have different challenges for international students
  - Certain issues may arise unexpectedly in relation to workplace *interactions* and *relationships*
  - Some mentors/supervisors have stronger '*cultural development*' than others
- Students may not have been taught effective skills to *reflect* about professional practice

# What the literature says

- International students bring *diversity* and *rich prior learning experiences* to the workplace which can be drawn upon positively
- *Regular access* to available *support networks* for international students can assist success i.e. cultural development awareness
- Students on work-placement are best seen as having *agency* in the way they respond and learn while on the job
- Workplace mentors are more *confident* and *satisfied* when they are *supported* and made more aware of issues facing international students
- *Critical reflection* aids both students and workplace mentors in promoting agency and professionalism

# What needs to be done

- Enable international students to *practise appropriate workplace* skills, interactions and decision-making in supportive and constructive environments across disciplines
  - Construct a context whereby *timely* and *focused* responses and *feedback* are provided to international students to resolve workplace issues quickly and effectively
  - Equip both students and workplace mentors with skills for *critical reflection*
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# What we have said we would do

1. To identify *current procedures and practices* in relation to work-placement and associated assessment for international students in the discipline areas of Business, Education, Engineering, and Health in participating institutions
2. To identify challenges, concerns and successes for *international students*, their *mentors* and *coordinators* prior to, during and after work placement

**Mentors/Supervisors:**  
those people who are responsible for assessing and working with students during their placement

**Coordinators/Academics/Support staff:**  
those people responsible for the coordination of placements, at both universities and workplaces

# What we have said we would do

- Develop a comprehensive **website** with supporting resources and materials, e.g.,
  - Brochures for:
    - » International students
    - » Mentors/supervisors
    - » Academic staff
    - » University support staff
- Disseminate information via multiple channels e.g.
  - » ACEN Webinar – September 5<sup>th</sup>
  - » Forum in June 2016

[www.wisp.org.au](http://www.wisp.org.au)

(currently under construction)

# What we have said we would do

3. To develop a *working model* of effective practice around *internationalisation*, *work-place socialisation* and *reflection*. This model will be used in support materials for international students, their mentors, coordinators and relevant university staff



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