

### What is WES?

The USC [Work Experience Scheme](#) (WES) provides current USC students in approved programs with support and insurance coverage to identify and obtain work experience opportunities relevant to their course of study.

In keeping with Fair Work Australia legislation, WES will enable placements for a maximum of **30 days or 240 hours within a calendar year**, in a supervised skill development capacity.

The sourcing of the host, and negotiation of appropriate placement shadowing activities is the responsibility of you, the student. Hosts that are currently advertising work experience vacancies can be found on [Student Hub](#).

The [USC Career Development Team](#) can assist you to prepare for WES, and will be the key contact for both students and host organisations during the WES experience. Final approval is required from the Program Coordinator before a placement can commence.

### Benefits of WES

The key benefit of WES is that it helps to increase your chances of obtaining graduate employment when you finish your degree.

It does this through:

- Giving you real world experience of workplaces relevant to your discipline area;
- Building your confidence in using your skills (both those you are learning at university, and the transferable skills you bring from other paid and volunteer work experiences) in your new career area;
- Building your networks with local employers.

You may elect to do WES as a one-off experience, or you may choose to be more strategic and seek a new WES placement each semester. The benefit of seeking a range of WES experiences is that you will have gained first-hand experience in a range of roles, and built your networks across a few different organisations within your graduate employment area.

### Am I eligible?

To be eligible to participate in the USC WES, you must be currently enrolled in a [WES approved program](#), and have completed a minimum of one semester of study.

If your current program of study is not on the list of pre-approved programs and you would like to participate in the Work Experience Scheme, please request approval from your Program Coordinator and email [careerdevelopment@usc.edu.au](mailto:careerdevelopment@usc.edu.au).

## How do I set up a WES placement?

To establish a WES placement, you need to identify and approach a suitable host organisation. A suitable host organisation is one which has roles relevant to your discipline area.

Make sure you think laterally when considering who to approach, and remember that you may need to build your experience with entry level opportunities before you are able to work shadow more advanced positions.

*WES Placement Sample: Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting)*

*Some relevant WES opportunities to explore include:*

- *Working with a small taxation firm*
- *Working within a large accounting firm with a variety of specialisation areas*
- *Working within a financial brokerage firm*
- *Working in the finance department of a manufacturing firm, or a not-for-profit organisation*

*Each of these experiences will provide you with valuable learning and networking opportunities, and will help you to determine the employment direction you want head into with your degree.*

Some strategies to help you identify potential host organisations for WES include:

- Yellow Pages
- Using Professional Association websites to identify local members and businesses in your area
- Researching member organisations in your local Chamber of Commerce
- Searching on Seek or other employment websites
- Using your local council community services directory to identify community services and not-for-profit organisations
- Asking friends and family of relevant organisations they may be aware of
- USC's '[Industry Research Toolkit](#)', available for download on Student Hub can help you with further strategies for identifying suitable hosts
- Looking for advertised work experience opportunities on [Student Hub](#)

## How do I approach a host organisation to set up a WES opportunity?

### Step 1: Make sure you are fully prepared

- Ensure your resume is up to date and targeted to the relevant industry area (access [Student Hub](#) for a range of resources to assist with this process).
- Think about what you would like to get out of the experience. What learning opportunities or experiences would you like to have?
- Research the organisation to ensure you are aware of what they do, who they service, and the nature of their work. Doing your homework first ensures you are prepared for any questions you may be asked, and also demonstrates your initiative, enterprise, and drive.
- Think about your availability. Are you looking for a two-week full-time opportunity over semester break, or a few hours each week? Being clear and realistic about your availability ensures you will be ready to discuss and negotiate with your potential host organisation.

### Step 2: Approach potential host organisations

- Be aware that you may not receive a 'yes' straight away, and that you may need to approach a few different potential host organisations before you successfully arrange a WES opportunity. Try and arrange a meeting with the relevant decision maker in the organisation. In some instances, you may need to leave a cover letter first to explain why you are seeking a meeting. Accompany this with your resume.
- In your discussion with potential WES host organisations, ensure you advise that it may take up to three (3) weeks for the placement details to be finalised, risk assessments completed, and insurance coverage finalised. Ensure your proposed start date with the organisation allows for this three-week period.
- When negotiating your WES experience with an employer, ensure the opportunities are relevant to your degree area, and the agreed workplace activities will add value to your career development.
- The Work Experience Scheme is to enable you to work shadow or support an existing position within the organisation. You are not approved under WES to do individual projects unsupported.
- Ensure the host organisation is aware that the proposed WES activities will need to be approved prior to permission being given for the placement to proceed.
- Essential details to collect from the employer to set up the placement are:
  - ✓ Host contact details (name, phone, email)
  - ✓ Start and end dates, hours of attendance
  - ✓ Placement role/discipline/ activity

### Step 3: Advise USC of your proposed Work Experience Placement

Once you have sourced an organisation or business that agrees to host you for work experience, please complete the **WES Student Application**, with details of your proposed placement provider.

To submit the **WES Student Application**:

- Log on to [SONIA ONLINE](#) using your existing USC login details
- Go to the 'Forms' tab
- Select the '**WES Student Application**' and **Add** to your profile
- Select the 'Edit' button, complete the form and press '**Submit**'

If you are unable to access the WES Student Application it may mean your current program of study is not on the list of pre-approved programs, please request approval from your Program Coordinator and email [careerdevelopment@usc.edu.au](mailto:careerdevelopment@usc.edu.au) to apply.

### Step 4: Complete pre-placement mandatory requirements

Once we receive your placement information, USC will contact the host and arrange for health and safety and risk assessment checks to be completed, as well as legal documentation to ensure your rights are protected. Once this has been completed, a USC Career Development team staff member will contact you via email to advise that your placement can commence.

Before you start your placement, you will be sent an email with instructions to complete 2 mandatory requirements:

1. Complete the **Pre-Place** online training module on Blackboard, this provides information and activities to assist workplace learning
2. Read and sign the **Student Placement Agreement**. The Agreement is to ensure that you provide the required information and are aware of your rights and responsibilities while on placement

If you have already completed Pre-Place as part of another course, you will not be requested to repeat this online module.

To submit the **Student Placement Agreement**:

- Log on to [SONIA ONLINE](#) using your existing USC login details
- Go to the 'Forms' tab
- Select the '**Student Placement Agreement**'
- Select the 'Edit' button, complete the form and press '**Submit**'

### What do I need to do during my WES placement?

During your WES placement, you will need to ensure you:

- are following the USC WES Code of Conduct and be mindful of the issues raised during your Pre-place training
- are working to the organisations policies and procedures
- turn up on the days and times negotiated with your host employer (or advise them in advance if you are unable to attend on a scheduled day)
- engage, learn, and enjoy your industry immersion experience!

### What if I miss a session because I am ill, or due to other unforeseen circumstances?

You must advise your host organisation supervisor if you are unable to attend. You will be required to make up this time through negotiation with the host organisation supervisor. You will need to provide a medical certificate to the host organisation supervisor if your absence is for more than 3 consecutive days due to illness.

### What should I wear while completing my WES experience?

Your dress and behaviour must be in keeping with the accepted standards of the WES host organisation. Ensure that this is one of the subjects you discuss during your negotiations with the host organisation.

### Is there a Code of Conduct I must adhere to?

You will be required to read and sign the **USC WES Code of Conduct** in the **Student Placement Agreement** as part of the approval process for your proposed WES experience. You must also ensure you are familiar with, and adhere to, any organisational codes of conduct expected by your host. Any breach of the Code of Conduct will result in your immediate withdrawal from the scheme. If this is deemed a serious breach by the host organisation, you will not be able to return to that site.

### What if I decide to end the WES experience early?

If issues or concerns arise which lead you to want to pull out of the WES experience early, it is critical that you first discuss this with your USC WES coordinator within the Career Development Team

## How does USC's insurance cover me while on WES?

For you to be eligible to be covered for University insurance whilst undertaking a WES experience you must be a student with an active enrolment status in accordance with the definition provided in the [Admissions, Enrolments and Graduation – Academic Policy](#).

### *Unpaid placements that are a course requirement*

A student who undertakes an approved unpaid placement in Australia as a requirement of their course or degree program is covered by the University's Personal Accident, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurances whilst involved in approved placement activities. Any activity which is not part of the placement (for example extreme sports, sightseeing or shopping) is not covered by the University insurance.

### *Public liability*

You are indemnified for your legal liability in respect of third party claims for damages to property or injury to persons while undertaking approved unpaid placement. This cover does not extend to incidents involving motor vehicles.

### *Professional indemnity*

The University holds professional indemnity insurance which covers you, when you act within the limits of your training, for legal liability arising out of a breach of professional duty by reason of any negligent act, error or omission committed or alleged to have been committed by you whilst engaged in an approved unpaid placement.

### *Medical Malpractice Insurance*

Medical Malpractice Coverage is for you undertaking placement that require clinical experience placements within Australia. The policy provides cover against civil liability for compensation arising from any claim as a result of medical malpractice. All treatment given by you must be under the direct supervision or express instruction of a qualified practitioner. All applicable clinical protocols must be followed. All patients or guardians must be fully informed and consent must be obtained before commencing any care, procedure or intervention.

### *Personal property*

Your personal property is not covered by the University's Insurance at any time. If you wish to arrange cover for personal items you must do so at your own expense.

### *Motor vehicle*

If you use your private car(s) and/or motorcycles during off campus placements it is your responsibility to arrange insurance as University insurance does not extend to motor vehicles. All students should ensure any vehicle they travel in is road worthy with current fully paid registration and a minimum of current compulsory third party insurance. If you wish to arrange your own motor vehicle(s) and/or motor cycle(s) insurance you must do so at your own expense. If you are driving a vehicle owned by the Host Organisation, insurance is the responsibility of the Host Organisation and not the University. However, you should note that if you use one of your Host Organisation's vehicles the Host Organisation's vehicle may not be covered for those who are not employees of this organisation.

### *Work Cover*

As you are not an employee of the University or the placement facility where you are undertaking your placement you are not covered under either the University's work cover arrangement or the placement facility work cover insurance. If you wish to arrange your own work cover/ personal indemnity insurance you must do so at your own expense.



## How does USC's insurance cover me while on WES?

### *Personal health and accidents*

The University does not provide any medical insurance cover. If you wish to arrange private health cover, you must do so at your own expense. Australian students are covered under Medicare and international students must have health insurance as a condition of their entry to Australia. International students are advised to contact USC International in relation to [Overseas Student Health Cover](#).

### *In Australia*

The Student Personal Accident insurance covers enrolled students of USC and provides 24-hour cover, 365 days a year for accidental death and capital benefits while undertaking approved unpaid placement in Australia. Cover for medical expenses for accidents occurring in Australia is limited to non-Medicare expenses in areas where no Medicare benefit is payable (for example Physiotherapy). No cover is provided for the Medicare Gap (that is, the difference between the medical fee and the amount recoverable from Medicare) as no insurer is permitted by government legislation to cover this aspect. Therefore, you will be responsible for any out of pocket expenses, should they choose to be treated by a medical practitioner who does not 'bulk bill'. The policy should not be seen as a substitute for private medical health cover and or accident / life insurance. The policy assumes you will be treated at a public hospital.

### *Notification of accidents, incidents and injuries:*

- Accidents, incidents or injuries that occur at a placement facility should be reported to your supervisor and procedures of the facility followed, including completion of any workplace health and safety forms.
- If you are involved in an incident (including minor incidents) please complete an [Incident/Near Miss/Hazard Report](#) form and email a copy to your USC placement officer. In the unfortunate event of an emergency, follow your employer's emergency procedures, organise emergency services as required and contact USC security on 5430 1122.

## What resources can I use to get myself WES ready?

There are a large range of useful resources on the Student Hub to help you with issues such as:

- preparing your resume
- writing a cover letter to introduce yourself
- preparing for a pre-placement interview
- understanding how to network to find a WES placement experience relevant to your interests

To access these resources, use your USC student log in details to access the [USC Student Hub](#) (<https://studenthub.usc.edu.au>) and follow the tabs to career resources.

## What if I am offered a paid opportunity with the WES Host Organisation?

If you receive any form of payment, gratuity or reward for the placement undertaken the University insurance does not extend to you. If you are offered a paid employment opportunity with the host organisation this would be a personal negotiation between yourselves, and would need to commence after you have completed your approved WES experience.

### What happens at the end of my placement?

At the end of your placement both you and your host will be requested to complete a written evaluation. This has been carefully designed to assist you in gathering structured evidence to use in future employment applications, and can be used in your professional portfolio.

The evaluation is also used as evidence towards your Student Leadership Award.

USC's Career Development Team can provide support and advice on using this evidence effectively in employment applications. Please visit [Career Development Services](#) if you require further support.

### How does WES link with the USC Student Leadership Award?

The USC Student Leadership Award is a prestigious accolade presented by the University of the Sunshine Coast to recognise students' participation in leadership activities, community involvement and professional development. The award provides students with formal recognition of their extra-curricular endeavours throughout the duration of their study.

Your WES experience is an approved activity for the Student Leadership Awards. If you are already registered for these awards, make sure you log your WES hours in your Student Leadership Awards Activity Log. If you are not yet registered, visit the [USC Student Leadership Award](#) page on the USC website for more information (<http://www.usc.edu.au/learn/student-support/usc-student-leadership-award>).

