Professional Practicum is a compulsory work-based placement for a period of 8 – 12 weeks for all University of Western Australia students enrolled in engineering courses.

About UWA Engineering
Today’s challenges require new ways of thinking and greater ability to put these ideas into practice. This is why we are focused on providing the best possible learning environments for the leaders of tomorrow. The UWA Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics has been privileged to launch the careers of many brilliant individuals.

UWA engineers are empowered to make it to the top of their chosen fields – many of our graduates go on to become CEOs and senior managers of major companies.

Our courses allow students to explore different fields of engineering and take broadening units before selecting their specialisation. Our undergraduate degrees offer the flexibility to study second majors from other disciplines across the University.

The benefits to employers
A well-designed and effectively implemented Professional Practicum experience offers benefits for everyone – companies, students and the industry as a whole. Industry participants report a range of positive outcomes as a result of their involvement in the UWA Engineering Practicum experience:

- Visibility and loyalty among students and graduates who become future employees, clients, contractors, alliance partners.
- Enhancement of the organisation’s brand among future engineers.
- Personal satisfaction for those engaged in working with students.
- Development of ongoing relationships for future collaboration.

What employers are saying:

“We are a small start-up company with only three employees. We are all UWA graduates so we appreciate the benefits of hiring a student. We were really impressed with their enthusiasm for every task and we’ll definitely apply for another student in the future” Ansac

“All of the UWA Practicum students have fitted in really well with our team and we felt supported by the team at UWA in responding to our questions about the program. It has allowed us to ‘road test’ prospective employees and we will definitely consider the students for graduate roles as they arise” Deloitte

“The students assigned to us were highly engaged with projects and maintained a very positive approach even when faced with challenges during execution. It was useful for us to have access to the latest ideas and technology and for the students to experience the required process around practical work, safety requirements and how study outcomes can impact work in the field. We highly recommend working in partnership” Woodside Energy

“Students have integrated with our teams seamlessly. We have since employed one of them who is developing in their career well” Lycopodium
Our students

The Engineering program at UWA has been developed in consultation with industry to equip students with the skills to succeed in their future careers.

At UWA, to become a professionally qualified engineer, students complete five years of study, consisting of a three year undergraduate degree with an Engineering Science Major, followed by a two-year Master of Professional Engineering.

Our students are generally encouraged to engage in practicum work towards the end of their undergraduate degree and during their masters’ studies. They are personally responsible for seeking appropriate work experience. This requires our students to demonstrate initiative and a proactive demeanour. It allows them to seek work opportunities that align with their professional interests where possible.

The practicum is an opportunity to assist students in achieving their Stage 1 Core Competencies with Engineers Australia. It is also important for students to apply their technical knowledge to real world engineering problems and to work in an environment where they are exposed to real world problems.

What you need to know

Remuneration

The practicum is normally fulfilled through paid employment during students’ vacations. While paid employment is preferred, it is less well known that employers are not obliged to offer paid placements. Some students undertake unpaid work experience to meet the requirements of the practicum.

Duration

Students are required to complete practical work experience for 8 - 12 weeks in an engineering work environment under the supervision of an engineer. This can be composed of multiple placements, part-time and not necessarily as a continuous period.

Provided students fulfil a minimum of eight weeks engineering work experience, the remaining weeks can be undertaken in a general work environment in a capacity unrelated to their specialisation, such as voluntary work or professional development. The Professional Practicum is intentionally flexible.

Insurance

While working in a paid capacity, students are covered like any other employee. That is, they are covered by your insurance arrangements – worker’s compensation and public liability insurance. However, if the student is accepted on an unpaid arrangement, they are covered by the UWA public liability and personal accident insurance policy. Further information is available via staff.uwa.edu.au/procedures/risk/insurance/student-placement.

Work rights for international students

UWA’s international students also need to gain work experience in their chosen course. It is possible to employ an engineering graduate under a Temporary Graduate Visa on completion of at least 2 years of study in Australia.

Further information about the work rights for international students is available at international.uwa.edu.au/newstudents/perth-life/taxation

Assessment

Certificate of work performed from employer

On completion of the practicum, the student will submit a certificate completed by the employer or representative indicating the tasks undertaken by the student and their conduct during the period of employment.

Students are also required to submit a short report on their practicum experience to encourage them to reflect on their professional development during the placement.

Contact information

Further information about the Professional Practicum is available at: uwa.edu.au/students/professional-practicum

You can also speak to a member of the Faculty Student Affairs Team for further information:

+61 8 6488 3061

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