

The students learn a huge amount from their workplace experience and they can find it inspiring and exciting. It gives the boost they need to continue their studies and gives meaning to their learning. We do rely on the goodwill and expertise of the supervisors to supervise the student and I would like to stress that TAFE courses attract a wide range of candidates of varying abilities. Some students require more help than others but this in itself can be rewarding as you can see a student's expertise develop.

A source of anxiety for supervisors is determining what sort of work the student can do? We provide a list of tasks for IP 1 which are basic tasks and observations of the workplace. IP 2 students are expected to complete a project and do general library duties. For example, the project can be weeding the collection, stocktaking, creating reading lists, displays, brochures and cataloguing. Customer service experience is important at this stage and the student is generally ready for this.

OH&S is also included in the Industry Placement 2 cluster of competencies and the student is required to make observations of the workplace and investigate the host organisation's OH&S policies.

Please cast your mind back to your training and study and reflect on your placement experience. Think about sharing some of your knowledge to enthusiastic newcomers. Taking students on placement also gives you a 'free look' at potential staff for your library and many students are offered work after their placement.

Some suggested tasks for students on placement are listed below but are of course subject to your own library operations and the student's abilities. The student really gains an insight into library work when they have an opportunity to experience a broad range of tasks.

When you next receive a phone call requesting a placement consider it as a compliment and an opportunity to share your knowledge, skills and above all your passion!

Some suggestions for student tasks:

- shelving
- ILL requests and reservations
- shelf reading
- locating missing items
- assisting clients
- basic bibliographic verification
- 'shadowing' library staff
- cataloguing
- processing
- setting up displays
- reading lists
- producing basic publicity materials
- signage
- organising pamphlets
- basic reference enquiries.

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## Work experience placements for VC students

Victoria University Library has entered into an agreement with VU's Library and Cultural Studies Unit to guarantee work experience placements for their students. The first group of students will commence late August 2008. At present the Library and Cultural Studies Unit have approximately 60 students to place in a range of information agency types. Given that some students might prefer to obtain experience in special libraries, public libraries or school libraries etc., VU library has committed to take up to 20 students per year. This figure may vary depending on Library and Cultural Studies' ability to meet the commitment (enrolments and student preferences will obviously factor highly in how many placements will actually be needed).

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Library and Cultural Studies students are required to complete two industry placements: 80 hours (10 days) for Industry Placement 1 and 120 hours (15 days) for Industry Placement 2.

VU Library is also committed to supporting the placement of students studying to become professional librarians at RMIT, Ballarat University and Charles Sturt University.

With VU Library and Cultural Studies students there are no set assignments for students to complete when placed. Wide and varied experience is considered the best option. Industry Placement students may have personal skill gaps that they would like to fill. The students are encouraged to negotiate with their supervisor when placed in regard to tasks to develop these skills.

VU Library Campus libraries and sections will commit to taking on at least one student per year. This could be an Industry Placement 1 student for one day per week for one semester; or an Industry Placement 2 student for one day per week for two semesters.

Placements of students from RMIT, Ballarat University and Charles Sturt University will be negotiated as required. An induction to the library will be held for all work experience students.

The benefits of this arrangement include:

- VU Library fulfilling its commitment to the University's 'Learning in the Workplace initiative'
- VU Library developing a stronger working relationship with the Library and Cultural Studies Unit
- Access to skilled graduates and a potential pool of casual workers.

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