Work Integrated Learning Policy for Veterinary and Para-Veterinary professional students

South African Veterinary Council

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A. Abbreviations

DT     Distributed Teaching (formal work placement)
DTS    Distributed Teaching Site
EMS    Extra mural studies (informal work placement)
HEI    Higher Education Institution
ICT    Information and Communication Technology
PBL    Problem Based Learning
PjBL   Project Based Learning
SAVC   South African Veterinary Council
SER    Self Evaluation Report
WDTL   Work Directed Theoretical Learning
WIL    Work Integrated Learning
WPL    Workplace Learning
B. Executive summary

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) includes all experiential training, from more theoretical forms to the most practical workplace learning. Workplace learning includes, *inter alia*, formal off-campus clinical rotation or distributed teaching; this is where mandatory clinical training, although delivered on sites not owned by the institution, and/or through people that are not part of the institution, is seen as part of the core curriculum, and needs to be quality assured as such.

This policy describes the organisational structures that must be in place, and minimum standards that must be met, for effective delivery of WIL to students. It sets out standards to inform a holistic approach to all WIL activities in a veterinary or para-veterinary professional curriculum, but will focus on distributed teaching and its demands in terms of monitoring and management systems.

Where distributed teaching is used, an annual report, based on this policy document, may be requested by the SAVC to demonstrate how the training programme meets all the minimum standards, and complies with the SAVC criteria for registration, regardless of where the teaching takes place.

C. Introduction

The term WIL is used to describe:
- The practice of integrating theoretical knowledge from formal study, with skills and experience gained in a professional work context, in order to enhance student learning and development of graduate attributes; and
- The alignment of academic and workplace practices in a process of reciprocal involvement that can benefit students, professions, workplaces and communities.

WIL encompasses the following four main curricular modalities\(^1\), with possibilities for many additional hybrid combinations:

1. Work Directed Theoretical Learning (WDTL): classroom-based instruction aligns theory and practice by the use of authentic practical examples or case studies.

2. Problem Based Learning (PBL): simulated real world scenarios for problem-based assignments and projects, are used to enhance problem-solving skills and self-directed learning.

\(^1\) Good Practice Guide to Work-Integrated Learning of the Council on Higher Education (HE Monitor no.12, August 2011)
3. Project Based Learning (PjBL): learning through engagement in complex practical projects in a work context, under competent supervision.

4. Workplace Learning (WPL): placement of students in practical work environments under supervisors that are trained to guide and to assess. There are four main types of workplace learning:
   a) On campus clinical rotations: This is part of the prescribed curriculum with formal guidance, assessment and quality assurance.
   b) Institution owned satellite facilities: Practical training is offered under direct auspices of the institution, at a distant teaching site.
   c) Distributed teaching (DT): Where clinical training that is considered to be a mandatory part of the programme, is delivered on sites not owned by the institution and/or through people that are not part of the institution, such placements should be seen as part of the core curriculum and must be quality assured, controlled and monitored accordingly. It is also referred to as a distributive model for experiential training.

   It is delivered off campus at a distributed teaching site (DTS) which may also be known as a clinical site, facility or experiential learning environment;

   The supervisor in charge of the students' learning at such a site may or may not be a member of the academic staff and is also known as experiential learning provider or industry partner;

   d) Off campus ‘Extra mural studies’ (EMS) / Informal work placement: This is a valuable part of the programme and is used to supplement training by affording practical experience to students in a wide spectrum of disciplines, from husbandry to specialist placements. EMS can effectively be implemented in conjunction with distributed teaching.

Delivery of Workplace learning can roughly be summarised as follows:
The South African Veterinary Council recognises the value of WIL for training institutions in the development of undergraduate students, and supports a system of practical training that includes distributed teaching.

**Purpose:** This policy has been developed according to the objects of the SAVC as described by the Veterinary and Para Veterinary Professions Act, Act No 19 of 1982. It describes the minimum standards applicable to the offering of Work Integrated Learning in a Veterinary and or Para-Veterinary professional curriculum for undergraduate students, in order for the programme as a whole to meet all the SAVC criteria for registration.

**D. General principles**

- The objectives of the WIL policy in veterinary and para-veterinary programme should be to provide adequate practical experience to develop the necessary Day One competencies, including principles of ethical practice, research mentality, lifelong learning and life skills like communication and decision making.
- All WIL is to be measured against the accepted Day One competencies of the profession.
The objectives of all distributed teaching is to broaden the scope and effectiveness of the main WIL policy and to contribute to animal production and the community as a whole, to the mutual benefit of all.

For this to be successful, it will need to be managed effectively.

For WIL activities to be recognised as part of the core curriculum, and meet the SAVC criteria for registration, it must be quality assured, controlled and monitored to the same standard as formal training on campus, with comparable teaching, guidance, assessment and reporting.

The Main Indicators for training standards of each profession will be in effect for all mandatory distributed teaching.

The periodic full visitation by the SAVC will require information on distributed teaching, to be read with the standard Self Evaluation Report of the institution.

All distributed teaching, whether at satellite campus or other facilities, or Extra mural studies, share the same administrative support by the HEI regarding practical issues like agreements and accommodation.

The delivery of WIL in core or elective curriculum, optional subjects - hence the academic value of the workplace learning - will dictate the level and form of assessment and the level of control needed.

Any deviation to the described criteria in this document may be accepted by the SAVC if well motivated.

In this document, 'he' means either he or she, as does 'him' and 'his'; and 'student' can equally refer to a group of students.

E. Minimum standards

1. Organisation

The WIL policy must be properly integrated, with effective central control to ensure co-ordinated delivery of the teaching programme, and systems need to be in place to ensure the following:

- Stakeholder representation on all structures involved in the evaluation and assessment of the WIL system: contracted supervisors, students, recent alumni, and professional colleagues from the relevant discipline of the WIL activity;
- Coordination of all experiential learning in the institution and alignment of the curricular requirements and types of WIL;
- Administration of the WIL programme: for this a 'WIL Coordinator' or administrative secretariat must be appointed by the institution to provide a single, effective point of contact for all parties involved in WIL and take responsibility for, or facilitate the following:
  - Management and coordination of all WIL related activities;
  - Planning and coordination of student placements, communication and assessment;
  - Addressing all information, training, and communication issues;
  - Approval of facilities with adequate infrastructure;
Approval of supervisors for different levels of instruction;
Concluding memoranda of agreement between HEI, supervisor and student, and monitoring of mutual compliance;
Practical issues of student placement, including transport, accommodation, health and security, and number of students in terms of organisational capacity of the site, etc;
Student access to study areas, ICT and study guidance and support;
Student preparation, welfare and support, assessment and mentoring;
Grievance procedures and structures to handle complaints by students and supervisors;
Development of a manual to govern the implementation of the WIL Policy and provide guidelines for the following:
  - Evaluation of teaching sites and supervisors;
  - Concluding of agreements;
  - Principles of good practice for all experiential learning activities;
  - Placement of students at distributed sites;
  - Preparation of students prior to WIL placements;
  - Student information regarding assignments and assessment;
  - Supervisor training regarding mentoring, teaching, and assessment
  - Supervisor monitoring and evaluation;
  - Use of ICT in learning and assessment;
  - Assessment of students doing WIL and record keeping; and
  - Procedures for internal quality control and quality assurance of the WIL programme.

2. Finances

For the sake of sustainability of the programme, funding must be available for:

- Administration of the WIL programme by a dedicated WIL Coordinator and/or administrative office;
- Contracting in of external service providers and facilities; and
- Student accommodation, support, study and ICT needs.

Planning must ensure that there are be sufficient places available in total to match the training needs of the student intake, so that stability of provision is ensured.

There must be contingency plans to cover possible shortfalls in WIL placements.

3. Contractual agreements

For all work placements, a Memorandum of Agreement between the HEI, the provider and the student must be concluded to regulate the mutual relationships, and to ensure that standards will be maintained for the duration of the students' training.
Such agreements must set out the expectations, rights and responsibilities on all sides, in terms of all relevant legal, financial and relational issues; and must include the detail of the WIL to be achieved and what will be required for the WIL to be maximally effective.

4. Curriculum

In curriculum design, it must be specified how WIL will contribute to the programme. All WIL units must be aligned to the unit outcomes, as described in the Day One competencies, and be appropriate for the level of the students. All credit-bearing WIL-modules must be described well and must be indicated in the academic brochures and qualification information of the institution.

Where WIL forms part of the core curriculum, the teaching and formative assessment may be contracted out to duly trained supervisors with academic background. Where WIL is part of the elective curriculum, the teaching and formative assessment may be contracted out to well trained supervisors.

All summative academic assessment is done by teaching staff at the HEI, and may be done at distributed sites through means of electronic communication facilities.

For Extra Mural Studies, the supervisor need not be trained in teaching or assessment: he is not required to do formal teaching or assessment, as all formative assessment after EMS will be done by teaching staff at the HEI at the institution, based on the learning evidence produced by the student and the report of the supervisor.

Any teaching given by contracted supervisors must be monitored, and all assessments moderated by teaching staff at the HEI;

EMS must not exceed six months of the total academic training period.

5. The teaching and learning environment

The institution must:

Select, approve and appoint sufficient suitably qualified workplace supervisors: they may be teaching staff, or contracted-in veterinary and para-veterinary professionals that are willing to make their workplace available for student placements, and facilitate student learning through WIL activities.

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2 Refer ‘Distributed Teaching 1 and 2’ in Table 1
3 Refer ‘Distributed Teaching 3’ in Table 1
4 Refer ‘EMS’ in Table 1
5 Compare SAQA WIL handbook
They will be selected based on availability, experience, and peer review.

All supervisors of clinical modules must be registered or authorised with the SAVC.

Para-veterinary professionals may be appointed as supervisors where the training falls in their specific scope of practice and competence.

Supervisors must be approved as fit to provide WIL under core or elective curriculum, or EMS according to their competency and experience:
To provide mandatory core or elective curriculum teaching, supervisors must be fully competent and experienced in the academic field of study concerned, and the principles of teaching and assessment.

Core curriculum assessment: The supervisor may do formative assessment if he has prior relevant academic experience.
For Elective curriculum assessment: The supervisor may do formative assessment if well trained and supported by the institution.
They must receive on-going support by the institution regarding assessment policies and procedures, as well as regular monitoring and evaluation.

All summative academic assessment is done by the relevant academic teaching staff.

First time supervisors to be given comprehensive training regarding guidance to and assessment of students placed with them.

Supervisors for EMS do not require specific training, support or monitoring. and will be evaluated based on the student’s feedback and learning evidence like logbooks or portfolio’s produced, and supervisor’s report.

All supervisors must be given a practical and comprehensive WIL practice guideline to be able to know and understand the HEI’s expectations from them and from the students in terms of workplace mentoring, learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Practical training requires the active hands-on participation of students under appropriate supervision and for the keeping of a practical logbook, the mere observation of others doing procedures is not acceptable.

A ratio is accepted of one supervisor to a maximum of five students in a clinical set-up.

Student numbers admitted to any Distributed Teaching Site must be compatible with the available staff numbers as well as facilities and the amount of clinical and pathological material available.
Contracted supervisors must be encouraged to make input to the programme and assessment design and review processes.

Recommendations:

Where teaching is provided in private practices or other commercial environments, time must be allowed for students to investigate and follow up a proportion of cases in depth, towards problem solving of complex cases in consultation with their supervisors, notwithstanding the commercial constraints present in a private practice.

Students are allowed to spend more time in specialist practices during their clinical EMS if they feel there is too much emphasis on Day One competences at the distributed learning sites.

WIL should be integrated into the curriculum in such a way that it does not clash with traditional lectures or other formal teaching activities.

The Institution must endeavour to make modern online information and communication facilities available for use by staff, students and supervisors.

Students must be encouraged to engage in the inter-professional cooperation, and/or cooperation between veterinary and para-veterinary professions according to the One Health vision.

Supervisors to be given incentives and reward for teaching excellence to improve the quality of teaching.

The institution must document:
Total Number of contracted supervisors
For each Distributed teaching site where mandatory curriculum teaching is delivered:
- Curriculum unit taught;
- Supervisor name, area of competence, training and academic background (if applicable)
- Assessment done by supervisor: type of formative assessment;
- Academic staff member responsible for support and monitoring;
- Evaluation reports on supervisor performance
- Student feedback
- Supervisor's report
- Staff development programmes attended;

List supervisors for EMS and students that attended.
Staff not directly employed by the institution who are contracted to be regularly involved in teaching and assessment may be added in a separate table to the institution's staff-student ratio returns to SAVC, calculated on the proportion of Full Time Equivalents (FTE) worked - provided their teaching time is covered by an agreement with the institution.
Per study year, the time spent at Distributed Teaching Sites for core and elective training and EMS.

6. **Assessment**

There must be good assessment practice to judge the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved, and all assessment must:

- Be aligned to the Day One competencies, in a holistic assessment policy;
- Be repeatable;
- Be reliable indicators of student performance, with standardised objective assessment criteria;
- Allow students a number of opportunities to demonstrate what they have learnt;
- Use an appropriate range of assessment methods, including formative and summative assessment items;
- Avoid over-assessment;
- Balance assessment of individual work vs. group work;
- Be meaningful, relevant and engaging for students;
- Be realistic for the developmental level of the students; and
- Be spread on a realistic timeline to ensure a manageable workload for staff and students.

The institution must:

- Provide all students and staff with Study Guides which describe the delivery, assessment and learning outcomes of each unit in detail;
- Prepare students adequately for different modes of assessment;
- Ensure online security, student identity and originality of work for electronic submission of assignments and assessments;
- Provide students with timely constructive qualitative and quantitative feedback on assessment items, to allow students to use the information before the next assignment;
- Develop and document moderation procedures for all modes of assessment by supervisors;
- Keep record of all assessment processes and outcomes, and archive samples of student work at different levels of performance (from high to fail) in a unit, for scrutiny by the SAVC’s monitors;
- Document where students have to pass a specific WIL assignment before they can continue their course.

7. **Quality assurance and monitoring**

The institution must develop and implement a clear policy for regular internal quality assurance and monitoring procedures to ensure that practical work, teaching and assessment undertaken at distributed sites continue to meet the required standards, and that deficiencies are addressed.
The following measures must be implemented to assess the WIL Outcomes against the Institution's mission and the Day One competencies:
Annual documented site visits of all official distributed sites (not EMS) by qualified institution staff;
Monitoring of feedback by all parties involved in WIL. Feedback to be provided in a standardised written format after each site placement by:
- Students - on the WIL activities including opportunity to perform hands-on procedures and objectives achieved; facilities available; mentoring by supervisors;
- Students and supervisors - on support by institution;
- Academic staff - on supervisors’ teaching and practice standards;
- Supervisor – on student abilities and compliance
- Industry stakeholders - on the perception that the public has of new graduates;
Monitoring of questionnaire or other feedback from stakeholders like contracted supervisors, students, recent alumni, professional colleagues and consumers;
Monitoring of student assessment and assessment moderation;
Monitoring of supervisors at distributed learning sites;
Assessment of learning opportunities;
Audit process for reporting and investigation of incidents, and follow up on student welfare complaints and supervisor complaints;
Procedures and follow up action after deficiencies were identified on feedback; and
Ways in which the policy is implemented, evaluated and revised so that the results of the outcomes assessment are used to improve the quality of the institution's WIL programmes.

8. Information and student support

Each student should have access to an academic mentor who will
- review his academic progress;
- provide pastoral support or counselling for social academic or career development issues that affect his progression (if mentor is not properly trained, external service providers should be used);
- assist with the planning of practical placements;
- enable the student to see and improve on weaknesses, and build on existing and new abilities; and
- provide ongoing support to new graduates.

All students must receive the following information:
- The Day One skill list;
- Aims and objectives of experiential learning, and the responsibility of the student to take ownership of his practical learning experience and make the most of the opportunity;
- What is expected of the student in terms of WIL, and how to plan each activity in collaboration with the supervisor;
- Common pitfalls in report writing and oral presentations etc;
- A list of approved suitable facilities and supervisors available;
• Expected professional conduct when dealing with members of the public;
• The directives of the Code of Conduct of the SAVC for their profession and Rules for Students (where available); and
• The student's right to report any and all safety, physical, and emotional concerns, problems or grievances, to the faculty (anonymously if needed);

Before each placement students the following guidelines must be given to the students to ensure that they understand what is required of them and be able to make the best use of the WIL opportunity:

• The workplace agreement with details about the placement, local protocols, transport and accommodation, IT structures and support;
• The expected rigours of the workplace and how to deal with it;
• Learning guidelines for the student and the supervisor;
• Study resources: study guides, instructions, and equipment that may be needed;
• Specifications about assignments and learning evidence required; and
• Details of assessment items.

The institution must document:

• That the educational objectives, anticipated outcomes and assessment practices are thoroughly understood by students and educators;
• The frequency of all grievance reports by students, mentors, supervisors or staff, the issues raised by them, and follow up action - for review by the visitation team; and

What was done to pre-empt and address stress caused in distributed sites where the speed of rotation does not allow a trust relationship between supervisor and student to develop, resulting in the student not being given the responsibility or autonomy he needs – thereby defeating the purpose of the placement.

9. Facilities and equipment

Off campus teaching sites may include any veterinary facility, farm, breeding centre, factory, laboratory, abattoir, state veterinary facility, factory, laboratory, feedlot, Animal Welfare Organisation, Zoological gardens, or other facility, as deemed relevant to the teaching intended.

All veterinary facilities must be registered with the SAVC and approved through the SAVC inspection process.

Core clinical teaching should be provided in an environment that promotes best practice of veterinary medicine and surgery, but because students need exposure to a variety of work systems, it is important that not all sites have ‘state of the art’ facilities.
All other sites must meet the relevant applicable national standards or codes and/or should afford a standard where a professional service can be rendered, with facilities comparable to those available in the work/commercial environment and be appropriate WIL training in terms of space, heating, lighting, ventilation, bio-security and hygiene.

All sites have to comply with standard safety, animal welfare, waste management and biosecurity regulations.

Sites must guarantee an acceptable workload/exposure.

Adequate support staff is needed to allow for appropriate supervision of students by the supervisors.

Ongoing compliance must be reviewed by regular, documented, institution on-site inspection, based on the SAVC minimum standards for facilities as well as the requirements of the specific educational programme to be delivered there.

The SAVC may inspect clinical sites at any time. Such inspections, including travel and per diem costs, will be at the expense of the facility or Institution.

Sites where students have to sleep over must provide dedicated learning spaces for students: at least desk, chair, light and access to high speed internet, to facilitate access to e-learning resources and campus information and support.

Vehicles used for student transport should comply with all relevant regulations.

The institution must document the following per facility:

- Owner
- Name of facility or farm
- SAVC or other applicable registration number
- Address
- Contact person and contact numbers, e-mail addresses and website links
- Type of facility: Clinic/farm/laboratory/ abattoir etc
- Type of WIL offered: clinical practice/ husbandry/ laboratory procedures/food hygiene etc
- Curriculum covered: core/ elective/ EMS
- The availability of teaching materials
- Number of students in one year and average time spent there by one student

SAVC visitation teams must have access to written records of at the annual review process instituted by the institution to review the student experience at the learning site, and to the steps taken to deal with issues of concern.
10. Animals and teaching material

WIL should ensure exposure of the students to adequate numbers of all the major species relevant to training programme.

Clinical material should be varied, from primary care to referral exposure, and providing experience in routine and more complex procedures.

At all times an acceptable standard of animal welfare must be maintained at the distributed sites, where animals are used for teaching.

There must be adequate exposure to teaching material in the food hygiene area.

Where core or elective training with formal assessment, is offered at distributed sites, the practical exposure must be documented and may be included under a separate heading in the Institution’s annual report: the number per species, of autopsies, clinical cases per consultation, mobile clinic or hospital cases; herd visits; food hygiene; laboratory work; and game capturing.

F. Reporting to the SA Veterinary Council and visitations

For the SAVC to be satisfied that the programme as a whole meets all the SAVC criteria for registration and Day One competencies, it may request to see the information documented as per this policy.

SAVC visitations:
The visitation team meetings should include representatives of contracted supervisors and support staff involved with WIL.

The Distributed Teaching Sites where core curriculum is taught and with formal assessment, may be recognised as part of the institution’s structure during official visitations, and a random sample of such DTS’s may be inspected. For the sake of time, such inspections may be delegated to local experts that are drawn from a list of suitably qualified nominees and completed before the visit, or done by video conferencing technology.

Where problems are identified at a distributed site of such nature as to impact on the quality of the training being given at that site, the SAVC may ask a more detailed report or choose to visit the site even before the next visitation. Should a site, based on objective assessment criteria, not conform to teaching quality, the site will be given a maximum of six months to rectify the deficiencies, or be reconsidered as a WIL site.