

# WIL in Science: Opportunities & challenges for engaging students



# Our research

How can we make engagement with WIL a priority for science students?

How can we make WIL experiences meaningful to science students?

1. WIL specialist interviews
2. Student focus groups
  - N=85
  - Two universities

# Students value and want WIL...

- Get hands-on experience
- Develop their skills
- Build networks
- Try out different options
  
- **Set themselves apart**

## ... but may not engage in WIL.

- **Staff** Where WIL is optional, only a small proportion actively engage.
- **Students** Peers are interested but may not 'action the worry' and take the next step
- Students often need to 'choose' WIL over other opportunities.
  - Opportunity
  - Awareness
  - Interest

# What encourages students to do WIL?

- Thinking beyond university
- Doing WIL
- Hearing about WIL
  - Importance
  - Relevant opportunities

# What are the barriers to engagement in WIL?

- Time
- Money
- Visa restrictions
- Confidence
- Lack of visible, relevant opportunities
- Lack of information
- Optional WIL

# We need to:

- Communicate
  - Talk about WIL more and earlier
  - Make it easier for students to find information on WIL
- Support students to find and access WIL
  - Provide more WIL opportunities
  - Embed and scaffold WIL throughout courses
  - Make use of the full range of WIL activities
  - Be flexible