

# The influence of values on supervisors' satisfaction with co-op student employees

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While a growing body of literature in cooperative education (co-op) has seen an increased focus on what makes for a quality work term for the student, few studies investigate the satisfaction of the co-op supervisor. This paper seeks to address how supervisors perceive the role of the co-op student in the workplace and understand how these values influence satisfaction with a hired co-op student. A self-report survey was sent to supervisors who had hired co-op students from one Canadian academic institution. The results showed a significant correlation between attributes valued by the supervisor and supervisor rating of the student when those attributes were exhibited; however, this was only the case after the attributes were weighted for importance. The results demonstrate the importance of expectations in influencing satisfaction and reinforce the need for preparation of the student for the workterm, a clear alignment of expectations between the student and supervisor, and the value of onboarding in creating a successful work term.

Keywords: Supervisor satisfaction, implicit follower theories, student attributes, student performance

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Job satisfaction remains an important individual outcome in organizational research (Beehr et. al., 2006). Defined as a positive emotional reaction towards one's job (Locke, 1976), job satisfaction is influenced by many aspects of the position itself, as well as the people that the individual holding the job interacts with most frequently. Indeed, a number of studies have cited the importance of satisfying relationships with co-workers and supervisors (e.g., Price & Mueller, 1986; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). However, there remains little mention of supervisors' satisfaction with subordinates. Despite the clear influence of others on job satisfaction, fewer studies focus on the manner in which employees' behaviours influence supervisors' satisfaction with employees (Beehr, Weisbrody, & Zagmuny, 1994; Beehr et al. 2006). As such, it is important to examine what aspects of the subordinate influence supervisor satisfaction and what attributes supervisors might value in their subordinates in the workplace.

Previous research using implicit follower theories (Sy, 2010; Derler & Weibler, 2014) suggests that supervisors' implicit norms for subordinate behavior influence their satisfaction with the subordinates they supervise. Supervisors have a mental model that guides their perceptions and evaluations of employees. Supervisors create imagined goal-directed prototypes to which each real subordinate is compared (Sy, 2010). The mismatch between the actual and ideal may lead to changes in satisfaction with the subordinate for the supervisor (Sy, 2010).

While implicit follower theory provides a useful framework in which to study supervisors' implicit norms and employee evaluations, there remains a relative lack of understanding as to what might contribute to the development of these implicit norms. The purpose of this study is to extend our

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current understanding of the development of individuals' implicit follower theories and supervisor satisfaction with subordinates. To do so, this study examines the influence of various subordinate attributes on supervisor satisfaction. Cooperative education (co-op) provides a useful context in which to study this influence. Co-op involves the alternation of academic and paid work terms that are designed to offer students the opportunity to integrate the knowledge gained in the classroom with practical learning in the workplace (Groenewald, Drysdale, Chiupka, & Johnson, 2011). Given the temporary nature of employment in co-op, norms are often not developed and communicated in a systematic way. Thus, the relationship between a co-op supervisor and co-op student is subject to discrepancies between what supervisors desire of their students and how students behave. In addition, co-op is a growing form of work-integrated learning in many institutions, suggesting that examining the ways in which supervisors think about their co-op students is important to the success of co-op in general. As a result, two research questions have been developed. The current investigation seeks to understand the perspectives of supervisors toward the importance and performance of selected student attributes, and whether student attributes help to predict supervisors' satisfaction with the co-op student when weighted for their relative importance.

This paper is organized as follows. First, we describe the co-op context, emphasizing the important but often under-appreciated role of the supervisor. Second, we position supervisors' satisfaction with subordinates (i.e., co-op students) as a construct of interest. Third, we examine that construct within the implicit follower theory framework, and argue that individuals' theories about how subordinates are supposed to behave inform their expectations which, when met, lead to greater satisfaction with that subordinate. Finally, the method and results of the study are presented and discussed in terms of the implications for stakeholders, limitations of the research, and directions for future investigation.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *Cooperative Education and the Supervisor*

Cooperative education relies on three groups of stakeholders: the student, the employer, and the institution (Hurd & Hendy, 1997). The interactions between these three groups determine the quality of the work-term experience in terms of learning and development in the workplace (McDermott, 2008). All three stakeholders play distinct roles in cooperative education and as such have different needs, and each require equal attention to capitalize on all possible benefits for invested parties. Previous literature has focused primarily on the needs of the student and how to support the student to increase chances of their success in co-op (Chapman, Coll, & Meech, 1999), but there has been a call for further investigation regarding the employer and supervisors' needs (Braunstein & Stull, 2001). While the employer is often described to be an important member of the co-op triangle (Chapman, Coll, & Meech, 1999) and offers the largest contribution to the "health of cooperative programs" (Hurd & Hendy, 1997), there is a gap in the literature in terms of the needs of co-op supervisors (Coll, Zegwaard, & Hodges, 2002).

Subsequently, more attention should be focused on the co-op student's supervisor. The workplace supervisor fills the roles of mentor, advisor, and facilitator for the co-op student in the workplace, making them integral to experience-based learning (Mackaway, Winchester-Seeto, & Rowe, 2013). By guiding the student through the workplace, the supervisor provides opportunities in the workplace that can result in learning, which allows for the integration of theory and practice (Fleming & Eames, 2005). The supervisor's large influence on student learning offers a critical link between the students'

learning both in and out of the classroom, which therefore contributes to the personal and professional development of the student (King, 2001).

As the co-op supervisor and student interact, their relationship has the potential to be mutually advantageous. Co-op students benefit supervisors with regard to productivity (Hurd & Hendy, 1997), increased motivation (Braunstein, 1999, cited by Weisz & Smith, 2005), and a lower cost in terms of wage/salary compared to regular employees (Deane, Rankel, & Cohen, 1978). However, the supervisor may also experience challenges in their involvement in cooperative education programs. These challenges may include the increased expense of hiring and training first work term students (Abel & Love, 1988) and an incomplete knowledge of the purpose and goals of co-op (Fifolt & Searby, 2010). Success of cooperative education from the supervisor's perspective therefore relies on minimizing these challenges, while maximizing the benefits of supervising co-op students. Past research by Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) revealed that achieving educational benefits for students and related benefits for employers are linked. Consequently, it becomes apparent that co-op students will benefit more greatly from their co-op work term if the employers also experience increased benefit from their involvement in the co-op program. It becomes important, then, to produce an experience that benefits both the supervisor and student, which will then increase satisfaction in both parties, which would likely also result in benefits for the institution.

Co-op supervisors play an integral role in the success of co-op programs. It is clear that the supervisor therefore requires support and guidance from the co-op institution and commitment from the student to increase the probability of a successful work term. However, there is little research to reveal what the supervisor needs from the other two stakeholders to achieve this success from the supervisor's perspective.

#### *Supervisor Satisfaction with Subordinates*

When examining the relationship between supervisor and subordinate satisfaction, the general approach is to examine the subordinate's satisfaction with the supervisor (Riggio & Cole, 1992). Often what remains ignored is the supervisor's satisfaction with their subordinates (Warr & Routledge, 1969). In a review of the existing literature on supervisor satisfaction, Beehr, Weisbrodt, and Zagumny (1994) identified two aspects of job satisfaction for the supervisor with respect to their subordinates: the functional relationship and the entity relationship (Locke, 1976). The functional relationship refers to the exchange of services and materials. The subordinate can facilitate the achievement of supervisory goals which in turn will cause the supervisor to view the subordinate favourably. Entity relationships are based upon liking a person for their personality, values, and beliefs rather than what they can provide (Locke, 1976). Similarity between individuals in terms of attitudes, personality, and values generally contribute to liking (Byrne, Clore, & Smeaton, 1986). Together, entity and functional relationships jointly contribute to higher levels of satisfaction with the subordinate for the supervisor (Locke, 1976).

#### *Implicit Follower Theories and Satisfaction*

Implicit follower theories describe assumptions and theories that individuals have about follower characteristics (Sy, 2010). Generally, a supervisor's implicit theories about subordinates are important in impacting the leader-follower relationship (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). Implicit follower theories have a dual nature and reflect a supervisor/leader's prototypes of how followers are and how followers should be (Sy, 2010). Supervisors may have a different idea of how the average subordinate may behave and what attributes they may have and the attributes of the ideal subordinate that they might

supervise. The idea of how followers truly are may be based upon common taxonomy while ideal prototypes of followers may be goal-derived (Schyns & Meindl, 2005). Generally, leaders value attributes such as being hard working and reliable (Wernimon, 1971) but this may not be observed in all subordinates. As such, when those attributes are observed, leaders may view a subordinate to be closer to their ideal follower and how an ideal follower would behave in the workplace. As a subordinate becomes a closer resemblance to a supervisor's implicit follower theory, a supervisor may believe them to be a higher performer or be more satisfied with the subordinate. In other words, goal-derived implicit follower theories become a framework for performance theories and become known as performance expectations for employees who the individual supervises or leads (Sy, 2010). Together, implicit performance theories and goal-derived implicit follower theories overlap to create expectations for effective followers and only consist of positive attributes of individuals.

Following this, it may be the case that supervisors place more weight on certain attributes based upon their implicit follower theory and how they believe subordinates are and how ideal subordinates should be. Those characteristics that fall under one's goal-derived follower prototype may be considered more important and valued more by the supervisor. When those characteristics are observed, supervisors are more satisfied because their subordinate is approaching what they consider to be the ideal follower. If a subordinate exhibits the characteristics of how a supervisor pictures the "average" follower, this may not influence their satisfaction and rather lead them to feel as though the subordinate is meeting expectations but not exceeding them. As such, what a supervisor values and views as ideal directly impacts their evaluation of subordinates and, in turn, their satisfaction. The current study looks to examine whether supervisors' ratings of the importance of various attributes impacts whether those attributes play a role in supervisor satisfaction with a subordinate. Specifically, the current investigation attempts to understand how supervisors might evaluate their satisfaction with co-op student employees.

## METHODS

### *Data Collection*

Data were collected via an electronic survey distributed to the supervisors of co-op students. Potential participants were individuals who had supervised at least one co-op student from a Canadian university. Ethics clearance was received for the study and participants read an information letter before deciding to participate. Those who chose to participate responded to various questions about their most recent experience supervising a co-op student, their perceptions of co-op, and provided some demographic information. The survey was made available for approximately six weeks.

### *Measures*

Measures in the study included: (a) satisfaction with most recent co-op student; (b) behaviours of the most recent co-op student; and (c) supervisors' perceived importance of various co-op student characteristics.

### *Satisfaction with Co-op Student*

Supervisors' satisfaction with their most recent co-op students was measured using a modified version of the Satisfaction with Subordinates scale developed by Beehr and colleagues (1989). The scale was modified in order to be more specific to co-op student subordinates rather than general employees that an individual might supervise. One sample item is, "All in all, I was very satisfied with this person as

my co-op student." A total of five items were included in the scale and were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Overall, the scale had adequate reliability ( $\alpha=0.857$ ).

#### *Importance of Student-Employee Attributes*

Supervisors were asked to rank-order ten attributes of co-op students. These ten attributes were identified previously through a qualitative phase of the current investigation (Pretti, Drewery, & Nevison, 2016). Themes were identified through qualitative interviews and informed the creation of the current measures. They reflect a number of core characteristics that tend to be at least to some degree desirable to co-op supervisors. Examples include *being hard-working*, *producing a high quantity of work*, and *fitting well with company culture*. Participants (supervisors) were asked to think about their most recent co-op student and, in the case that they supervised multiple students, to think of only one student for the remainder of the survey. Participants were then asked to rank the ten attributes in order of importance (10 = most important, 1 = least important) in terms of how important each attribute would be for their co-op student to have when working for them.

#### *Perceived Performance of Student-Employee Attributes*

Supervisors were then asked to report the extent to which their co-op student 'performed' each of the ten attributes. Responses were collected on a five-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores represent a stronger performance of a given attribute. Scores were then transformed into ranks such that the highest score would receive a rank of 10 and the lowest score would receive a rank of 1. This approach allowed us to get a sense of which attributes might differ greatly in terms of their importance and performance from supervisors' perspectives.

#### *Analysis Plan*

First, the appropriate analyses were conducted in order to examine the characteristics of the sample and the validity of measures included in the current model. Next, data were subjected to an importance-performance (I-P) analysis (Martilla & James, 1977). Each of the 10 attributes were mapped onto an I-P matrix to visually examine attributes that fall into each of four categories: "concentrate here" (high importance but low performance), "keep up the good work" (high importance and performance), "low priority" (low importance and low performance), and "possible overkill" (high performance but low importance). Mean ranks (see Methods section) were used in the I-P analysis. This approach corresponds to the first research question.

Finally, to answer the second research question, a linear regression analysis was conducted. Independent variables included ten weighted student attributes. Each attribute was weighted by multiplying the mean performance score (range from 1 to 5) by the mean importance score (range from 1 to 10). As such, if an attribute was not important, it would be weighted less and important attributes would be weighted more. The beta weights for each variable were examined for the relative importance of each variable.

#### *Description of Sample*

After screening for unengaged responses and those who had not completed enough of the survey to be included (must have less than 10% of missing data), a total of 376 responses remained. Of these respondents, the greatest proportion of supervisors worked in the manufacturing industry (21%) but there were respondents from several different industries including IT, government, education,

research, finance, natural resources, and healthcare. The majority of supervisors were based in Canada (81%) and in large companies of more than 1,000 employees (49%). The respondents within this survey make up a fairly representative sample of those hiring students from the institution where the research was conducted.

## RESULTS

*RQ1: What are supervisors' perspectives towards the importance and performance of selected student attributes?*

The first research question explored supervisors' perspectives on each student attribute in terms of their importance and students' performance. Table 1 lists each attribute with average importance score, importance rank-order, average performance score, and performance rank-order. Results show that relevant prior experience is the most important attribute as reported by co-op supervisors, and is also the attribute that is displayed least of all by co-op students. Enthusiasm was ranked as the least important attribute, but co-op students performed quite well (rank = 8).

TABLE 1: Mean and rank of importance and performance scores for co-op students' characteristics as reported by co-op supervisors

Attribute	Importance		Performance	
	M (1 to 10)	Rank	M (1 to 5)	Rank
Enthusiasm	2.99	1	3.27	8
Fit with company culture	5.57	6	3.08	6
Hardworking	4.11	2	3.35	9
High quality of work	4.22	3	3.11	7
High quantity of work	7.69	9	2.84	2
Independence	5.35	5	2.89	4
Professionalism	6.10	8	3.04	5
Relevant prior experience	9.00	10	1.74	1
Resourcefulness	4.39	4	2.87	3
Response to supervision	5.59	7	3.38	10

*Note.* Higher ranks indicate higher mean scores

Figure 1 graphs the relationship between importance and performance scores into four quadrants. Clockwise, from upper-left, the quadrants are called "concentrate here", "keep up the good work", "possible overkill", and "low priority". Results show that relevant experience, high quantity of work, professionalism, and independence are all relatively important to supervisors but students are currently underperforming on these attributes. Results also show that students are performing well on "response to supervision" and "fit with company culture" which are of particular importance to supervisors. Students appear to be demonstrating high quality of work, enthusiasm, and a hard-working attitude, but that these attributes are of less importance to supervisors (possible overkill). Finally, students are not performing well in terms of resourcefulness, but it is less important to supervisors and therefore requires less attention from institutions as they prepare students for work terms.



FIGURE 1: Results of the importance-performance analysis for student attributes

RQ2: After considering their relative importance, do any of the student attributes help to predict supervisors' satisfaction with the co-op student?

Regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the influence of certain student attributes on supervisor satisfaction. Table 2 shows the results of the analyses. Results from this analysis reveals that when student attributes were weighted based on their relative importance, they were all significant in predicting supervisor satisfaction with a subordinate.

TABLE 2: Regression analyses examining impact of student attributes on supervisor satisfaction with co-op student subordinate when weighted by supervisors' reported importance of attributes

Attribute	$\beta$	SE
Fit with company culture	0.026***	0.003
Hard-working	0.025***	0.004
Enthusiastic	0.030***	0.003
Relevant prior experience	0.024***	0.006
Professional	0.025***	0.003
Independent	0.028***	0.004
High quantity of work	0.026***	0.004
High quality of work	0.025***	0.003
Responded well to supervision	0.024***	0.004
Resourceful	0.026***	0.003
$R^2$		0.606

Note. SE=standard error, \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The analyses revealed an  $R^2$  value of 0.606 demonstrating a relatively strong model of predicting satisfaction, ( $F(10)=36.81$ ,  $MSE = 24.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the degree to which a supervisor

values certain attributes may influence whether that attribute helps students to be seen more favourably by their supervisor.

## DISCUSSION

There remains a paucity of research regarding supervisors' satisfaction with subordinates. Given that employees' performance attributes – such as how much work they accomplish or the candor with which they achieve goals – influence supervisors' evaluations, we explored which attributes were most important in relation to performance of each attribute. Our goal was to examine how supervisors evaluate their satisfaction with their hired co-op students by examining the importance and performance of each attribute, and testing the association of each with satisfaction.

Results showed that certain attributes are more important than others to supervisors, and that these attributes do not necessarily align with students' performances. This clearly suggests that there are areas on which students can focus to change supervisors' opinions. For example, while supervisors rated relevant prior experience and quantity of work as the most important attributes that a co-op student should have, students appeared to have under-performed in these areas. It may be the case that students are not able to see connections between their previous experience and their current work term and this leads them to appear as though they lack experience. It may also be the case that students are attempting multiple different types of work and therefore are not accumulating similar work experience. Institutions should work to facilitate student reflection and assist students in finding connections between their previous academic and work experiences and the upcoming work term. Also, it is important that students determine what is important to their current supervisor through a beginning of term meeting or goal-setting session. By discussing what the individual supervisor values, the student and supervisor can establish some mutually beneficial goals. While there are general trends in what supervisors generally prefer, it is important to evaluate what individual supervisors value when entering a new workplace.

Second, students appear to focus more on the quality of work rather than quantity and it may be that some supervisors prefer the reverse. This information should be shared with students in order for them to better prepare for the workplace. Professionalism represents another important attribute in which students may under perform. A pre-departure workshop or a mandatory course prior to students' first work term might better instil professional values in students and set them up for greater success. One example of this is implemented in the Waterloo Professional Development program and delivered to all students before their first work term. The importance-performance analysis provides a guide through which students and their post-secondary institutions can better prepare students to meet the expectations of supervisors and heighten the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Results presented here also revealed that when attributes were weighted according to importance for supervisors, each predicted satisfaction with co-op students. This demonstrates that supervisors' implicit follower theories about co-op student subordinates are unique to the supervisor and students must determine what their supervisor values when they first enter into a new workplace. While there are some attributes that appear to be important to all supervisors and predict satisfaction on their own, there remains a certain amount of variance in what supervisors value in co-op student employees. It may be the case that organizational goals, the industry of the organization, or the supervisors' perception of co-op influence supervisors' implicit follower theories. Previous research has demonstrated that implicit theories are unique to the individual (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) and the current investigation demonstrates that supervisors see co-op students differently and have varying ideas of



the attributes of the ideal co-op student. Further work will be required in order to determine whether implicit follower theories about co-op students differ from those about regular subordinates.

#### *Implications for Future Practice*

The findings of this study have important implications for all co-op stakeholders on a personal and professional level, as well as supervisors of regular employees. Given that a supervisor may believe an employee to be a higher performer when they are a close resemblance to their own implicit follower theory, once a supervisor is able to determine what he or she values in an employee (Shondrick & Lord, 2010), their relationship with their student may improve. Furthermore, the supervisor may be better able to screen for students that embody these traits so as to increase the chance of work term success for the supervisor, the company as a whole, and the student. Institutions with co-op programs will have university staff who work with the supervisors, and the current research reinforces the importance of having conversations with supervisors about values and whether their students are meeting expectations. From a co-op practitioner perspective, we might aim to incorporate such supervisor questionnaires in an attempt to better match students with employers for maximum benefits over the course of the work-term.

Results may also inform practice beyond the co-op context. Employees and supervisors should work together to establish clear performance expectations. Goal setting practices and constant communication appear to be critical, especially during early socialization periods, to articulating norms of behaviour. Employees can develop a better sense of supervisors' desires through such activities and can direct behaviour towards the most useful actions. Creating clear 'learning contracts' between the supervisor and student to clarify goals or offering a thorough onboarding process for the student may also support students and supervisors in preparing for the work term and aligning expectations. Additionally, results suggest that hiring managers can screen potential employees in a way that highlights particular traits that would align with supervisors' notions of 'important' employee attributes. Human resources personnel could use results from this study to recruit employees that best fit the criteria for meeting supervisors' expectations.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

A primary limitation of the current investigation is the use of self-report questionnaires to measure supervisor satisfaction and valued attributes. Self-report lends itself well to determining what a supervisor sees as satisfying, because it may be different for each unique supervisor depending on industry, workplace, and personal preference. However, future research could incorporate raters who score students across the various weighted attributes examined and compare these ratings with supervisor evaluations to confirm our findings. Second, while supervisors were asked to focus on only their most recent student, their responses may have been influenced by their general experience with co-op students. Further investigation is required to determine whether experiences with different students can be extracted from a general experience in co-op. Also, while this study drew participants from various industries and company sizes, the study focused exclusively on supervisor satisfaction with co-op students, and specifically students from one institution. Future research could conduct a similar study with non-co-op samples, including other work-integrated learning arrangements (e.g., placements or internships) as well as regular full-time employees to see whether these influences are specific to co-op. Finally, research regarding the supervisor experience is limited (Coll, Zegwaard, & Hodges, 2002). Future research should continue to address this gap in the literature to understand

other influences on supervisor satisfaction, particularly within the cooperative education context, and potential moderating or mediating factors that may impact these ratings.

## CONCLUSION

Cooperative education relies heavily on the involvement of the supervisor, and therefore it is imperative that we as practitioners know how to improve the supervisor experience. This study looked at what makes for a satisfying work term from the supervisors' perspective. We contend that this is a critical perspective to examine to provide valuable information to both students and institutions, with the opportunity improve the outcomes for cooperative education as a whole. We performed regression analyses after weighing the variables based on supervisor ratings to investigate whether how important each supervisor rated certain attributes would play a role in the impact of that attribute on supervisor satisfaction. We found that supervisors carry different expectations of co-op students and what contributes to a successful work term and those expectations influence whether students' performance in various areas impacts their satisfaction. Results answer our initial research questions about what supervisors value in their co-op students and whether those values influence satisfaction. The insights gained from this study demonstrate the importance of voicing expectations early on in the work term and how these expectations can affect the overall outcome of the work term for the student and the supervisor. These findings provide a basis on which practice and future research can build. We suggest that researchers continue to bridge the gap in the literature, and further investigate the supervisory experience, in order to fully understand satisfaction with co-op for the students, the institution, and the supervisor.

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## About the Journal

The International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning (IJWIL) publishes double-blind peer-reviewed original research and topical issues dealing with Work-Integrated Learning (WIL). IJWIL first published in 2000 under the name of Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE). Since then the readership and authorship has become more international and terminology usage in the literature has favoured the broader term of WIL. In response to these changes, the journal name was changed to the International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning in 2018.

In this Journal, WIL is defined as "*an educational approach that uses relevant work-based experiences to allow students to integrate theory with the meaningful practice of work as an intentional component of the curriculum*". Examples of such practice includes work placements, work-terms, internships, practicum, cooperative education (Co-op), fieldwork, work-related projects/competitions, service learning, entrepreneurships, student-led enterprise, applied projects, simulations (including virtual WIL), etc. WIL shares similar aims and underpinning theories of learning as the fields of experiential learning, work-based learning, and vocational education and training, however, each of these fields are seen as separate fields.

The Journal's main aim is to enable specialists working in WIL to disseminate research findings and share knowledge to the benefit of institutions, students, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that leads to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of WIL, and promote further research.

## Types of Manuscripts Sought by the Journal

Types of manuscripts sought by IJWIL primarily of two forms; 1) *research publications* describing research into aspects of work-integrated learning and, 2) *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and provide critical explorative discussion around a topical issue. The journal will, on occasions, consider best practice submissions.

*Research publications* should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry. A detailed description and justification for the methodology employed. A description of the research findings - tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance to current established literature, implications for practitioners and researchers, whilst remaining mindful of the limitations of the data. And a conclusion preferably including suggestions for further research.

*Topical discussion* articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical and scholarly discussion on the importance of the issues, critical insights to how to advance the issue further, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.

*Best practice and program description* papers. On occasions, the Journal also seeks manuscripts describing a practice of WIL as an example of best practice, however, only if it presents a particularly unique or innovative practice or is situated in an unusual context. There must be a clear contribution of new knowledge to the established literature. Manuscripts describing what is essentially 'typical', 'common' or 'known' practices will be encouraged to rewrite the focus of the manuscript to a significant educational issue or will be encouraged to publish their work via another avenue that seeks such content.

By negotiation with the Editor-in-Chief, the Journal also accepts a small number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.



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