



International
Specialised
Skills
Institute



ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING OVERSEAS PRACTICAL PLACEMENTS

in workplaces for VET students

An International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship

ALAIN GROSSBARD

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Department of
Education & Training

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1. Executive Summary

It is recommended that Vocational Education teachers and administrators develop and partner with global vocational education programs from tertiary institutions and industry groups to develop short term work placement opportunities overseas. This will enhance students' knowledge, employment skills, build client relationships and business networks so important to navigate the complexities and challenges to make them ready for life and work.

The Fellow's goal was to focus on discovering alternative ways to develop the right skills, abilities and experiences for students to make better choices about their employment future. The public relations and communication discipline are a world of infinite possibilities and the hardest part is to make choices. It's about developing students to have creative skills such as critical thinking, innovation, people management, flexibility and problem solving.

The journey began with the belief and financial support of the International Specialised Skills Institute, allowing the idea of vocational education students complete their work placement requirements overseas to gain skills and abilities in different environments to that offered in the Victorian work place.

As this is the first time such a venture has been developed and implemented, a selected group of 11 final year RMIT University students from the Advanced Diploma of Business (Public Relations) became the pilot group to see if overseas work placements would be a viable and feasible alternative to local work placements. The companies and organisations accepting students came from cities such as Stuttgart, Cologne, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Dublin, Edinburgh, Richmond, London, Johannesburg, Nairobi and Calgary.

The Fellow established contacts and agreements from global companies, travelled overseas to visit these facilities, meet with the staff and discussed the requirements and assessment procedures. This program was to ensure cutting-edge cross-cultural communication, cross discipline and learnings will engage these students to deliver them with well developed, strategic communication skills, abilities and experiences. This project particularly emphasised new strategies that would have a direct impact on enhancing graduate employability and work readiness via industry.

The report provides details about this new idea, the overall project schedule, timelines and changes that had to be made. It discusses finding the right companies that would nurture, educate and train these young people to become PR professionals in the future.

The main challenges are described such as convincing VE staff and administration that this concept and associated activity was a worthwhile program that should be adopted in many aspects of VE programs beyond Public Relations at RMIT. It discusses the need to convince private sector companies overseas to acknowledge the work placement program and incorporate this educational learning experience with our students from Australia.

The report covers the need to find supportive travel grants and funding to assist students to travel and live overseas for four weeks to complete their required studies. For this pilot project of 11 students, it cost each student around A\$6300 to complete their work placement.

To ensure the success of this program is fully communicated in a way to ensure it becomes an ongoing program option for those teachers and students interested in completing internships overseas, a set of recommendations are presented. It is estimated it will take three years to prove to VE staff and administration that this global work placement should become a reality and a necessary option in this globalised world of work.

From the experiences of the students who completed their global work placement program, they all strongly believed that participating in this innovative and pragmatic venture of working overseas as part of their course was fruitful and productive. The fact that it will become part of their Curriculum Vitae will make each of these students a point of difference for their job prospect.

Several major employers of PR in Australia as well as Industry bodies have stated constantly that such an experience means that the student will develop independence, become a problem solver and a people collaborator. Those students who are prepared to take a 'gamble' and uproot themselves to a different work environment in a different country with different cultural habits says a lot about the students strive and ambition to do well.

The success of this program should provide a means of enhancing other disciplines in RMIT University and the wider vocational education sector to adopt this global work placement approach. The offer of short-term global internship program is unique to the Vocational Education sector and will set precedence for other VE institutions to consider such work placement opportunities.

2. Fellowship Program

The aim of the Fellowship was to further develop and partner with overseas companies and industry groups to further enhance students in vocational education through the development cross-cultural communication skills, experiences and knowledge of the industry as well as build client relationships and business networks from global short-term work placement opportunities.

This idea has been percolating for some time working with 31 states, national and international businesses and organisations on VET related work integrated learning projects and 231 work placements over the past eight years. The success rate of employment has been outstanding with most of RMIT public relations students offered full time on graduating with their Advanced Diploma of Business course, as covered in the Fellow's published academic paper delivered at the International Education and Pedagogy Conference, April 2017.

By travelling overseas on the Fellowship, it was the intention to meet and establish industry relationships for student engagement in the workplace as part of their vocational education pathways to employment and industry productivity that would be transferable back to Victoria and Australia businesses.

It was also the intention that this innovative and proactive approach will have many attributes for VE teachers. It would advertise to the Vocational Education and Training sector that opportunities are boundless in that there are possibilities for our young people to use and enhance their skills, knowledge and intercultural communication beyond just the boundaries of Australia. Providing students and teachers to work overseas will offer experiences and maturity and networking globalised world of ours.

3. Methodology

The process of ensuring that this Fellowship would be successful required detailed logistics and management and can be best subdivided into the following categories:

Agreement with tertiary institution

- » Sought approval from management of the specific VE School to establish this global WIL (Work Integrated Learning) work placement program
- » Global WIL Work Placement Agreements with the legal department required to be formulated and agreed between all parties.
- » Sought agreement and processes with the International Department (Global Mobility Unit) of the tertiary Institution which required documented formalities, training course on Global mobility unit and application into the Mobi software system.
- » Sought funding from the Global Mobility unit but this required application one year in advance, which would have delayed the project with no assurance of any financial support.
- » Requirement to complete risk management and risk mitigation process for each student for approval by management.

Industry contact

- » Reached out in August/September 2017 via emails, phone calls and personal contacts to industry groups, institutions and individual companies for their support in recommending or accepting students to do their work placement for a period of four weeks in October 2018.

- » Organisations included:
 - » International Public Relations Association
 - » Public Relations Institute of Australia
 - » Chambers of Commerce in different countries
 - » Australian public relations companies direct contacts
 - » Personal contacts with global companies
- » Received responses, mainly affirmative, of support for this pilot project during September to December 2017. The companies that supported and accepted the invitation to be part of the work placement program initiation for VE students came from:
 - » Stuttgart, Germany
 - » Berlin, Germany
 - » Dublin, Ireland
 - » Edinburgh, Scotland
 - » Richmond, England
 - » London, England
 - » Johannesburg, South Africa
 - » Nairobi, Kenya
 - » Calgary, Canada
- » The following companies that accepted the Fellow's invitation but because of the travel and cost issues and in some cases, visits to the sites, were not

chosen:

- » Cologne, Germany (working visa restrictions)
- » Washington and Iowa, USA (working visa restrictions)
- » Paris, France (language issue)
- » Amsterdam (language issue)
- » Madrid and Barcelona, Spain (language issue)
- » Istanbul, Turkey (low country risk profile)

Over a period of seven months, prior to the Fellow's visit to organise meetings and visits to discuss global practical work placements, there was ongoing communications with the owners of the companies or the Managing Director of the organisation monthly from October 2017 to February 2018. This was increased to fortnightly contacts either via emails or telephone or Skype sessions from March to May 2018.

Each student was allocated a company that fitted in to their work capabilities and interest. The students were fully consulted and if felt that this was not the best fit for them after the visit, an alternative organisation was selected for them. Fortunately, this happened only on one occasion.

The students were well informed about the Global WIL work placement concept back in September 2017. This meant they had the vacation period to save money and make their decision. The students had to fund their own airfare, accommodation, meals and out of pocket expenses for the work placement overseas. On an average it cost around A\$6300. However, it should be noted that some students used friends or relatives accommodation or shared their accommodation with other students.

All airfares, accommodation and meals were organised by the Fellow as companies were changing their times of meetings until just prior to departing from Melbourne.

Flexibility and adaptability were required.

In the entire time, there were six countries visited. The companies included:

- » INEOS, Cologne, Germany – second largest petro chemical company in Europe with a large PR division.
- » Cardicuno, Stuttgart, Germany – a company that distributes, buys and sells Pokémon cards
- » Market Logic Software, Berlin, Germany – an international company that provides market insight platforms to the world's best marketing and research teams.
- » Bombers Inc., Paris, France – an international fashion design company
- » University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, Netherland – worked with them and their industry related networks
- » Irish Academy of Public Relations, Dublin, Ireland – a private college which focuses on teaching communication skills to a worldwide audience of students
- » Weber Shandwick PR, Edinburgh, Scotland – one of the world's leading global public relations firms
- » Jasper Alliance, Richmond, England – a consulting organisation involved in marketing, media and communications, small, medium size enterprises and the private sector
- » Grove Communications, London, England – an integrated PR and marketing consultancy specialising in lifestyle, fashion and luxury goods.
- » Tomorrow PR, London, England – a design PR agency specialising in consultancy for the international design community.

Work places that were not able to visit due to distance, time and costs but constantly contacted and agreed to be part of this work placement pilot project were:

- » Flow Communications, Johannesburg, South Africa – an integrated communication agency
- » AMREF Flying Doctors Service of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya – leading provider of professional aero-medical transportation
- » William Joseph Communications, Calgary, Canada – a western Canadian fully integrated brand and marketing agency
- » Camron PR, London, England – an international PR agency dealing with design, lifestyle and business innovation communications
- » White Hair Company, London, England – a boutique PR agency working across a premium lifestyle portfolio
- » LVH Cosmetics and Perfumes, London, England – a major player in the perfume, make-up and skincare market

With each organisation the Fellow visited, the working conditions were observed, staff were met who would support the student and discussed the type of work that matched the tertiary requirements. In discussion, the company was informed that each week every student was required to report to their work placement teacher through Google Hangout to discuss their progress.

Documentation was provided and discussed to assist both parties including:

- » Practical placement compliance requirements (2018 Global WIL Agreement with all three parties)
- » Insurances and liability coverage by RMIT University
- » Details of duration – four weeks (maximum 120 hours)
- » Type of work functions, roles and responsibilities required as part of VE qualification
- » Student requirements to maintain a daily work diary and portfolio of their work contribution to the company

- » Assessment guidelines to evaluate student's performance
- » No payment for completing four week work placement as it is part of their qualification
- » Suitable accommodation suggestions
- » Any support from the organisation
- » Emergency assistance if required.

The significant value of visiting these companies was to directly see if they will support the work placement requirements with competent and helpful staff support. In certain cases, it was seen that the company was run by an independent, solo manager and that the student would not be provided with a variety of professional support required for an effective work placement outcome. As a result, a new PR service provider had to be sourced, contacted and recommended to the individual students.

In some cases, students requested that they search for a company or organisation that they preferred to work for. They contacted directly, and, in several instances, a Skype interview took place after the curriculum vitae was sought.

As a result, work placements were offered to all these students. They included:

- » Camron PR, London, England – an international PR agency dealing with design, lifestyle and business innovation communications
- » White Hair Company, London, England – a boutique PR agency working across a premium lifestyle portfolio
- » LVH Cosmetics and Perfumes, London, England, – a major player in the perfume, make-up and skincare market

4. Fellowship Learnings and Key Findings

Without a doubt, this global work placement opportunity has provided VE students with the opportunity to connect with overseas industry that they would unlikely experience in Victoria, or Australia.

Those 11 students who completed their work placements overseas provided positive feedback on their global work placement opportunities supported by best learning and teaching experiences. Such involvement encapsulates a range of educational pedagogies supporting authentic real-life case studies, opportunities for client and staff/student collaboration, learned-centred activities, and integrated evaluation of their achievements. This has been a central focus that have engaged and motivated these students to achieve high quality learning outcomes.

Skills enhancement as a result of global work placements

The fact that the students had completed numerous courses in their Vocational Education qualification made the work load imposed by the overseas company seamless and therefore built confidence in both the students and companies.

In summary the students gained further skills, new abilities and global experiences in:

- » Working with people who have a different lifestyle and environment that what students are used.

- » Developing client relationships and building business networks skills beyond the local scene.
- » Cross-cultural communication – similar and different ways to communicate due to language difference, interpretations, and cultural background views.
- » Inter-cultural understanding – exposed to ways of thinking and acting whether it is the way of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the communication activities or projects presented to the students.
- » Awareness and participation in overseas organisation changes, innovations, strategic and critical thinking and staff mobility.
- » Working on major international brands, products and services
- » Living away from home using their personal skills and ability to ask for support from their employer. This was a learning curve for some students.

“The students VE courses made them very suitable and companies valued these students.” Managing Director, Camron PR, London, England

“I wanted to send you an email to say how great Orla was during her internship. A pleasure to have joined the Grove Communication team over October. We would love to work with you going forward should this be of interest.” Grove Communications, London, England.



Figure 1 - some of the PR team from Grove Communications, London. Work placement student Orla Roache is front right.



Figure 2 - Some of the communication staff from AMREF Flying Doctor Service, Kenya. PR student Stephanie Maina (2nd from left)

"Personally, I'd say that this project is actually very valuable and beneficial for people like myself who have never worked in a work force before. It has helped me in terms of gaining skills and knowledge that will be needed to be adopted in the real world." Stephanie Maina, student, Nairobi, Kenya

Value to Vocational Education Fraternity

Creating broad learning experiences for these students have the greatest impact of their time in Vocational Education. Broadening of their knowledge base and experience has led to their graduate attributes and employability skills. Such experience has provided a better and more practical understanding of target audiences, need for a better appreciation of intercultural communication, and the working on strategies to raise profiles and increase community support.

With the promotion of globalisation of information and the workforce, the timing is right for VE students to extend educational opportunities beyond the boundaries of our nation.

The Fellowship allowed setting an example for the education and training fraternity and enterprises in Victoria to demonstrate the importance of a seamless transition from VE into the workforce. This can occur through the experience gained by overseas work placements as part of a collaborative learning relationship with global partners that will make students 'Ready for Life and Work'.

The ways the VE sector will benefit can be demonstrated by blending the connections between theory and practice to realise that courses need to be current and relevant supported with real-life examples, industry leaders and work placement opportunities prior to entering the workforce. Additionally, work integrated learning projects, semester-long practicum and work placements will provide a clearer insight into ways to enhance students' educational outcomes engagement and industry productivity.

The outcomes can be considered as having a dual effect, namely:

- » The principle that learners construct meaning from what they do to learn to solve a problem through their skills and experiences with WIL and global enterprise participation; and

- » Secondly, that the teacher makes a deliberate alignment between the planned learning activities and the quality teaching outcomes in a current global context.

"The fact that the placement was overseas was also why it was so valuable, I was able to gain a worldly experience whilst working within the PR industry. My placement at Camron PR has also helped me prepare for my future role in the PR world. The people I met and the experiences I had whilst completing my work placement at Camron in London will stay with me forever." Aylish Frusher, student, London, England

"My time spent at William Joseph Communications has been nothing short of amazing. I have learnt so much in the quick four weeks that I have been there. I have noticed that the agency environment is very fast paced and forever on the go." Jessica Patterson, student, Calgary, Canada.



Figure 3 - Staff from William Joseph Communications, Calgary, Canada. Work placement student Jessica Patterson on far right.



Figure 4 - Supervisory staff from William Joseph Communications, Calgary, Canada with student Jessica Patterson (middle)

“The Global WIL Project for me was a huge success - a culturally enriching and in-depth learning experience in a very niche field of PR that I am passionate about!”
 Marcus Raj, student, Stuttgart, Germany

Issues to be considered

In any innovative or new project, there is inherently a ‘BUT’ section which one is reluctant to discuss so as not to dampen the project.

However, it is vital that this following list of issues be considered for any future global WIL work placement programs for VE students, namely:

1. The need to be very selective about the overseas companies engaged to assist in work placements – as some companies are not as active or as focused as they make it to be. For example, one student was promised to co-ordinate a major international event but on arrival, the company decided to engage the student in another discipline.
2. Companies at the last moment changing their minds about accepting a student leaving the individual totally disillusioned and the need to find an immediate alternative company.
3. Companies having only one owner and outsourcing their work which meant the students would not have the direct supervisory experience required for a total work placement experience. This meant finding alternative organisations within a short time period. This occurred with two organisations.
4. A company requiring a working visa only a few weeks before the student was to arrive in the country. Working visas take time and money and cannot be gained within a short period of time.
5. Additionally, four weeks was considered by global companies to be too short for work placement. In Europe and North America, work placement take place for a minimum of six months and up to 24 months duration. The companies felt the quality and standard of the student capabilities exceeded the longer-term work placements engaged in the past.
6. Timing of work placement can be an issue. October was selected because it was the students’ last two courses to complete their qualification and then they could travel. However, it was very disruptive to other teachers and their courses which meant additional burden placed on teachers’ time to arrange assessments.

7. Students working full time in their work placements and then having to complete assignments were very stressful to some students. Some students found the evening commitment to complete assignments arduous and exhausting. This was a time management issue.
8. Administration tend to play a significant part in the whole process requiring detail description, risk management and risk mitigation issues, WIL agreements, and a concern as to the welfare of the students.
9. It was quite evident that envy by local students who decided not to go overseas had caused a certain level of resentment even though the global work placement students paid for such an experience.
10. Issues of miscommunications took place between students and the global companies due to cultural and work-related interpretations. For example, one student took certain actions which should have been consulted with their teacher prior to distribution. This caused a level of mistrust and confusion and took time and management to rectify.
11. Each week, it was compulsory for students do participate in a Google Hangout session with their teacher. The time difference led to students conversing late at night or very early in the morning and vice versa for the teacher. Not a major issue as students really wanted to reflect on their value of their work placement but an imposition on the teacher.
12. Google Hangout was a very valuable tool as a form of communications for the student-teacher relationship as it allowed some students to vent their concerns over issues other than work. For example, four students were sharing the same accommodation that led to hostility and bullying issues resulting in having to move one student to another place and another student leaving to go to their relatives.
13. The value received from the students is invaluable but for the teacher very time consuming basically because:
 - a. Administration requirements
 - b. Legal and risk management issues
 - c. On-going communication with the global companies
 - d. Delay in global company responses
 - e. Weekly emails and Google Hangout discussions with poor connections in some cases

5. Personal, Professional and Sectoral Impact

A moment of inspiration came when the idea of extending students' work placement opportunities to overseas organisations was considered a real possibility. When suggesting to students and administration this concept, there was total support for this concept as it had never been done in the Vocational Education communications discipline in Victoria.

The opportunity through the International Specialised Skills Institute Fellowship gave the concept acknowledgement, credibility and financial support to see the value of extending VE students' work placements to overseas businesses.

The Fellowship meant that this project idea could be further conceptualised, developed and implemented to become a reality.

The benefits from a teacher perspective were to see students gain so much from their global work placement experience that all administrative and time-consuming preparation was worth it. It brought into play the entire Fellow's problem-solving skills (critical and creative thinking); communication, social skills and teamwork; further intercultural understanding and global mindset; and of course, self-efficacy.

Having successfully completed the pilot project, it is now time to encourage VE teachers in Victoria to implement their own global work placements for their students

This teaching and training practice can be easily implemented once the structure and format are in place with suitable overseas partners located. It is this approach with the support of logistics and justifications that will convince colleagues, peers and the broader sector in many disciplines of VE to accept and adopt. It would be best done through:

- » **Presenting talks at conferences and seminars**
- » **Webinars**
- » **VE websites**
- » **Social media platforms**
- » **Conference type papers**

All the above tools would, of course, must be accessible by Vocational Education and Training teachers and educators.

Great, pragmatic ideas and actions are easy for VE personnel to convince but it is the way it is communicated that is equally as important.

In addition to the above networks and communication tools outline above could include:

- » **a video for distribution through YouTube channel**
- » **a dynamic PowerPoint presentation that outlines the value and implementation of the concept**
- » **poster board**
- » **blog site**
- » **printed DL brochure for distribution at meetings and conferences.**

6. Key Considerations

A summary of key findings includes:

1. Teacher personal contracts with overseas is invaluable as do recommendations from professional bodies such as, in the Fellow's case, the International Public Relations Association and international Chambers of Commerce groups.
2. Students should be encouraged to apply their own global work placements. Some of the Fellow's students did so and gained positions. Most of these were visited for legitimacy and reliability and all were professional.
3. The coverage of insurance and liabilities to be incurred by RMIT University was reassurance to overseas companies, even though they all have their own liability coverage.
4. All companies reviewed the WIL three party agreement and were all satisfied with the contract and arrangements.
5. Accommodation will be an issue for students living overseas. With such a short period, it will be an expensive part of their overall experience and their short stay means that no long-term arrangements and agreements with accommodation can be made. A few of the companies assisted by providing shared accommodation.
6. Arranging global work placements in October (end of the students' final semester) is not the ideal time for overseas companies particularly in Europe. The best time is in June. It is before the enterprises' summer break and their busiest time and therefore students would gain maximum benefit from their experiences and activities.
7. Pairs of students working in an area is ideal for companionship, accommodation, work discussions, avoid loneliness in unfamiliar territory and sharing of ideas. Very few companies could or would accept two students.
8. Need to scrutinise the company's way they would manage student's work placement activities. The Fellow provided a detailed list of expectations and required each enterprise to reaffirm that they would provide the skills, abilities and experiences to match the VE Course requirements.



9. In one case overseas, it was evident that the Fellow's correspondence, view of their website, promotional materials, and their referred credentials all appeared sound but when visited, the company was observed to be a solo owner conducting work from home with no work space for the student other than in their own kitchen. A valuable lesson learnt as to thoroughly seek details about each company.
10. Duration of a work placement with companies overseas is usually six months to two years. The concern by the companies the Fellow engaged with stated those four weeks is not ideal time to benefit from both the student and company perspective. Companies are used to longer stay period so that they can provide more fruitful experiences. However, the 4 weeks proved that benefits could still be achieved for both parties.
11. Finance is an issue for each student. The students cannot be paid for their work placement (under Fair Work Commission) and the average total cost of a four-week global internship was approximately A\$6300, which covers flights, internal travel, accommodation, and meals.
12. The issue of out of pocket expenses paid by the companies was discussed and companies said they would consider such matter, but nothing eventuated.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended that Vocational Education teachers and administrators develop and partner with vocational education programs from overseas tertiary institutions and industry groups to develop short term work placement opportunities overseas. This has been shown to enhance students' knowledge, employment skills, build client relationships and business networks so important to navigate the complexities and challenges of make them ready for life and work.

Recommendations worthy of action now and in the near future can be summarised as:

- A. Financial support or a grant provided by Vocational Education Schools and the Victorian Government to financially assist the students in their global work placement program would be appreciated.
- B. A 'Global Work Placement Tool Kit' for teachers and administrators should be developed to encourage other programs within the Vocational Education sector to adopt this educational initiative.
- C. The Tool Kit needs to be produced and distributed would cover:
 - » Work placement compliance requirements
 - » Tertiary guideline documentation and training
 - » Contractual agreement
 - » Global work placement contacts
 - » Organising and monitoring work placements

- » Keeping students informed before and during work placements
 - » Work placement assessment strategies
 - » Issues to be considered (e.g. working visas)
- D. The Tool Kit needs to be supported by the education, training and industry sectors through discussions and examples in websites, digital and social media, talks and articles. Teachers need to be offered a breadth of activities relevant for their courses which will incorporate private and public-sector companies as well as not-for-profit organizations.

A list of ways to communicate this project could include:

- » Development of a 'Work Placement Tool Kit for VE Teachers'
- » Presenting talks at conferences, seminars,
- » Webinars,
- » VE websites and
- » Social media platforms
- » A video for distribution using YouTube format
- » A dynamic PowerPoint presentation that outlines the value and implementation of the concept
- » Poster board
- » Blog site
- » Printed DL brochure for distribution at meetings and conferences.

It cannot be stressed enough that our present and future VE students need to see and know that their courses are coherent, with a sense of direction, relevance and with clarity of purpose.

This is done by hearing and meeting 'experienced people' working with real life examples from industry or from the community via work placement involvement.

This will aid them to identify career options and pathways with informed decisions about future courses whether in Vocational Education or as a pathway to Higher Education programs. Working overseas is a bonus.

8. Fellows Biography



As a committed educator in the vocational education and training sector in Victoria, I have been involved as a:

» Teacher in Public Relations for the Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Business (Public Relations) at the School of Vocational Business Education, RMIT University

» Member of the Victorian Department of Education and Training Re-Accreditation Committee for Public Relations (2015 to 2019) – to develop VET accredited courses in response to Victorian industry, enterprise and community needs

- » President of the Public Relations Institute of Australia (Victoria), 2013 to 2016
- » National Board member and Chairman of various committees of the Public Relations Institute of Australia, 2013 – 2016
- » Member of the RMIT Industry Advisory Board representing Public Relations, Marketing and Advertising (2011 onwards)
- » Member of RMIT University Academic Board, representing Vocational Education (from 2012 onwards)

- » Member of RMIT University College of Business Board, representing Vocational Education (from 2012 – 2015)
- » Adviser, Co-ordinator and Judge of state and national public relations and marketing communication award submissions from industry and organisations for PRIA and Mumbrella (2012 onwards)
- » Strong and ongoing affiliation with the Public Relations Consultancy Association of Australia and the International Public Relations Association
- » Involved in professional industry groups:
 - » Fellow of Public Relations Institute of Australia
 - » Member of Australian Institute of Company Directors
 - » Member of the Australian Institute of Energy
 - » Australian College of Educators – Life member.

From the above connections and involvement, the Fellow has been able to develop a strong network with businesses and organisations that have resulted in collaboration between education and enterprises as well as the 231 on-going work placement opportunities in Victoria and NSW for public relations students over the past eight years.

9. Abbreviations/Acronyms/Definitions

HESG	Higher Education and Skills Group
PR	Public Relations
PRIA	Public Relations Institute of Australia
RMIT	RMIT University
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
VE	Vocational Education
VET	Vocational Education & Training
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

10. Acknowledgements

As an ISS Institute Fellow, it is an honour and privilege to be given the opportunity to develop this pilot global WIL work placement project. ISS Institute provided the support, valued expertise and guidance throughout the fellowship program from September 2017 to end of October 2018.

Although acknowledging that numerous people from each company were involved, the Fellow has named only the Head of each company.

- » RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia – Mrs Theresa Lyford
- » Cardicuno Pty Ltd, Stuttgart, Germany – Mr Cetin Yildirim and Mr Bodo Baumann
- » INEOS, Cologne, Germany - Dr Anna-Gret Iturriaga Abarzua
- » Market Logic Software, Berlin, Germany – Ms Elizabeth Morgan
- » Bombers Inc., Paris, France – Mr Alexandre Destel
- » University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht, Netherlands – Dr Paul Williams & Dr Ivonne Loew-Dekker
- » Irish Academy of Public Relations, Dublin, Ireland – Ms Ellen Gunning
- » Weber Shandwick, Edinburgh, Scotland – Mr Harry Hussain
- » Jasper Alliance, Richmond, England – Ms Jacqueline Purcell
- » Grove Communications, London, England – Ms Eilidh Macdonald
- » Tomorrow PR, London, England – Mr Neil Byrne
- » LVMH Perfumes & Cosmetics, London, England – Ms Yasmin Kamhi
- » White Hair Co, London, England – Ms Zoja Minic

- » In the Public Eye, Calgary, Canada – Ms Bernadette Geronazzo
- » William Joseph Communications, Calgary, Canada – Mr Jordan McGill
- » AMREF Flying Doctors, Nairobi, Kenya – Ms Tanya Nduati
- » Flow Communications, Johannesburg – Ms Caroline Smith
- » International Public Relations Association, Brussels, Belgium – Mr Philip Sheppard
- » Public Relations Institute of Australia, Sydney, Australia – Ms Jenny Muir

A special acknowledgement must go to ISS Institute for its financial support and its diligent staff for their total support towards this innovative pilot project that would develop unique skills and benefits to young people in the future.

International Specialised Skill Institute (ISS Institute)

The ISS Institute exist to foster an aspirational, skilled and smart Australians by cultivating the mastery of skills, abilities and knowledge of talented Australian through international research Fellowships.

The IIS Institute is proud of its heritage. The organisation was founded over 25 years ago by Sir James Gobbo AC CVO QC, former Governor of Victoria, to encourage investment in the development of Australia's specialised skills. Its international Fellowship program supports many Australians and international leaders across a broad cross-section of industries to undertake applied research that will

benefit economic development through vocational training, industry innovation and advancement. To date, over 400 Australian and international Fellows have undertaken Fellowships facilitated through ISS Institute. The program encourages mutual and shared learning, leadership and communities of practice.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our individual Fellows. Under the International Applied Research Fellowship Program, the Fellows travel overseas and upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

- » Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
- » Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses
- » Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

The organisation plays a pivotal role in creating value and opportunity, encouraging new thinking and early adoption of ideas and practice. By working with others, ISS Institute invests in individuals who wish to create an aspirational, skilled and smart Australia through innovation, mastery and knowledge cultivation.

For further information on ISS Institute Fellows, refer to www.issinstitute.org.au

Governance and Management

Patron in Chief: Lady Primrose Potter AC

Patrons: Mr Tony Schiavello AO and Mr James MacKenzie

Founder/Board Member: Sir James Gobbo AC, CVO

Board Chair: Professor Amalia Di Iorio

Board Deputy Chair: Katrina Efthim

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The Fellow acknowledges the Victorian government, through the Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) of the Department of Education and Training, who is a valued sponsor of the ISS Institute and provided funding for this Fellowship. HESG is responsible for the administration and coordination of programs for the provision of training and further education, adult education and employment services in Victoria. HESG has provided the opportunity to expand the Fellow's knowledge, skills and abilities. The Fellow is most appreciative of HESG for believing in the worth of the project and funding of this Fellowship.

11. References

Grossbard, A. 2017, Creating a Collaborative Learning Relationship between Enterprises and a University That Has Made Students Ready for the Workforce, *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology Conference Proceedings*, No. 19, pp. 474-478

RMIT University intranet, *WorkLife News*, www1.rmit.edu.au/library, 7 May 2018

12. Appendices

Appendix I

Article in RMIT University intranet 'WorkLife News', published on 7 May 2018

VE students to embark on international internships program – an innovative first for RMIT!

VE teacher Alain Grossbard secures opportunity for students to work overseas.



Figure 5 -Alain Grossbard (Fellow) with some of his students travelling overseas to complete their global work placement requirements.

Alain told *WorkLife News*: “I am very passionate about this project. It has taken me some nine months to make this idea become a reality.”

A select group of 10 Vocational Educational students from the Advanced Diploma of Business (Public Relations) volunteered to travel overseas and do their internship with PR companies around the world.

“This is the first time such a venture has been developed and implemented with students attending companies and organisations situated in Stuttgart, Cologne, Berlin, Amsterdam, Dublin, Edinburgh, Richmond, London, Johannesburg, Calgary and Kenya” said Alain.

RMIT is the only provider of VE programs in Public Relations in Victoria. This innovative program will ensure our students are ready for life and work.

“This new project will give students the opportunity to complete their required work placement overseas for four weeks in October. In the past, students undertook work placements in Melbourne or Sydney, so it’s a massive innovation that aligns Focus Area 5 - Making Global Work.”

The program will provide cutting-edge cross-cultural communication skills including cross-discipline learning. It will engage the students, developing them into graduates with impressive strategic communication skills, abilities and experiences.

“The project embraces new strategies designed to enhance graduate employability and work readiness through global industry connections. It truly lives up to our strategy around Shaping the World by making global work.

“The short-term global internship program is unique to the Vocational Education sector. Its success will set precedence for other VE institutions considering such opportunities,” Alain said.

“For me it’s about developing my students to have creative skills such as critical thinking, innovation, people management, flexibility and problem solving. It’s all about them - not me.”

Appendix 2

Fellowship Itinerary visit for ISS Institute Fellowship (2 June – 4 July 2018)

Date (2018)	Countries	Meetings
Saturday 2 June		Arrive, Frankfurt, Germany
Monday 4 June	Stuttgart, Germany	Cardicuno
Tuesday 5 June	Cologne, Germany	INEOS Petro Chemical Comp.
Thursday 7 June	Berlin, Germany	Market Logic Software
Friday 8 June	Berlin, Germany	Market Logic Software
Monday 11 June	Paris, France	Bombers Inc.
Tuesday 12 June	Paris, France	Bombers Inc.
Thursday 14 June	Utrecht, Netherlands	University of Applied Sciences
Monday 18 June	Dublin, Ireland	Irish Academy of PR
Thursday 21 June	Edinburgh, Scotland	Weber Shandwick PR
Friday 22 June	Edinburgh, Scotland	Weber Shandwick PR
Friday 29 June	Richmond, England	Jasper Alliance PR
Monday 2 July	London, England	Grove Communications
Tuesday 3 July	London, England	Tomorrow PR
Wednesday 4 July		Depart, London, UK



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