Curriculum Design Pattern

Global Learning by Design

Name of Pattern	**Virtual Global WIL**
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Abstract

This pattern outlines an approach to work-integrated learning (WIL) which provides the opportunity for students to **coordinate a global project** across three time zones, mirroring the manner in which global business operates, and thereby providing students with valuable skills and developing graduate attributes. Students take on various roles in their teams, and **communicate virtually** with teams from the other institutions using Skype and various social media technologies.

Developing a virtual global WIL involving three partner institutions and an appropriate client organisation, in three time zones, provides a rich student experience and an authentic context for the **development of global business communication skills**.

It can be a complex and lengthy undertaking, and involves many considerations, including but not limited to academic calendars, curriculum, assessment, cultural, legal, and policy requirements, as well as communication strategies and project management processes.

Rationale

This pattern aims to provide guidance to staff in other Schools and Colleges in how to **establish a global virtual WIL**, with three partners in three countries.

Learners

The pattern is most applicable in the following circumstances:

- **Class size:** The number of students in the project is reliant on the number of students in partnering institutions. The Global WIL project should be the major (preferably only) assessment for the course in which it is embedded. Not practical for more than 100 students.
- **Level:** most suited to final year students, as it addresses graduate communication attributes, and requires a level of maturity and motivation from students.
- **Mode:** most suited to face-to-face delivery, but could be adapted for fully online with sufficient tutor support. Students and staff will need access to reliable broadband internet connection and may need to arrange video hook ups outside of normal University hours (i.e. potentially from home at night).

Category

Virtual WIL, WIL, Global Business Communications, Cultural awareness, Team development, global industry engagement

Outcome/impact

Students will develop skills in:

- global business communications, both written and oral
- working in teams, both locally and globally
- working to a client brief, producing a report
- time management
- problem-solving
- negotiation
- reflective practice.

Students will also develop a deeper understanding of **cultural differences** and how this influences communication and **team work**—while gaining valuable experience which will prove advantageous when **seeking employment**.

An optional component of this pattern is an **industry familiarisation visit (ie. study tour)** to one of the partner countries, providing the opportunity to enhance team building, improve cultural awareness and develop industry connections.

Staff involved with this WIL activity will gain increased skills in:

- global communications and negotiation
- providing support to students.

Alignment

This WIL activity provides students with the opportunity to apply the theory components of the course curriculum to a real-world problem. The WIL activity needs to be incorporated when designing the curriculum for the designated course.

Challenges

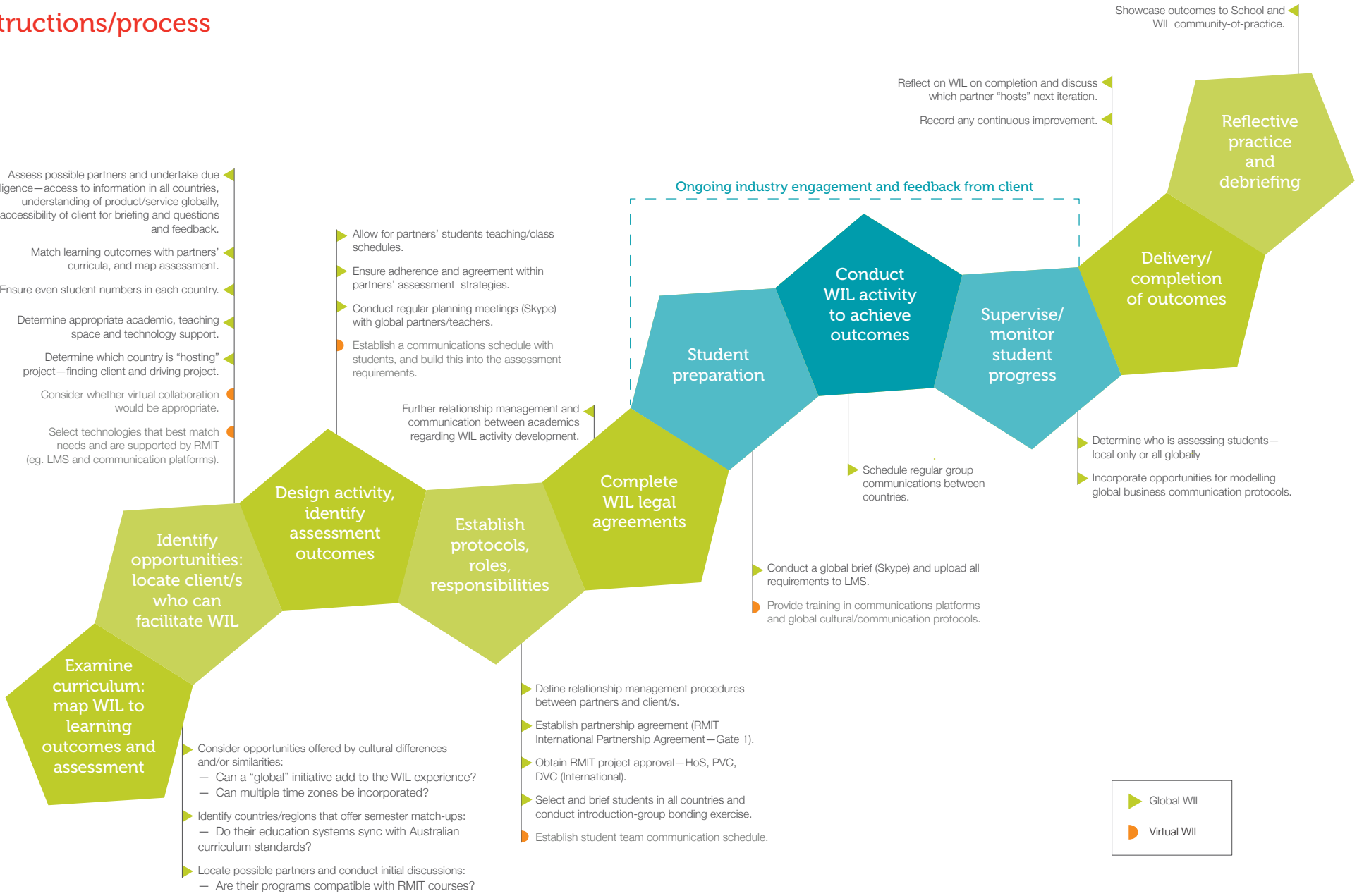
Successful implementation of a virtual global WIL activity requires careful consideration of many factors, including:

- multiple time zones (difficulties in scheduling meetings and discussions, for both staff and student teams)
- cultural nuances/differences (potentially language difficulties)
- variance in academic calendars between institutions
- variance in curriculum and assessment between institutions
- IT—e.g. reliance on Skype or other virtual communications, as well as need for broadband internet
- need for teacher/tutor support (commitment, skills, motivation)
- student cohort capability, relevance and interest

In the case of challenges that involve planning of the WIL, it is critical to undergo due diligence on all dimensions of the relationship with potential partners.

Delivery issues such as different time zones, and cultural and/or language difficulties, can be addressed by adequate briefing and ongoing support to students

Instructions/process



Conditions

The critical success factors for this pattern are as follows:

- Identifying **partner institutions** (limited by academic calendars, curriculum, assessment, language, IT considerations) and selecting a suitable **client organisation**
- Coordinating/negotiating **curriculum**, assessment, instructions, expectations
- Selecting the most appropriate **communications technology** and supporting teaching staff and students in its use
- Ensuring **motivation and commitment** from teaching staff (out-of-hours communication, heavier workload etc)
- Providing strong teacher **support for students** in all cohorts.
- Providing **support resources**, such as guidelines on cultural sensitivities, working in virtual teams, etc.

Resources

The project Google site contains or links to the following resources to support the pattern:

- Planning timeline of the Public Relations WIL activity
- Pedagogy and best practice resources related to the pattern and WIL
- Case study report of initial implementation of the pattern

The Google site, Virtual Global WIL, can be accessed at **https://sites.google.com/a/rmit.edu.au/glbd---global-virtual-wil/**

A video explaining the key features of the Virtual Global WIL was also produced and can be accessed at **http://youtu.be/_35cvWSU10o**

The project team has also created an RMIT development Blackboard site: **GLBDB2: Virtual Global WIL** (to access the site, request instructor access from ITS)

Reflection

Staff and student reflections on implementation of the pattern are incorporated into the case study report.

Acknowledgements

The project team comprised:

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