

SCALING UP: A SCAFFOLDED PLACEMENT PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY INTERFACE

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PROBLEM

Work-integrated learning (WIL) through placements (or internships) as part of higher education (HE) degrees can be a win-win-win activity for students, host organisations and HE providers. However, the rise in student numbers in placement programs across the sector is making it challenging for providers to reliably source enough suitable, high-quality placements, particularly when industry partners are facing economic uncertainty.

The Master of Pharmaceutical Science degree at Monash University has seen a sharp increase in enrolment numbers. It includes a compulsory 10-week placement, which needs to accommodate students with widely varying levels of professional experience. This has prompted the development of a diversified range of placement options within the University.

PLAN

We present here our design, and preliminary evaluation results, for a scaled-up placement pilot at the Monash University Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre (MMIC). The MMIC offers a range of drug development, testing and consulting services to industry and academic clients and combines an industry-oriented workplace environment with a strong commitment to workforce training.

The pilot comprises two intakes of 10 students each between July and November 2025. Building on established placement structures at MMIC, the program has a scaffolded design to address diverging learning needs. Students will participate in technical and safety training and work with supervisors on MMIC projects, complemented by training workshops on professional communication and career development.

Participating students and staff will be surveyed about their experience in the program (human research ethics application in progress).

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