

# WIL Guide: Guidelines for students Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual: LGBTIQ+



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## Overview

This guide is for students participating in WIL who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community. The opportunity for students to undertake WIL is a cornerstone of RMIT University's approach to industry relevant education and is central to the student experience. All students, including those who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community, are supported to undertake WIL that is relevant for their chosen program of study. Regardless of if they are LGBTIQ+ or not, students undertaking WIL are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this guide to prepare for a WIL experience where you may meet or work with colleagues, employers, communities, and customers who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community. Get in touch: [inclusion@rmit.edu.au](mailto:inclusion@rmit.edu.au)

## 1. What are the University's legal obligations around WIL?

RMIT recognises its legal obligations to provide a work and study environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. RMIT also recognises the benefits for the recruitment, retention, innovation, collaboration and productivity of staff and students in an environment that celebrates and welcomes diversity. RMIT University is proud to support the staff and students within our community who are part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual community (LGBTIQ+).

This means having access to the same educational opportunities and choices as all other students, including opportunities to participate in WIL as well providing the resources to non LGBTIQ+ people to act as an ally whilst undertaking WIL alongside LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities.

## 2. Planning for WIL

While gender identity, sex and sexuality are protected attributes by Australian law, workplaces are still reporting that, while overt racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia are not as prevalent as they were many years ago, workplaces are still challenging environments for many LGBTIQ+ individuals. WIL is an opportunity to gain new experiences, learn new skills and expand knowledge.

However, undertaking WIL for LGBTIQ+ students can present a unique set of challenges when it comes to choosing where you might go and how you experience the opportunity.

At RMIT, we would never want anyone to be harassed or discriminated against for being themselves. With this in

mind, we suggest researching where you want to complete your WIL, and considering whether the organisation is openly LGBTIQ+ inclusive.

### 3. Some things you might want to investigate before undertaking WIL:

- Visibility of LGBTIQ+ identities within the organisation's public profile
- Is there an ally network or equivalent?
- Signaling of allyship (e.g. pronouns in email signature, rainbow lanyards)
- Is there support for using a chosen (non-legal) name in systems?
- Gender neutral facilities and uniform/dress code policies
- LGBTIQ+ training and resources.

Even if the WIL activity does not tick all the above boxes, you may still want to continue, and the questions above may help you better prepare for your experience. Many workplaces may be in the early stages of their inclusion journey and a lack of specific inclusion strategies does not equate to discriminatory environments.

### 4. Support for LGBTIQ+ students:

At RMIT we recognise that supporting the LGBTIQ+ community can require a broader understanding of allyship. This guide complements other resources to support the student LGBTIQ+ community.

To find out more about the support offered for both students and staff, visit RMIT's LGBTIQ+ website. <https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/our-rmit/diversity-inclusion/lgbtqa> who can help you with anything from writing an email to joining meetings with you. For more information, contact your Course Coordinator, WIL Champion, or the WIL administration team in your School.

### 5. Changes to your WIL Activity

There are several reasons why you may want to request some changes to your WIL activity. Here are some examples:

- Location of WIL activity: some environments may be considered high risk for LGBTIQ+ students who, may not feel comfortable undertaking certain WIL activities.
- Using a chosen name: not all systems are set up to support a chosen name and students who have chosen a name for gender affirmation purposes may require a workaround to avoid misgendering and being 'outed' to peers.
- Scheduling of WIL activity: if a student is in the process of affirming their gender they may be required to attend medical appointments or may choose to take time off from work and study.

Changes can be requested following a discussion between you and your WIL Practitioner (in most cases your Course Coordinator) and the partner organisation. The WIL Practitioner can facilitate a WIL Activity Planning Meeting with you and/or share details of the recommended changes through email communication. This meeting offers an opportunity for all parties to discuss required changes. If you would

like support starting this discussion, you can contact the RMIT student IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) team: [inclusion@rmit.edu.au](mailto:inclusion@rmit.edu.au)

## 6. Disclosure and confidentiality

To implement changes to your WIL activity, the University requires written content to discuss the nature of the requested changes with the partner organisation. You are under no obligation to disclose your LGBTIQ+ identity/status to anyone. If you decide to disclose to the WIL Practitioner in order to discuss the impact of your LGBTIQ+ identity/ status on a WIL activity, this information cannot be released to partner organisations without written consent. Sharing of personal information is a personal decision and individuals should be placed under no pressure to disclose. You can contact [inclusion@rmit.edu.au](mailto:inclusion@rmit.edu.au) for advice.

The same considerations are applied when working with a colleague who is part of the LGBTIQ+ community. If they disclose information about their LGBTIQ+ identity/status, keep this information confidential and do not assume others are privy to this information.

## 7. What to do if things go wrong during WIL

Despite planning and implementation of changes, it is possible that you may still encounter challenges or feel unsafe during WIL. In such cases the following options can be considered:

- Discontinue WIL activity
- Defer WIL activity
- Request further adjustments to support completion of WIL e.g. change WIL location to one with gender neutral facilities.

When considering what option to pursue, the following questions should be considered:

- What is the impediment to completing the WIL activity?
- Can further changes address this impediment?

When a WIL activity is discontinued, you will be provided with an opportunity to develop a plan for completion in collaboration with the WIL Practitioner.

Plan options can include:

- Taking time off to recover
- Undertaking the WIL activity in a different location
- Undertaking an alternative to the WIL activity
- Undertaking a simulated WIL activity

## 8. The formal mechanisms for discontinuation of a WIL activity are:

- Special Consideration
- Late Course Withdrawal without Academic Penalty

## 9. What happens if you can't complete the WIL activity?

- WIL courses are assessed and are no different to all other assessed courses - the usual assessment policy and processes must be followed.
- This means that if you do not complete your WIL course assessment (in WIL this may be placement, or group/individual WIL project activity, simulations, etc.) you will fail the course. If you don't do the WIL placement or activity assessment, you will need to repeat, in the same way you would if you missed an exam (note: all Special Consideration processes apply).
- If you think you may not be able to complete the WIL activity, it is important that you contact the Course Coordinator as soon as possible. The Course Coordinator will provide options that may be available as well as review and prepare for the impact that not completing may have on your enrolment and progress.
- If you can't complete your WIL activity and it relates to your LGBTIQ+ identity/status, contact your WIL supervisor.

## 10. Useful links

- Top 10 Tips to be an Effective Rainbow Ally: Trans and Gender Diverse Edition <https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/au/en/students/documents/services-support/lgbtiq/top-ten-tips-effective-rainbow-ally.pdf>
- Gender Affirmation RMIT <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/support-services/lgbtiq/gender-affirmation>
- Inclusive Language Guide <https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/rmit-images/staff-site/my-employment/documents/diversity-and-inclusion/inclusive-language-guide.pdf>
- Student LGBTIQ+ website: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/support-services/lgbtiq>
- All gender Toilets at RMIT <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-locations-and-facilities/facilities/all-gender-toilets>
- Student WIL website <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/student-essentials/work-integrated-learning>