

PhD Industry Experience Program: frequently asked questions

What is the Queensland Government's role in the PhD Industry Experience Program?

The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) administers the program and acts as facilitator between universities and businesses to place PhD students in projects proposed by participating businesses.

DSITI officers help answer queries from students, universities and businesses. During the placement, DSITI officers may contact businesses and students to check on their progress and follow up administrative matters. This may include arranging a visit to the workplace.

Projects

DSITI will work with businesses to identify suitable projects for the program. The final projects will be advertised on [the Advance Queensland website](#).

Application assessment

Following a shortlisting process by the university, DSITI will provide a pool of students to each business so that they can shortlist for interview.

Following interviews, each business will provide DSITI with a list of preferred applicant(s) i.e. students to whom they would be willing to offer a placement (in preference order).

DSITI will notify the university and business of the outcome and write to successful applicants to notify them of their project and starting date.

Program documentation

DSITI will provide templates to program participants to assist with the placement. These include an Agreement between the business and the student and an Agreement between the business and the university so that all parties are aware of their obligations concerning the placement.

Project completion

At the completion of the project, DSITI may conduct a survey/interview with students, universities and businesses to measure the success of the placement and to obtain learnings for future rounds of the program.

For students

Am I eligible for the program?

The program is designed for PhD students looking for industry experience. The PhD Industry Experience program Guidelines for applicants 2015-16 provides full program information, including eligibility criteria and other conditions to consider before applying.

Which universities are participating in the PhD Industry Experience program?

A list of contact details for participating Queensland Universities will be released shortly to enable students to contact them directly to see if they can assist.

How do I apply?

It is expected that a list of available projects and the businesses involved will be published via the [Advance Queensland website](#) in October 2015. PhD students will be able to apply on the website for up to 3 business placements for a three week period following the publication of the projects. Additional frequently asked questions will be published at this time to assist applicants.

For businesses

What will this program achieve for my business?

The PhD Industry Experience program aims to increase the competitiveness of participating businesses by providing an opportunity to bring current PhD students, with fresh viewpoints and skills, into the workplace.

Through the program, businesses can access assistance to complete project work to a high standard by hosting PhD students from participating Queensland universities for 20-30 days (either full-time or part-time), on an unpaid basis.

How does this program differ from the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program?

The PhD Industry Experience program offers short-term, unpaid placements to PhD students to help to expand their practical workplace knowledge, and enable businesses to gain access to research, analytical and problem solving skills to help advance innovative projects. The program offers businesses the chance to preview talented students for future employment opportunities. It can also act as a catalyst for involvement in longer-term (6 to 12 months), co-funded strategic innovation projects, like those funded under the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program, which aims to increase workforce skills and create new jobs for the future knowledge economy.

What role does my business play?

Projects

- The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) provides businesses with a template to fill in with a brief description of the business, the project and

any specific placement skills or special requirements. The project must be suitable for a PhD placement.

- Matters to consider in the project description include:
 - whether the proposed project has a defined time frame (20-30 working days on a full-time or part-time basis)
 - whether the project will help the PhD student to develop experience in a commercial environment and further develop their organisational, research and analysis, communication and interpersonal skills
 - the readiness of the project for this program, e.g. is it underway, or in the planning stage, with set start and end dates?
 - whether the project will provide opportunities for PhD students to demonstrate their strong research, analytical and problem solving skills
 - whether a student would be capable of finalising the project within agreed timeframes.

Choosing a suitable applicant

After a business becomes a participant in the program, and receives a shortlist of applicants, a representative from the business will choose from the shortlist and conduct interviews to select a PhD student (and reserves). The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) can provide documents to assist in this process.

Signing the Head Agreement

The Head Agreement must be signed by the PhD student's university and the business before the placement begins. A copy is to be provided to DSITI as a record of the agreement. A copy of the Agreement and Terms and Conditions is available on request.

Insurance

The host business must ensure that appropriate insurance policies are in place for the duration of the placement, in accordance with applicable legislation and the requirements of the Head Agreement.

Student induction

Businesses need to maintain a safe and secure workplace for the student and at the start of the placement provide a workplace induction that includes:

- a welcome and introduction to supervisors and co-workers
- details of the student's planned activities and supervision arrangements
- discussion about expectations of behaviour, attitude and dress
- clarification of working hours, breaks and other workplace routines
- a tour of facilities, including the student's work area/desk, toilets etc.
- an explanation of safety procedures
- protection of the student's privacy
- any special student requirements.

An Unpaid Industry Experience and Student Placement Agreement (template provided by DSITI), signed by the host supervisor and PhD student, is to be returned to DSITI as a record of the project, including the aims, duties and time commitment.

Ongoing supervision

Each workplace offering a placement for a PhD student must have a supervisor able to provide guidance and information to the student, respond to their queries throughout the 20 to 30 working day placement and oversee project activities as appropriate. A back-up supervisor should be in place in the event that the supervisor is away.

Throughout the placement, supervisors should ensure that:

- the student has adequate resources and support to enable them to complete the project
- the student is sufficiently challenged and supervised in the workplace
- the student undertakes varied activities suitable to their skills level
- appropriate feedback and encouragement are provided
- reasonable steps are taken to avoid foreseeable risk of loss or injury to students
- placements are not outside normal operating hours, on a weekend or during public holidays
- the student's record of their hours at the workplace is signed off using a timesheet
- students are not involved in any role or activity that has an enforcement or regulatory basis or is considered high risk
- students are not asked to drive company cars unless the business or the student's university discussed this beforehand and can provide appropriate insurance coverage
- students are not out-of-pocket in some circumstances, e.g. working at a different work location further away from their home. In these instances, the host supervisor should discuss any requirements with the student so all parties are clear on what can be claimed. In normal circumstances students are expected to pay for travel between their home and work and meals when at the workplace.

Intellectual Property (IP)

Ownership of intellectual property developed during the placement under the PhD Industry Experience program will belong to the business. This is stated in the Agreement signed by the student and the host business that details the specifics of the placement.

Project completion

At the end of the placement it is expected that students will provide a report and verbal presentation on the work completed to the host business supervisor. The host will then inform the student's university and DSITI about the student's performance and the project outcomes.

The host business will be invited to take part in a post program survey that DSITI will conduct to evaluate the outcomes of the program. The survey will include: the scope of project activities undertaken and the role of the student, the opportunity provided for the development of new skills or knowledge for the student, and the project outcomes.

For universities

What will this program achieve for my university?

The PhD Industry Experience program will involve selecting PhD students from participating Queensland universities for short-term unpaid industry placements as part of an applicant's PhD studies. The program provides PhD students with the chance to expand their practical workplace knowledge and experience outside a university research setting and deliver insights into industry needs and how business operates.

A highly skilled workforce is critical for building Queensland's knowledge economy, and the program will assist to raise the profile of the high-level skills of PhD students, as well as developing their core work and commercially focussed skills such as communication, planning, organisation, team work and problem solving skills through the placements.

Successful PhD student applicants will be placed in a business for 20-30 days on a full-time or part-time basis, which can help develop new work contacts, and professional networks beyond the university, exposing students to employment opportunities outside traditional university research pathways.

How does this program differ from the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program?

The PhD Industry Experience program offers short-term, unpaid placements to PhD students to help to expand their practical workplace knowledge, and enable businesses to gain access to research, analytical and problem solving skills to help advance innovative projects. The program offers businesses the chance to preview talented students for future employment opportunities. It can also act as a catalyst for involvement in longer-term (six to 12 month), co-funded strategic innovation projects, like those funded under the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program, which aims to increase workforce skills and create new jobs for the future knowledge economy.

What is the role of the university?

Projects

Universities will advertise the PhD Industry Experience program to their students. The Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation (DSITI) will provide a communication toolkit to help promote the program within each university.

Shortlisting applicants

Students can apply online for up to three projects and DSITI will provide each university with the applications from their students.

Universities then review their PhD students' applications for the program and provide a shortlist of students to DSITI. DSITI will provide documents and assistance where required for the assessment process.

In shortlisting students, the university will check that the student can complete the projects nominated (up to three) and that the placement would not hinder the completion of the student's coursework.

Notifying students about the outcome of their application

Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer from DSITI and will have 15 days to accept the placement offered. Universities will need to follow their own processes to ensure that the placement forms a component of the student's university course. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by their own university in writing following the acceptance of placements.

Signing the Head Agreement

The Head Agreement must be signed by the PhD student's university and the business before the placement begins. A copy will need to be provided to DSITI as a record of agreement. A copy of the Agreement and Terms and Conditions are available on request.

Insurance

The university must ensure that appropriate insurance policies are in place for successful students for the duration of their placement, in accordance with applicable legislation and the requirements of the Head Agreement between the University and the business.

Funding

The program is voluntary industry experience and there will be no cost to the participating business. Any costs to the student or university will be met by the student and/or university, unless otherwise agreed.

Student advice and support

Each university should allocate a member of staff as a central contact point who can advise applicants, participating students and their PhD supervisors about their suitability for the program, as well as giving practical guidance about how to apply.

Universities will need to be available to assist successful applicants throughout their placement. It is recommended that universities make contact with their student/s at the start, during and at the end of the placement to see how they are progressing and to provide additional support as required.

Project completion

The university contact person/s will be invited take part in any survey/interview that DSITI conducts to evaluate the outcomes of the program.