The Jurien Bay Marine Debris Program is a successful industry and community collaboration developing key employability skills in Marine and Coastal Science students at Curtin.

In its second year of operation the Jurien Bay Marine Debris Program is a collaboration between Curtin University’s Work Integrated Learning Team, The Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Fisheries. The program aims to monitor and quantify marine debris within the Marine Park. The marine debris survey results are then used to inform marine debris mitigation strategies and increase community awareness of the ecological impact of marine debris in Australia.

The Marine Park extends to the waters between Wedge Island and Green Head, extending 5.5 km offshore and covering an area of 82,375 hectares. Species that are particularly vulnerable in this area are the Australian Sea Lion, a diverse range of seabirds, resident and migratory shorebirds, humpback whales, turtles and pelagic shark species.

Twelve Marine and Coastal Science students participated to collect, record and dispose of marine debris during an intensive five day operation. During the five days students covered 37 kilometres of coastline and collected a staggering 1200kg of debris.

Paul Jennings, Marine Park Coordinator for the Department of Parks and Wildlife, said “students actively took the initiative to assist with the capture of data, including the parameters for classifying beach characteristics and how they contribute to the accumulation of marine debris. Students also showed interest in learning about threats to key ecological communities and processes, and how our survey results influence management decisions to better inform source reduction initiatives.”

Six students have elected to return to Jurien Bay in the next few weeks to assist with the final sorting and reporting process.

Contact WIL Partnership Coordinator for Science and Engineering Kurm Sher to find out how to get involved in the 2016 Jurien Bay Marine Debris Program.
What to Expect From Fieldwork—WIL Student Blog

The following extract is taken from the WIL at Curtin Blog, a new resource connecting students to information, resources and student services that support the student experience during fieldwork and enhance learning outcomes. The blog covers topics such as how to prepare for fieldwork, what to expect from fieldwork, how to deal with failure, how to accept feedback during and after your placement and suggestions for reflecting on the WIL experience. Posts are published approximately every three weeks and will be rolled out over the next few months. View the full post on the WIL Blog page and please share this resource with your networks.

What is the difference between the classroom and fieldwork?

WIL experiences generally provide a counter point to university education, where experiences are planned and coordinated to support student learning in a safe and nurturing environment. Learning within university courses follows predictable formats, study timetables and conventions. WIL experiences, such as fieldwork, on the other hand are less controlled; more complex environments and expose students to different expectations regarding performance and professional behaviour. Fieldwork introduces many new and unpredictable elements to the learning experience. This is a GOOD thing! Embrace it and make it work for you.

Follow the WIL at Curtin Blog to continue reading.

Worksafe: Best New Starter Award for Curtin Graduate

We ask recent Occupational Therapy graduate Leanne Sher about finding her first professional job and Industry Awards surprise!

Leanne graduated from the Bachelor of Science, Occupational Therapy in 2014. She shares her experiences of the transition from student to professional with us.

“I was allocated a placement with the WorkFocus Perth office for my final placement as an Occupational Therapy student. After completing three weeks of clinical placement my Perth supervisor suggested I speak to the manager of the Melbourne WorkFocus office about a potential graduate role with them. I was offered a job that week and moved to Melbourne a few weeks later to begin in the role of Rehabilitation Consultant.”

Being on clinical placement allowed me to learn from experts in the field and gain real, practical skills in the workplace. I felt supported by WorkFocus staff and Curtin supervisors to make my own clinical judgements. Building upon my knowledge and experience in the workplace, I felt confident to accept the graduate role with WorkFocus in Melbourne.

My advice to current students on clinical placements is to ask as many questions as possible and accept challenges as they are presented. Do not be afraid to speak up, however know your limits and work to better yourself. Workplace supervisors and Curtin staff are there to help and were once in your shoes—they recognise you are learning and developing skills and will help you grow, if you let them. This is a once in a lifetime chance to get real, on the job experience with the support of your school and work supervisor. This will be the best time of your life and a chance to get a taste of the different avenues your occupational therapy degree can take you... make it COUNT!

I was nominated by the Area Manager of WorkFocus for Best New Starter, with an original employer, in the Australian Rehabilitation Providers Association Victoria, Worksafe Awards."

Congratulations on your win Leanne and thanks for sharing your story with us at WIL!