

Must love water

DHI looks for local **water-loving students** for work placements



Greg Stuart wasn't joking when he claimed his staff love all water. "Our staff love the work they do and are very passionate about water, beaches, rivers, even sewers!" said Greg, whose job as Gold Coast Office Manager for DHI Water and Environment exposes him to more H₂O than most people see in a lifetime.

It is therefore not surprising that DHI looks for water-loving engineering students when offering work integrated learning (WIL) placements. The firm's Gold Coast office has formed a close relationship with Griffith University that includes research partnerships, providing teaching and research licences for their software and, providing workplace experience for students.

"We've been part of Griffith University's Industrial Affiliates Program (IAP) for many years and have recruited several staff through it. WIL is one of the ways we identify potential employees. We have had a number of staff working here who started as WIL placements," Greg said.

“Our connection to universities is an important part of our business model”

Greg Stuart



DHI consultants often lecture at the engineering school at Griffith University. "We get to know some of the students and when the work placements are available we ask the professors to identify students who have potential. We want people with strong technical ability; students who have shown promise in hydraulic modelling, the ability to program and a love for their hydraulics subjects.

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Providing opportunities for local people

The recruiting guidelines at DHI go further than a standard skills and experience assessment. According to Greg Stuart, finding staff with community ties to the local area is also important.

“On the Gold Coast there are not a lot of engineering opportunities and our graduate recruiting focus is usually on the Coastal Engineering Program at Griffith University. We feel we have a responsibility to provide opportunities for local people and if we can find someone with ties to the Gold Coast – family and so on – they are more likely to stay.”



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They must be very strong technically, for that’s what sets us apart from our competitors.

We take on difficult problems and find creative solutions.”
Greg explained.

Students learn a lot during their placement. “There is a big difference between working full time in an office and going to university. We teach students how to behave in an office and how to make that transition from student to employee. Along with learning about our models, they get real practical experience,” he added.

The students can encourage DHI to look at things differently. “Any organisation can get stuck in their standard processes so having a fresh set of eyes is useful.

Students are inquisitive and question the way we do things; they identify things out of the ordinary. When we have to explain our methods, it assists us to really think them through,” Greg said.

DHI is a research based company which provides an important bridge between knowledge partners such as universities and the commercial and industrial sectors which are solving real world problems. DHI and Griffith University partner on a number of research and consulting projects including the AllConnex Water SmartRelease study which Griffith University students contributed to.

“A lot of our work relates to consulting and software development and we want to stay at the cutting edge of that. Our connection to universities is an important part of our business model. Along with supporting WIL student placements we support research through Griffith University as this connection forms part of the research and development arm of our business. Finding highly qualified potential employees along the way is a big plus,” Greg said.

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DHI is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Queensland.

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Innovative Research Universities (IRU) are working in partnership to assist small, medium and large businesses to participate in work integrated learning programs. IRU members are: Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University and The University of Newcastle.

Participating ACCI members are: ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Business SA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Northern Territory, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia, NSW Business Chamber, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Victorian Employers’ Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

For more information on WIL partnerships for employers please go to:

www.iru.edu.au/group-activities/wil or www.acci.asn.au