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To whom it may concern,

Cyara was invited to join Monash University's Postgraduate Industry Experience Program in 2015, and have participated in every semester since then.

As an organisation we were keen to engage with Monash, and an important part of our ethos is giving back to the community and to our profession; This program ticked all the boxes.

Our mentors to date have included senior staff like our Chief Technical Officer, pre-sales engineers, and developers, as well as managers from various departments including operations, quality assurance, and marketing. It was interesting to see that our different perspectives all added value to the students' experience.

Initially we were unsure what value we could add, but it has been fascinating to see students develop throughout the journey, and the difference we have made. We've had to mentor teams in different ways, according to their needs. Sometimes that mentoring has included teaching the students very basic skills, like how to shake hands, at other times it has included more involved topics such as risk mitigation in project planning. It has been important for the students to learn that it is okay to disagree in a team, that it is an important part of working together. Our mentoring has also gone beyond the classroom; for example we've helped students with their résumés, and encouraged them to develop their networking skills to help with employability.

At times when the work was overwhelming we have encouraged them to persevere, to get out of their comfort zone. It was also rewarding to help the international students with the cultural norms of the country – How do you engage with stakeholders? How do you request help? This can be quite different in different countries, and getting it right is important for success.

From our perspective as an organisation it is good to be involved with a program that is well organised, with staff deeply committed to their students. We've found the staff running this program at Monash are really engaged, and invested in the students doing well. We are also very happy with the benefits to our organisation. The obvious benefits are the promoting of our organisation and recruitment; we have employed graduates as a result of the program, but it has also been an opportunity for staff development. It has been interesting and enjoyable to coach students, to help them build their self confidence, and to learn when to step in and when to let them fail. It has helped us improve our feedback skills; we've had to make sure that our feedback was seen as food for thought rather than something that should be adopted without thinking. We also believe it is valuable to have some input into the curriculum of today's IT degrees, to ensure that the students are ready for work when they graduate.

We are strong supporters of the program, which is evidenced by our return each semester. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Yours sincerely,

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Cloud Operations Manager

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