



What is workplace learning?

Workplace learning is part of the NSW secondary school curriculum. It provides students with the opportunity to develop vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes in real work environments. Two main types of workplace learning programs are organised and approved by individual independent schools:

- Work Experience programs
- Work Placement programs

Work Experience usually gives students aged 14 and over the opportunity to learn more about career options in a workplace they have chosen. Work Experience places are usually sourced by families or by the school.

Work Placement is a compulsory part of HSC Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses which lead to nationally recognised VET qualifications. In a real work context, it complements the knowledge and skills gained in off the job training at school or external RTO (Registered Training Organisation). The skills and knowledge gained can be used for work-based assessment of specific course competencies. Work Placement is usually sourced by Work Placement Service Providers or by the school.

How Can You Help?

1. Choosing a Work Experience employer

Encourage students to:

- discuss the aims and objectives of the program.
- select an occupation or industry in which they have a genuine interest.

- find out about a number of occupations or industries and the lifestyles of people in those occupations.
- consider alternatives in the same interest area (some positions are very popular and therefore difficult to obtain).

2. When a Work Experience position has been obtained

Assist students to find out about:

- clothing requirements.
- starting and finishing times (students are expected to work the normal hours of the position).
- first day arrangements (time, place, contact person).
- meal facilities and transport.

3. When a Work Placement position has been obtained

Encourage students to:

- read the *AISRTO Student Guide to Workplace Learning*.
- read the work placement details form provided by the employer.
- contact the employer no later than one week prior to the starting date of the work placement to confirm details.
- check travel details.
- read about the importance of the Student Workplace Learning Journal in the *AISRTO Student Guide to Workplace Learning*.

4. During Work Experience and Work Placement

Encourage students to:

- complete journals supplied by the school.
- discuss each day's activities.
- contact you or the school immediately if there are any difficulties e.g. accident, injury, industrial dispute, harassment.

Discuss with students:

- how the organisation works.
- education and training requirements for jobs in the organisation.
- working conditions.
- the role of the unions.
- occupational health and safety.
- employees' responsibilities and rights.

5. After the Work Experience or Work Placement

Encourage students to:

- discuss the employer's report
- review and discuss future employment, education, training and career options

Payment

Students are volunteers and therefore will not be paid for either work experience or work placement.

Student Responsibilities

While in the workplace, students are expected to follow the rules of the workplace and the reasonable directions of the workplace supervisor and other employees.

1. Attitude

Students should:

- show enthusiasm and initiative.
- accept and complete duties planned by the supervisor.
- be willing to learn.
- listen to instructions and ask questions when unsure
- accept and act on advice given by workplace supervisors.
- ask for jobs when they have nothing to do.
- be polite, courteous and well mannered.
- avoid distracting other employees unnecessarily from their work.
- dress appropriately to industry standards and the workplace.

2. Attendance and punctuality

Students should:

- Start work on time each day.
- take only the allocated time for morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch breaks and return promptly to work.
- contact the workplace supervisor and the supervising teacher immediately if unable to attend the placement.
- account for any absence to the workplace supervisor and the supervising teacher because the hours lost through absence may be required to be made up at some other time.
- attend work for the normal hours of work for that job, unless prior arrangements have been negotiated by the school.

Duration and Timing of Workplace Learning

- Work Experience is often of one week's duration. However, schools may organise shorter or longer periods of time.
- Work Placement is a mandatory component of VET courses. For most BOSTES VET courses, students in Years 11 and 12 complete 35 hours for each 120 hour course. BOSTES syllabuses should be checked for current requirements for specific courses.
(www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au)
- Schools determine whether workplace learning occurs in school term times or in school holidays.

Insurance

The school should have a number of provisions which provide protection for both students and employers. These include:

- insurance coverage for students injured while on workplace learning.
- protection for employers in the event of a claim against them as a result of an injury to a student or damage to property caused by a student.

Child Protection

Employers should have been asked to make all staff aware of the special responsibilities associated with working with students. There is ongoing and close cooperation and communication between employers and schools both before and during workplace learning programs.

Work Health and Safety

Host organisations should ensure students do not work in unsafe conditions or carry out work that could endanger the health or safety of themselves or other staff members.

Before entering a workplace, students should be aware of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) requirements of the industry.

Please remind students that most workplace accidents can be prevented if they:

- obey reasonable instruction.
- work safely and wear the personal protective equipment provided and required.
- do not put other workers or the public at risk.
- report accidents or near misses.

Prohibited Activities

Students must not undertake any of the following activities during workplace learning:

1. use of machinery or equipment which is dangerous for new or young workers to operate, unless :

- the activity is first risk-assessed as suitable for student operation by the host employer **and**
- the student has been given appropriate information, instruction and training and a checklist for the safe operation and handling of the equipment **and**
- the equipment is in safe working order, complete with required safety devices or guards **and**
- on-going, close supervision is provided by a suitably qualified or experienced person in the workplace who has good communication skills and the ability to give clear instructions.

2. the service of alcohol; unless:

- the student is aged 18 or over **and**
- the activity is essential to the placement **and** has been agreed to by the school **and**
- the student has completed the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) Training Course.

3. travel outside the 12 nautical mile limit at sea.

4. scuba and deep-sea diving.

5. the following 'high risk construction work' as defined in the NSW WHS Regulation (2012):

- work in tunnels.
- work involving the use of explosives.
- work in and around gas and electrical installations.
- work near traffic or moving plant.
- any activities involving or adjacent to the repair, removal or demolition of any construction work containing asbestos or in the clean-up process following the activity.
- demolition work other than simple stripping of walls etc.
- any excavation work at a depth of one metre or more; at a depth less than one metre without direct supervision by a competent person; near utilities.
- work on caissons or cofferdams (permanent or temporary structures respectively, used to enable excavation and construction work).
- work on a roof.

- attendance at a site while chimney stacks or buildings are being demolished.

6. scheduled work as set out in the *NSW WHS Regulation 2012*. (The operation and use of loadshifting machines; the application of pesticides except when used in horticulture, husbandry or the growing of fruit and vegetables; the use of fumigants) unless:

- there are exceptional circumstances **and**
- the student is aged 18 or over **and**
- the student has already achieved the necessary certification.

7. any activity requiring a licence, permit or certificate of competence unless:

- the student already has the relevant current licence, permit or certificate **and**
- the activity is directly related to the learning outcomes of the placement **and**
- the activity is included in the AISRTO Student Work Placement Record and approved by the school prior to the commencement of the placement.

8. any work of a sexual or explicit nature.

Note: students are not expected to drive their own vehicles while undertaking activities on behalf of the host employer.

Further information

If you would like further information, please contact your school's VET Compliance Officer.