

Workplace Learning for school students

Information for parents and carers

Workplace learning is a placement of an eligible student with an employer to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of a real work environment. Workplace learning aims to build on the students' schoolwork and career education activities in support of them planning and managing their transition through and beyond school.

Benefits of workplace learning

Workplace learning helps students to:

- explore potential career choices and pathways
- develop essential skills and understandings of the workplace to support their career pathway
- develop industry-related competencies and employability skills
- create direct links to apprenticeship or traineeship opportunities.

Types of workplace learning

Schools will support employers to provide students with appropriate learning experiences for their age and stage of development which will be agreed to prior to the student's placement. These may include:

Work experience

Work experience may consist of:

- work shadowing and observation
- assisting staff with appropriate tasks
- virtual work experience – for students who are unable to access the workplace due to distance or other circumstances.

Structured workplace learning

As part of some vocational education and training (VET) courses students will be required to undertake structured workplace learning. The tasks the student undertakes will be negotiated and agreed by the registered training organisation (RTO), student, school, and employer prior to the placement.

Student Pathways

Work trialling for an apprenticeship or traineeship for school students

Year 10, 11, 12 or 12+ students participating in a work trial must only be considered once the genuine opportunity for an apprenticeship or traineeship for a school student has been established. A work trial should only be for a short duration of time, long enough for a potential employee (student) to demonstrate the skills required for the job.

How parents and carers can support students with workplace learning

The transition to the workplace can be significant growth experience for students. Parents and caregivers can support students by:

- engaging in and completing all workplace learning preparation requirements as instructed by the school or workplace learning provider
- ensuring the Workplace Learning Agreement form has been completed and processed prior to the workplace learning occurring
- contacting the school immediately for support if parents and caregivers have any concerns about the student's engagement, safety or wellbeing
- contacting the school immediately if unlawful and inappropriate behaviour has occurred towards a student during the placement and supporting the student to decide on, and lodge, a formal complaint with a relevant organisation.

How students are being prepared for workplace learning

The Department for Education has developed, in partnership with Safe Work SA and Return to Work SA, a Work Health and Safety (WHS) program for students called WorkPRO. This course will prepare students to build their WHS knowledge and skills so that they understand:

- their role, responsibilities and rights related to WHS in the workplace
- the purpose of the workplace learning and how it supports their career plan goals
- their right to undertake workplace learning in a safe work environment, including their right to be safe from harm and free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, and bullying
- procedures they can follow if they experience any issue that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Student Pathways

Workplace Learning Agreement form

The relevant sections of the Workplace Learning Agreement form must be completed by the parents and caregivers, the student, the school, and the workplace learning provider. The school will redistribute a copy of the finalised form to all parties.

Workplace learning provider requirements

Workplace learning providers are required to maintain a safe work environment for students on workplace learning. Australian WHS legislation requires an employer to:

- ensure they complete Section 2 and a signature for Section 3 of the workplace learning agreement form and return the form to the school for completion
- provide a work site induction including a tour, introduction to staff and outline of safety processes
- provide and maintain a safe working environment and safe systems of work
- provide information, instruction, training, and supervision to students that enables them to perform their work safely
- ensure students are always directly supervised by the employer or nominated on the job supervisor
- communicate with the school if there are any concerns regarding students' wellbeing or engagement
- in the event of any incident involving a student, ensure the wellbeing of the student and then notify the school as soon as possible, advising of the particulars of the incident and any other relevant details.

Schools will identify and provide a staff member to supervise a student engaged in virtual work experience during school hours on the school site. The Workplace Learning Procedures outline the procedures schools and workplace learning providers must follow to ensure they fulfil their legislative obligations.

Contact your school who can help with the first steps of arranging workplace learning.

The Student Pathways and Careers team within the Department for Education can also provide support to students who have identified their vocational pathway and wish to link to potential employers.

Contact

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