

Workplace Learning for school students

Information for workplace learning providers

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.

There are multiple Acts that provide governance to support the safety of young people in the workplace. The five Acts listed below have a significant role in keeping students safe while engaged in workplace learning, which are:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).

The Department for Education Workplace Learning Procedures outline the procedures schools and workplace learning providers must follow to ensure their legislative obligations are fulfilled.

Benefits of workplace learning

For workplace learning providers:

- embeds a culture of teaching and mentoring into your workforce
- nurtures skilled young people who can transition from learner to employee
- develops a pipeline of high-quality future employees
- trials students to determine their suitability for employment, potentially reducing recruitment costs.

For students:

- enables students to explore potential career choices and pathways
- develops essential skills and understandings of the workplace and develops industry-related competencies
- provides opportunities for students to develop employability skills
- creates direct links to apprenticeship or traineeship opportunities for.

Student Pathways

Types of workplace learning

Students may need different workplace learning experiences based on their individual career plan. Schools will support workplace learning providers to ensure that students receive appropriate learning experiences, which are agreed to prior to the placement. These may include:

Work experience

Work experience is the involvement of a student in a short-term industry placement. This enhances their experience in and understanding of the work environment while informing career development. Work experience can include:

- work shadowing and observation
- assisting staff with appropriate tasks
- Problem Based Learning (PBL), including small projects that can be completed fully supervised or with some level of independence.

Work experience can be paid or unpaid and is arranged between the employer and student. The timing of the placement, including start and finish times are also arranged directly between employer, student and school. This required to be in line with the industry award (eg no more than 8 hours per day).

Virtual work experience will require access to suitable technology so students can interact with the employers through several methods. These may include phone, email or internet-based delivery platforms.

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.

Work trialling for an apprenticeship or traineeship for school students

Workplace learning providers may conduct a work trial to evaluate a student's skill level to see if they will fit within the culture and activities of the workplace as a potential employee. 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.

The work trial can be paid or unpaid and is arranged between the employer, student and school.

The timing of the trial, including start and finish times, are arranged directly between the employer, student and school. This required to be in line with the industry award (eg no more than 8 hours per day).

Student Pathways

During the work trial, it is appropriate to ask students to demonstrate employability skills, including but not limited to:

- ability to communicate effectively with others
- personal presentation
- capacity to operate in the work environment
- ability to follow instructions
- punctuality
- positive attitude
- willingness to learn.

All students enrolled in government schools are covered by a personal accident insurance scheme when a workplace learning agreement has been completed prior to start of the workplace learning.

Workplace learning provider requirements

Workplace learning providers are required to maintain a safe work environment for students on workplace learning as detailed in the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)

Employers need to:

- complete Section 2 and sign Section 3 of the Workplace Learning Agreement form before the student commences the placement
- provide students with a work site induction, including a tour, an introduction to staff and an outline of safety processes before any tasks are undertaken
- provide and maintain a safe working environment and safe systems of work
- ensure students are always provided with direct supervision by the employer or a nominated on-the-job supervisor
- communicate with the school if there are any concerns regarding the student's wellbeing, safety, or engagement.

Child safe environments

All students have the right to always feel safe and free from harm during workplace learning. Workplace learning providers should ensure that their workplace is suitable for students to undertake work placement and that all staff engaging with students will report, as required, any issues or concern to ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm.

Students must not be treated in a manner that may be psychologically harmful or that would constitute physical assault.

Student Pathways

Working with Children Check

Workplace learning providers are required to have a Working with Children Check if their workplace is considered a [child-related work environment](#).

There is no requirement for a workplace learning provider to have a Working with Children Check where the work undertaken is not classified as child-related work, nor are the employers in prescribed positions. It is noted that an employer is not required to get a Working with Children Check in relation to the student undertaking workplace learning, regardless of that student's age, as the student is classified as an employee during the placement.

Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect

Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect (RRHAN-EC) is only required for mandatory notifiers definition in the [Mandated notifiers and their role](#) page on the Department for Child Protections website.

How students are prepared for placement

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 prepares students to build their WHS knowledge and skills so 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.

Contact

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