

Work EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS

Ministerial Order No. 56

WHAT IS WORK EXPERIENCE?

Work Experience is the short term placement of secondary school students with 'host' employers, to provide insights into the industry and the workplace in which they are located. Students are placed with employers primarily to observe and learn - not to undertake activities which require extensive training or experience.

WHAT IS YOUR 'DUTY OF CARE' AS AN EMPLOYER?

You have legal obligations to provide a safe and healthy working environment for your employees and contractors. Work Experience students are no different. They are owed the same duty of care, and you must take all the same steps to safeguard them during their Work Experience period.

You must assess your workplace to determine which activities can be safely managed. Students should be given tasks which are interesting and which will give them an understanding of your business. However, you must take care NOT to place them at risk, and you must provide supervision at all times.

Note: Criminal record checks are required for employers and persons who will supervise students under 15 years of age. There will be separate guidelines in regard to these checks.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT OF THE STUDENT?

Remember that young people cannot be expected to possess the judgement or maturity of older workers.

You have a right to require the student to comply with workplace rules and procedures. First, though, you must explain those requirements and provide any necessary information, instruction and training. Don't assume a student will automatically know what's expected!

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING

The most rewarding Work Experience programs - and the safest - are those planned in advance. It's useful to draw up a timetable for students before they arrive, setting out proposed activities for each day and identifying the people who will supervise them at different times.

Even though your timetable may have to change, a planned program enables supervisors to prepare meaningful activities, and reduces the chances of exposing the student to risks resulting from unplanned activity.

SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

Your safe systems of work should already be built on knowing your hazards, assessing the risks they present and taking steps to control those risks.

Your employees will know the risk controls, but your Work Experience student will not. It's important to take time to explain to the student what the hazards are, why the risk controls are in place and how they are put into practice.

INDUCTION AND SUPERVISION

Students will not be familiar with the workplace, or the way things are done. Like any new starter, it will take them a few days to remember names and find their way around.

The first thing you must do - on their first morning with you - is induct the student. This should be done by the employer or the nominated supervisor - don't assume that induction will happen if you have not given someone specific responsibility for it!

Take it slowly, and reinforce key information (eg supervisory arrangements, no-go areas and excluded activities).



The following are the 'must do' elements when introducing a student to your workplace:

●INTRODUCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The student may be supervised directly by more than one person during the week. Introduce those who are available, and make a note of people the student will need to catch up with later.

Inform the student that their health and safety is your most important concern during their stay. Explain your legal duty of care for them, and that in turn they must observe any requirements you have established to safeguard employees and others.

If there is a Health and Safety Representative at the workplace, arrange a time for them to discuss their function with the student.

●EXPLAIN SUPERVISORY ARRANGEMENTS

Students must report directly to their supervisor when entering, leaving and returning to the work location.

Consider the skills and experience of people nominated as supervisor(s) - will they be able to answer questions and provide the right information and instruction to ensure the student understands the tasks they are given and can undertake them safely?

Explain during induction what the student should do if their supervisor is not present at any time - and who they will report to.

●EXPLAIN ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRST AID AND EMERGENCIES

Tell the student who their first aider is, and what to do if they need first aid.

Explain emergency arrangements, and point out the evacuation plan and muster points. In an emergency, the student must follow direction from their supervisor or from identified wardens.

●EXPLAIN HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Incidents and accidents must be reported to the supervisor without delay. Incidents include near misses, even if no-one was injured. Accidents - including even minor cuts and scrapes requiring only a bandaid - must be reported and recorded.

Explain to the student how this is done, and encourage them to raise any health or safety concerns with their supervisor. If the student feels there might be risk in any activity, they must understand that they should not continue with the task.

●PROVIDE AN ORIENTATION TOUR OF THE WORKPLACE

If the student will be located in one area through the week, show them 'home base' first. It's a good idea to return to that work location from different areas each time, to assist the student to build a mental picture of the workplace layout.

You should explain what happens in each part of the workplace, and point out locations where the student may be working during the week.

Explain why certain areas may be deemed 'no-go' for the student. If hazardous operations mean an area is restricted, you may want to observe the activity from a safe vantage point and describe the operations. If personal protective equipment is necessary to enter the area, this must be provided and you must explain how to use it.

●WORKPLACE BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

You must explain your workplace policy regarding bullying, harassment and/or discrimination. Encourage the student to report any concern directly to the employer or their supervisor or to their teacher.

●CONFIRM STUDENT'S MEDICAL INFORMATION

Check that you have necessary medical information. Does the student have any condition (eg asthma or epilepsy) that could require treatment? Are they taking any medication? (The information must be kept confidential as far as is practicable.)

Creating an induction checklist and a timetable will help you to provide a safe and rewarding work placement!

Please check <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/> and follow the links.



A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

What is Work Experience?

Work experience involves secondary school students in short-term industry placements that broaden their experience and understanding of the world of work and career opportunities in general. Students observe different aspects of work within the industry and may assist with tasks allocated by their supervisor. Work experience is **not** the same as structured workplace learning, which allows students to acquire skills and knowledge in an industry setting as part of a vocational training program.

What are the benefits for students?

Work experience provides students with the opportunity to:

- be exposed to the 'real' world of work
- gain an understanding of the nature and conditions of paid work
- find out more about work-related issues such as the impact of technological changes on work, workplace relations, rights and responsibilities of employers and employees
- examine and assess initial career choices and career opportunities
- obtain assistance in their course and career decision making
- develop an awareness of appropriate attitudes and behaviours at work
- improve their communication skills
- develop contacts with potential employers.

What are the benefits for employers?

Work experience enables employers to:

- build closer relations with schools and the local community
- promote their enterprises and industry as a career to young people
- assess the capabilities of work experience students who understand the workplace for casual, part-time or full-time work

- enhance the skills of existing employees by involving them in supervision of students.

What is the employer's role?

In preparing to host a work experience student, the employer should:

- allocate a supervisor familiar with the tasks the student will undertake during the work experience. The teacher in charge of work experience should make arrangements to meet with the workplace supervisor during the work experience to discuss the student's performance
- ensure that the student is supervised at **ALL** times during the work experience. The employer must arrange effective supervision to ensure the welfare and safety of the student in a non-discriminatory and harassment free working environment
- plan a schedule of activities which will allow the student to learn as much as possible about the nature and conditions of work in that enterprise or industry
- provide appropriate training and instruction in respect of occupational health and safety to the student, and provide any required safety equipment and clothing
- ensure other employees understand the purpose of work experience, and the contributions they can make
- inform the teacher in charge of work experience, and the student, of any special requirements during the work experience (for example, starting and finishing times, special items of clothing that are required, the need for confidentiality).

Occupational health & safety

Occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements and standards under Victorian law should be complied with in regard to the student **as if the student is an employee**. Training and instruction in respect to OH&S should relate to the tasks to be undertaken by the student during the work experience. This will vary from workplace to workplace and may range from simple instructions (for example, correct use of

photocopiers) to more detailed instructions. These instructions will depend on the tasks to be undertaken. If you have any queries, contact your relevant employer association or the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

WorkCover

All employers of students in work experience arrangements, pursuant to Part 5.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, are deemed to have WorkCover insurance with the authorised insurer of DEECD. This cover extends to all employers who are self-insurers.

Accidents

If a work experience student is injured, the employer must contact the student's parent/guardian as well as the teacher in charge of work experience **as soon as possible**. The employer must also fulfil the incident notification requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

Public Liability Insurance

When an arrangement is entered into by a principal of a government school, it is the obligation of **DEECD** to hold or take out public liability insurance to provide at least \$10 million cover per event. The persons to be insured are the student and the employer.

When an arrangement is entered into by a principal of a non-government school, it is the obligation of **that school** to hold or take out public liability insurance to provide at least \$10 million cover per event. The persons to be insured are the student and the school.

When an arrangement is entered into by a principal of a non-government school not covered by public liability insurance as set out above, then the **employer** will be obliged to hold or take out public liability insurance to provide at least \$10 million cover per event for any loss or damage which may be caused by any act or omission of the student while engaged under the arrangement. The persons to be insured are the student and the employer.

Privacy legislation

Victorian privacy laws, the *Information Privacy Act 2000* and *Health Records Act 2001* protect the personal and health information of students.

Information provided by students, parents/guardians and employers is obtained for the purposes of coordinating the work experience for a school student, and meeting duty of care and child protection responsibilities.

Information provided must be kept confidential.

Employers are required to use this information only for the purposes for which it has been given to them.

The school will store the student information securely, and to retain it for a minimum of five years after the placement has been completed.

Anti-discrimination requirements

Anti-discrimination requirements under Victorian law (*Equal Opportunity Act 1995*) must be complied with in regard to the student **as if the student is an employee**. There must be an level of supervision adequate to ensure the safety and welfare of the student in a non-discriminatory and harassment free working environment.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities may extend their work experience. Extensions to the length of the work experience program will only be granted if it is determined that the student needs the extra days to achieve the skills and benefits required in the educational program he/she is undertaking.

Work Experience Arrangement Forms

All sections of the Work Experience Arrangement Form must be completed and signed before the work experience commences. The teacher in charge of work experience will forward a copy of the completed form for the employer's records.

When can students do work experience?

Students normally undertake work experience in Years 9 and 10. Work experience is only to be undertaken during the official school year. This includes the first, second and third term holidays, but not the holidays at the end of the year.

Under the legislation, students can undertake work experience:

- for a maximum of ten days per term
- with the same employer for specified periods during the year
- during normal working hours, but not between 11.00 pm and 6.00 am.

Work experience activities

The student should be provided with a meaningful and varied program and given the opportunity to:

- see and experience as many aspects of the workplace as is practicable
- gather relevant information required to complete tasks or work requirements set by the school.

Employers should contact the teacher in charge of work experience at the school if any problems or queries arise during the work experience.

For work experience during the term holidays, the employer and the work experience student should be provided with contact details of a specific staff member in case of an emergency.

Attendance

If a student is absent without notification, the employer should contact the teacher in charge of work experience straight away. Students must inform the employer and school if they are going to be absent from the workplace or if they are going to be late.

Evaluation

At the end of the work experience, an evaluation form must be completed and forwarded to the school. It would be beneficial if the student and the supervisor have discussed the value of the work experience and the student's performance prior to the completion of the form.

Payment

The student is paid a minimum rate of \$5 per day.

Where the student is under the age of 18, if payment is \$112 or less per week or \$225 per fortnight, the employer will not be obligated to withhold tax, collect a Tax File Number declaration from the student, issue payment summaries or report payment details.

Students aged 18 years and over must provide a Tax File Number declaration to the employer, who is required to withhold amounts in accordance with the tax tables (where applicable), issue payment summaries and report these payments to the ATO as they would do for their employees.

Where the placement is with a Commonwealth department or body established under a Commonwealth Act, an educational, charitable or community welfare organisation not conducted for profit, the \$5 per day payment will not be made.

Further information

Contact the teacher in charge of work experience at the local school.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Information on work experience can also be obtained from following website:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sense/youth/careertrans/worklearn/>

General inquiries can also be directed to DEECD Information and Referral Service, telephone 1800 809 834