



# WORK PLACEMENT COORDINATION PROGRAM NSW

## GUIDELINES

These guidelines have been developed to support the provision of structured workplace learning for students undertaking mandatory work placement for a vocational education and training (VET) course for the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC).

## Structured workplace learning in NSW schools

Work placement is a mandatory HSC requirement for 12 Industry Curriculum Framework (ICF) courses and a range of Board Endorsed courses (BEC). These VET courses are available to students in Years 11 and 12 and also to students in Years 9 and 10 in appropriate circumstances through the early commencement pathway or Stage 5 courses. Guidelines for access to VET courses by students in Years 9 and 10 are available at:

<http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/vet>

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) principles underpinning work placement in the HSC are provided at Appendix One.

## Work placement coordination

The Work placement coordination program is funded by the NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) and the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AIS).

## Management of the work placement coordination program

The work placement coordination program is managed by Senior Pathways Rural and Pathways NSW Department of Education on behalf of the three program partners.

Senior pathways manages:

- Agreements for all service regions in NSW
- Ongoing liaison with work placement service providers
- The work placement website <https://workplacement.nsw.edu.au/>
- Annual professional development activities in consultation with work placement service providers
- The [Sydney Access](#) program
- Maintenance of the [go2workplacement](#) website.

## Work placement service providers

Work placement service providers are non-government, not for profit organisations contracted to support and coordinate mandatory work placements for students undertaking HSC VET courses within a specified service region.

Work placement service providers work with local schools with secondary enrolments, Externally Delivered Vocational Education and Training (EVET) providers including TAFE NSW colleges and private providers, and employers to coordinate HSC VET work placements for all eligible students within the service region.

## Service regions

There are 16 service regions across NSW. Each region will be serviced according to a separate agreement for each work placement service provider. An organisation may hold agreements for more than one service region.

## Agreements

Agreements with work placement service providers specify the placement activity and reporting requirements. This information is updated annually.

## Protection of children

Work placement service providers must comply with the provisions of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and all related legislation (Child Protection Legislation) including without limitation:

- ensuring that personnel, and volunteers work or persons undertaking practical training who are or will be assigned to work on the program comply with the Child Protection Legislation
- carrying out employment screening of each worker who is or will be assigned on the program, provided that any worker who declines being screened does not work on the program
- notifying to work NSW DoE of any relevant disciplinary proceedings in relation to the Child Protection Legislation against any worker who is or will be assigned to work on the program or of any applicant in relation to the program is rejected for child-related employment not performing assign, or continue the assignment of, a prohibited person in relation to the program or allow such prohibited person to undertake work in relation to the program.

Work placement service providers have an obligation to take reasonable steps to minimise risk to students.

## Professional development

Work placement service providers will undertake relevant professional development for staff who are engaged to work on the work placement coordination program.

Work placement service providers also participate in network meetings with neighbouring service regions and with education sector representatives.

The agreements for each service region will identify an indicative funding level to be allocated for professional development activities.

### **Reporting requirements**

Work placement service providers are accountable for service delivery in their service region and are required to adhere to any reporting requirements which form part of the agreement.

Work placement service providers will maintain accurate, appropriate records of their work with schools, EVET providers and employers.

Work placement service providers are required to complete online, milestone progress reports and an annual report. Information from students, schools and employers about the quality of the work placement will also be collected on the work placement website: <http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au/feedback.php>.

## Implementation of work placement coordination

On behalf of schools and EVET providers, work placement service providers coordinate work placement opportunities that encourage the practice, development and refinement of HSC VET competencies in a workplace setting. Within a service region, the following activities carried out by the Work placement service providers support the coordination of work placement.

### Working with schools and EVET providers

- determining current and future needs for work placements
- supporting the implementation of [go2workplacement.com](https://go2workplacement.com) to promote work placement readiness for students undertaking a placement
- providing participating schools and EVET providers, in a timely fashion, with appropriate quality work placement opportunities to enable schools and EVET providers to match students and ensure satisfactory completion of work placement
- liaising with, and giving assistance as required to schools and EVET providers
- ensure additional learning and support needs of students are appropriately supported in the workplace
- maintenance of effective communication with education stakeholders including sector partners, participating schools and EVET providers.
- convening a specific work placement reference group at least twice each year to encourage feedback from education and training providers and host employers to support monitoring, review and continuous improvement.

### Working with employers

- promotion of the work placement agenda to engage business and industry
- recruitment of suitable employers to host work placements
- induction of host employers including student safety and supervision and the protection of young people as well as promoting employer compliance with the Workplace Learning Policy for secondary students in Government Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes policy (<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/workplace-learning-policy-for-secondary-students-in-government-schools-and-tafe-nsw-institutes>), relevant procedures and related mandatory documents. non-government schools will also have policy documents relating to this

work.

- reinforcing requirements of work placement including the need for supervision of students by competent persons who are adequately briefed for the task
- students with disability or learning and support needs should be provided with opportunities on the same basis as other students and liaising with employers around adjustments and accommodations students with additional needs may require
- introducing [go2workplacement.com](http://go2workplacement.com) to employers and promoting the resource and associated documentation
- participating in relevant local community networks including work placement service provider forums to promote structured workplace learning
- annual evaluation of employers, taking into account feedback from stakeholders, to maintain program quality
- maintenance of effective communication with stakeholders in business and industry including participating host employers.

### **Work placement ready**

Work placement service providers will liaise with schools and EVET providers regarding the preparation of students to be work placement ready.

Suitable pre-placement activities must be provided by the school or EVET provider to prepare all VET students for work placement and to optimise the planned workplace learning experience.

Go2workplacement is an online resource for students enrolled in HSC VET courses to get the most out of their work placement by identifying the skills and competencies they want to focus on during their time in the workplace ([www.go2workplacement.com](http://www.go2workplacement.com)).

Work placement service providers will work with schools and EVET providers to implement the resource and will promote go2workplacement to participating employers in their service region.

### **Insurance requirements**

Each of the education sectors maintain insurance and indemnity arrangements to cover injury to students, loss or damage occasioned by students and indemnity arrangements for host employers. Conditions apply. Host employers must have current public liability insurance coverage.

## **Payments to students**

Students in NSW undertaking work placement are not paid employees. Host employers cannot make any payment to students. Work placement service providers must ensure host employers are aware that a payment made to a student may in the event of an accident or claim void the education sectors' insurance and indemnity provisions for host employers.

## **Mandatory work placements documents and procedures**

There are mandatory documents and procedures that are to be used for the coordination of mandatory work placements. These include a Student Placement Record (SPR) to be completed by all parties and other associated documents as required. This records contact details, arrangements and approvals relating to the student's placement. The student placement record also records information regarding any disability, learning and support needs, medical condition, allergy or restriction that may affect the safety and supervision of the student in the workplace. It will indicate if employers need to make adjustments to accommodate a student's additional support needs or disability. A separate student placement record is generated for each student work placement.

It is a requirement of the Work Placement Coordination Program that all participating employers are provided with an Employer Guide to Work Place Learning which sets out expectations of host employers and their explains their responsibilities. These are provided to work placement service providers by each education sector. Work placement service providers play a lead role in introducing and explaining the guide/s to prospective host employers and to highlighting key responsibilities of employers and their staff, for example, in relation to student safety, supervision and child protection issues.

## Appendix one

Principles underpinning work placement in the Higher School Certificate. NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) has formally endorsed the following principles relating to work placement in HSC VET courses.

### Principle 1

Work placement must have a clearly articulated and documented purpose. The structure of the work-based learning experience needs to be planned and developmental.

A range and number of purposes are possible including;

- learning about a particular industry, workplace culture and career opportunities
- practicing skills learnt off the job
- developing new skills
- improving work-related skills
- developing skills including employability skills such as teamwork, using technology and problem-solving
- achieving entry-level competencies
- achieving workplace performance of particular competency standards
- assessing in a realistic environment or allowing for holistic assessment in conjunction with a qualified assessor
- providing opportunities to build skills in a developmental manner from simple to complex
- providing opportunities for the student to reflect on the workplace learning experience in the context of individual current knowledge and understanding
- encouraging students to undertake further education and training.

### Principle 2

The scheduling of the work placement should reflect student readiness and should complement off-the-job learning programs.

The scheduling of the work placement should take account of:

- whether or not students are workplace ready in terms of the skills and competencies they will need to develop and demonstrate in the workplace
- how the timing of the work placement links to overall course planning
- the degree of flexibility available at both the workplace and the school
- how the alignment of both on and off-the-job competencies can be best achieved.



- An individual work placement program focusing on a developmental approach should be negotiated with the workplace supervisor/employer.
- Dependence on supervision should reduce over time as students move towards greater independence in the workplace. The ultimate goal of a work placement should be competence and autonomy in the range of tasks required for the job being undertaken.

### Principle 3

Work placement should be relevant to the VET courses being undertaken. The 'real' tasks being undertaken in the workplace should complement the tasks and learning being undertaken by the students in their VET courses at school. Work placement may also provide students with the opportunity of having learning outcomes/units of competency assessed in the workplace by accredited trainers and assessors.

### Principle 4

Work placement can provide opportunities for work-based assessment. Not all industry curriculum frameworks specify that it is mandatory for competencies to be assessed in the workplace. Assessment events should relate to overall course planning and the purpose of the work placement. In a competency-based course, assessment of competencies is criterion-referenced. This means that a participant's performance is judged against a prescribed standard not against the performance of other participants.

The purpose of assessment is to judge competence on the basis of performance against the performance criteria set out under each element of competency. A participant is judged either competent or not yet competent. Competency-based assessment is based on the requirements of the workplace. Competence incorporates all aspects of work performance, including problem-solving and the capacity to apply skills and knowledge in both familiar and new situations. Assessment of competence involves the assessment of skills and knowledge combined.

Assessors should adopt an integrated or holistic approach to assessment. This means that a number of elements of competency or even several units of competency are assessed together. This method of assessment is encouraged in line with the concept of competence as the integration of a wide range of skills, knowledge and attitudes.