

Structured workplace learning coordinator

The structured workplace learning coordinator provides the linkage between the student, the school and other training providers, and the employer. The coordinator is the key figure in any structured workplace learning program.

The role of the structured workplace learning coordinator is to:

- plan and implement the development and delivery of structured workplace learning programs
- ensure that school personnel, teaching staff and curriculum personnel are familiar and up to date with the requirements of structured workplace learning
- develop and deliver appropriate information to employers, students and parent groups in regards to structured workplace learning programs, and
- manage the day to day requirements of the structured workplace learning program.

The responsibilities of the structured workplace learning coordinator include:

- finding placements
- liaising with employers
- preparing students for structured workplace learning
- providing support during the placement to both student and the employer
- being the main point of contact between the student, employer and the school
- promoting workplace learning programs to employers, and
- monitoring workplace assessments.

In order for the structured workplace learning coordinator to effectively develop and manage a program, they must be familiar with the conditions laid down in Part IVA of the *Education Act* 1958 and Ministerial Order 23. [Refer to Section E]

Preparation before structured workplace learning

Prior to commencing a program, the structured workplace learning coordinator needs to:

- ensure that workplace supervisors have been allocated for each student and that there are adequate levels of supervision to ensure the student's welfare and safety in a non-discriminatory and harassment free working environment
- liaise with supervising teachers to ensure that all information relevant to the student's assessment whilst on placement will be communicated to the structured workplace learning coordinator
- identify the students who are to undertake structured workplace learning and the industry areas where the placements are required
- identify employers interested in offering placements and arrange contact with the employers

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- contact the employers to explain the procedures and processes related to structured workplace learning
- ensure that the employer has indicated that they comply with the occupational health and safety requirements and standards under applicable legislation (*Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 1985*), and ensure this is noted on the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form
- match students to workplaces where possible
- involve the employer in the selection of the student where possible
- ensure that the employer and the student have clear expectations about the skills and competencies which the student is expected to gain in the workplace and that the student will be given the opportunity to acquire these skills and competencies
- prepare the student to be aware of occupational health and safety rules and regulations by showing the video *Workwise – workplace safety for students*, and ensure they have completed the accredited occupational health and safety training relevant to the workplace **before** commencing their placement
- ensure that the student is 'work ready' and understands workplace behaviour and etiquette
- ensure that the student is aware that they are representing their school while on placement, and must continue to observe school policies and codes of conduct. **In particular, students should not use the internet or other electronic communication for accessing illegal, offensive or inappropriate material.**
- ensure that the structured workplace learning arrangement form for each student is correctly filled out and signed by all the relevant parties, and that copies of the form have been given to the employer and to the student and, where the student is under eighteen years of age, to the parent
- ensure the student and the workplace supervisor are aware of the assessment procedures and the timing of the assessment.
- ensure that teachers who visit the student undertaking structured workplace learning know what to expect of the workplace and are aware of workplace issues
- ensure that the student understands his/her rights and responsibilities, and
- ensure that the student knows what to do in case of lateness at work, absence and/or an accident, and is aware of strategies to deal with problems which may arise, and who to contact in a crisis.

Activities during structured workplace learning

During a placement, the structured workplace learning coordinator should:

- visit the student during the placement or ensure the student is visited by one of the teachers from school
- provide ongoing support to the employer/workplace supervisor if required
- organise for the assessment of the student to take place where appropriate

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- be available to be the first point of contact in case anything goes wrong, and
- ensure that all correct procedures are followed if anything does go wrong.

Debriefing following structured workplace learning

The structured workplace learning coordinator should:

- conduct a debriefing session for the student (a student self-evaluation survey is available in section F)
- finalise assessment and communicate results to the appropriate people
- ensure that letters of thanks are written to the employer, and
- follow up with the employer upon completion.

This is an excellent way to retain the employer for future placements. Employers also like to know what the student has gained from the placement.

Principal

The principal has a pivotal role in the organisation of structured workplace learning programs. Although the principal would rely on the structured workplace learning coordinator to organise the arrangements for the placement, it is nevertheless very important that the principal be assured that all the relevant guidelines and procedures are being followed.

Principals should ensure that the structured workplace learning coordinators are familiar with the conditions laid down part IVA of the *Education Act 1958* and Ministerial Order No. 23. Failure to abide by these conditions may render null and void an arrangement.

Responsibilities prior to the placement

Prior to entering into an arrangement on a structured workplace learning placement, the principal must be satisfied that:

- the proposed placement will provide structured workplace learning suitable to the needs of the accredited course of study for which the arrangement is proposed, within the time frame specified in that arrangement and according to the capabilities of the student

It is important that the needs of students with disabilities are considered – refer to Section C

- the distribution of structured workplace learning days during the current calendar year under the proposed arrangement, and any other arrangements which have occurred or are likely to occur, does not disadvantage the student with regard to the balance of that student's educational program at his or her school
- the student has the capability to undertake the structured workplace learning as specified within the arrangement and to do so without exposing others in the workplace to any extraordinary risk
- appropriate procedures for making and recording any of the assessments of the performance of the student under the arrangement which are required for the accredited course of study are established and are applied for the term of the arrangement
- both the employer and the nominated supervisor of the student in the work place are aware of his or her obligations to the pupil under the arrangement

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- appropriate arrangements have been made for the student to travel to and from the workplace
- the student has undertaken training in accredited occupational health and safety relevant to the workplace where the pupil will be employed under a structured workplace learning arrangement before the arrangement can be entered into, and
- the employer is provided with any necessary medical information that relates to the student undertaking structured workplace learning, including any condition that could require treatment.

The principal must also ensure that the employer certifies in the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form (refer to Section D) that he/she understands and accepts his/her responsibilities (also see Section B).

If the employer certification is not completed to the principal's satisfaction, the principal may either choose not to proceed with the arrangement, or negotiate with the employer directly, or negotiate through the structured workplace learning coordinator to resolve the matter. For example, if an employer is unwilling or unable to ensure that the student will be provided with safety shoes, and the principal is satisfied that apart from this, the student will be undertaking a quality placement, then the principal may proceed with the arrangement and ensure that the student is provided with safety shoes from elsewhere. The principal therefore may use his/her discretion if the employer certification is not completed satisfactorily, provided the welfare of the student remains uncompromised.

Responsibilities during the placement

During a structured workplace learning placement, the principal should ensure that:

- the student is visited by the structured workplace learning coordinators or teachers from the school
- ongoing support is provided to the employer/workplace supervisor and the student where required
- formal assessment of the student is undertaken where appropriate, and
- correct procedures are followed if anything does go wrong.

Responsibilities at the conclusion of the placement

At the conclusion of a structured workplace learning placement, the principal should ensure that:

- a debriefing session is held for the student, to discuss both the student's report of their experience and any other feedback available regarding their workplace performance, and
- assessment is undertaken and results communicated to the appropriate people in a timely manner (Refer to Section C).

Employer

The employer's role in the successful delivery of a structured workplace learning program cannot be underestimated. Therefore, structured workplace learning coordinators, principals and school administrators should seek opportunity where possible to develop extensive partnerships within local networks to support employers in providing quality work placements for students. The work

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of the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) may be a useful starting point to assist with developing quality employer partnerships.

The employer should provide supervision of the student on structured workplace learning and ensure that the student is provided with opportunities to acquire skills and competencies required by the program that the student is undertaking. The employer must also ensure that the skills and competencies required by the VET program are assessed and the results communicated to the structured workplace learning coordinator.

Contractual undertakings

By completing the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form (Section D) the employer certifies to the principal that he/she:

- understands and complies with the occupational health and safety requirements
- will identify, assess and control related risks wherever possible, and where risks can not be controlled, will inform the school prior to the placement commencing
- has read and understood DE&T guidelines for employers and will ensure that sufficient planning, induction, supervision and safe systems of work are provided at all times
- will consider and take into account the competency, maturity and physical capabilities of the student, and the students activities will be planned and carried out with this in mind
- will nominate a supervisor to ensure that employer obligations are carried out
- will provide appropriate information, training, instruction and supervision in relation to occupational health and safety, and will provide appropriate equipment and clothing for the student
- will ensure that the placement is undertaken in a non-discriminatory and harassment free environment
- will permit the principal or representative to access the workplace or contact the student at any reasonable time during the placement
- will ensure that the arrangement is not used as a substitute for the employment of employees and/or the payment of appropriate wages
- will ensure that the maximum number of structured workplace learning students at the place of work does not exceed one student for every three full-time employees (or part thereof)
- will notify the teacher in charge of structured workplace learning as soon as is possible if the pupil is absent, injured or becomes ill during the placement
- will consult with the principal and the teacher in charge of structured workplace learning if they consider it necessary to terminate the arrangement before the specified time, and
- undertakes to pay the student a minimum of \$5 per day.

Responsibilities prior to the placement

Prior to the commencement of the structured workplace learning placement, the employer should ensure that:

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- the structured workplace learning coordinator and the student are aware of any special requirements related to the workplace, including starting and finishing times, special items of clothing, and any need for confidentiality
- a workplace supervisor or mentor has been allocated to the student and that this person is aware of what is required during the placement, and
- both the structured workplace learning coordinator and the student have been negotiated with on the nature of the on-the-job training, and the enhancement or acquisition of the skills and competencies required by the program undertaken by the student.

Responsibilities during the placement

During the structured workplace learning placement, the employer should ensure that:

- opportunities are provided for the student to acquire or enhance the skills and competencies required by the program undertaken by the student
- adequate support is given to the student during the placement
- correct procedures are followed if the student is injured
- the structured workplace learning coordinator is contacted immediately if any problems arise, so that the problems may be dealt with promptly, and
- formal assessment takes place and the results communicated to the structured workplace learning coordinator.

Responsibilities after the placement

After the structured workplace learning placement, the employer should ensure that:

- the assessment is discussed with the student
- the placement is discussed with the student and it is determined if the student was satisfied with the placement.

Student

The roles and responsibilities presented in this section can be used as a reference guide when developing preparation lessons for students undertaking structured workplace learning.

A student undertaking structured workplace learning as part of an accredited course has the opportunity to:

- learn and apply knowledge and skills which are relevant to the workplace
- try out career choices before leaving school
- develop contacts with potential employers
- be exposed to the 'real' world of work, and mix with adults in a mature environment
- demonstrate mastery of specific skills and competencies related to the accredited course which they are undertaking
- undertake relevant courses which count towards their exit credential and articulate into further education and training, and

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- undertake a relevant curriculum which develops skills appropriate for life-long learning.

Student preparation prior to placement

Prior to the structured workplace learning placement, the student should:

- communicate to the structured workplace learning coordinator/teacher any special requirements they may have for the placement

This could include any restrictions on the type of placement (locality etc) and the reasons (cultural, religious etc). While recognising the importance of a placement broadening the student's horizons and experiences, the structured workplace learning coordinator should nevertheless also acknowledge the student's requirements within reason.

- ensure that the structured workplace learning arrangement forms contain all the correct personal contact details and that a copy of the form, once it has been filled out and signed by all the relevant parties, is given to the student, or the parent where the student is under eighteen years of age
- keep to hand the structured workplace learning coordinator's contact details, particularly if the placement is undertaken outside school hours
- meet with the workplace supervisor on site before commencing the placement

At this meeting the following can be discussed:

- ~ starting and finishing times
 - ~ arrangements for meal breaks
 - ~ clothing requirements
 - ~ actual tasks to be performed by the student
 - ~ the workplace assessment
 - ~ where to report on the first day
 - ~ any equipment/tools which the student may be required to bring, and
 - ~ any special requirements the student may have (within reason)
- use the pre meeting with the workplace supervisor as an opportunity to both work out the best way to reach the workplace and see how long it takes to get there.

Note: If the student has any concerns regarding the placement, the student should discuss them with the structured workplace learning coordinator at this stage.

Responsibilities during the placement

Students need to be aware that they are representing their school while on structured workplace learning and must continue to observe school policies and code of conducts. **In particular students should not use the internet or other electronic communications for accessing illegal, offensive or otherwise inappropriate material.**

Students should also follow general workplace rules and understand protocols regarding the internet. They need to be aware that some work placements might use sensitive information that needs to remain private and confidential.

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The student should endeavour to:

- behave like an employee as much as possible and follow the rules of the workplace and the directions of the workplace supervisor and the other employees
- perform tasks which will enable the student's skills and competencies to be assessed where appropriate
- display the right attitude during the placement
- show enthusiasm and initiative
- be willing to learn
- ask for immediate clarification whenever unsure about instructions
- ask for jobs if there is nothing to do
- be polite and courteous to all work colleagues and customers
- wear clothing appropriate to the workplace
- be punctual and regular in attendance
- contact the employer and the structured workplace learning supervisor if they are going to be late or absent, and let both know when they will arrive at work
- take only the allocated time for all meal breaks
- be present at work for the normal hours of work for that job, unless negotiated otherwise, and
- follow the rules and regulations of the workplace, in particular, those relating to occupational health and safety, and equal opportunity.

The student should also endeavour to:

- report any accidents immediately to the workplace supervisor and the structured workplace learning coordinator
- respect the confidentiality of any information about the workplace
- discuss any problems which arise immediately, with the workplace supervisor and the structured workplace learning coordinator
- use all opportunities to undertake tasks in the workplace which enable mastery of the skills and competencies required
- ensure that the skills and competencies being assessed are recorded in the logbook and are signed off, dated and the results communicated to the structured workplace learning coordinator
- encourage feedback from the workplace supervisor throughout the placement, not just at the very end, and
- ask the supervisor for a reference if it is appropriate.

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Responsibilities upon completion of a placement

Upon completion of a structured workplace learning placement, the student should:

- discuss the placement with the employer
- discuss aspects of the placement with the structured workplace learning coordinator, teachers and fellow students
- reflect upon the experiences in the workplace, and
- write a letter of thanks to the workplace supervisor.

Parents/guardian

Before the placement

The parent could share their own experiences of work with the student and allay any uncertainties the student may have.

During the placement

The parent should discuss the day's activities with the student and, if any problems are identified, encourage the student to follow correct procedures to deal with the problem.

After the placement

The parent should discuss the placement with the student and ensure that the student has reflected sufficiently upon his or her experiences in the workplace.

Educational sector administration

The regional offices of DE&T, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and the Association of Independent Schools in Victoria have a role ensuring that all schools and teachers under their jurisdiction are familiar with the Education (Workplace Learning) Act 2003 and Ministerial Order 23 relating to structured workplace learning. If you have any queries contact the relevant office listed below.

Contact phone numbers

DE&T – Regional Later Years Consultants	
Barwon South Western 5272 8348	Gippsland 5127 0400
Goulbourn North East 5761 2117	Loddon Campaspe Mallee 5440 3110
Central Highlands Wimmera 5352 5644	Northern Metropolitan 9488 9433
Eastern Metropolitan 9881 0228	Western Metropolitan 9291 6504
Southern Metropolitan 9794 3538	
Non – Government Schools	
Catholic Education Commission Victoria 9267 0265	Association of Independent Schools 9825 7222

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Checklist for structured workplace learning coordinators

Task	Completed	Progress	Action
1. Set dates for structured workplace learning (SWL) program			
2. Induct students: - outline the SWL program - explain student tasks and responsibilities, and - arrange completion of appropriate VET OHS Module			
3. Inform staff of SWL program, their tasks and any anticipated outcomes			
4. Inform parents of SWL program: eg: information evening, school newsletter, letter sent home			
5. Set up a database or spreadsheet to record placements, employer contacts and dates			
6. Ensure employers have been contacted about the SWL program. Check that: - the correct SWL Arrangement Form and Employer Guidelines have been sent and received - all placements are suitable in regards to OH&S and VET program students are undertaking, and - employers have an OH&S orientation program available to students on the first day.			
7. Organise a system for principal to receive, review, sign and return SWL forms.			
8. Send a copy of the completed SWL form to both employer and student.			
9. Set up a visitation and assessment roster: - distribute all necessary documentation to any other staff involved - organise assessment of students, and - ensure students and employers have a copy of assessment / visitation dates.			
10. Collate and send assessment results to all stakeholders.			
11. Organise debrief of students at conclusion of placement: - record any information on suitable and unsuitable placements for future reference.			
12. Provide students with evaluation of placement as evidence for their personal portfolios.			
13. File and store SWL Forms and copies of evaluations in a bound register.			
14. Write a report on SWL placements, issues and strategies for improvement.			