

Section A

Overview

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Background to the Work Experience Resources Manual

This Manual has been produced to support and complement the successful development and delivery of work experience programs in secondary schools across the state of Victoria.

It has been designed to:

- advise schools of the legislative requirements which govern the delivery of work experience programs in secondary schools in Victoria
- outline the necessary requirements for implementing a quality work experience program
- clarify how work experience operates under Ministerial Order 56 – Work Experience Arrangements
- complement careers and work education in the school curriculum
- provide copies of relevant arrangement forms and other administrative documents
- provide sample forms for students and employers
- provide suggested guidelines for the evaluation of the work experience activity.

What is work experience?

Work experience for school students in Victoria began in the mid 1970s as a way of enabling students to explore and experience the world of work. The provision of between one or two weeks 'out' at work has become part of many school programs over the last 30 years. It is generally undertaken in Years 9 or 10. The *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* requires that 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.**

Work experience involves secondary school students in short-term industry placements, which broadens their experience and understanding of the world of work and career opportunities. Placements with parents and relatives are not recommended as the student gains more benefit from meeting new challenges in new environments. In general, students will observe different aspects of work within the industry and may assist with tasks allocated by their supervisor.

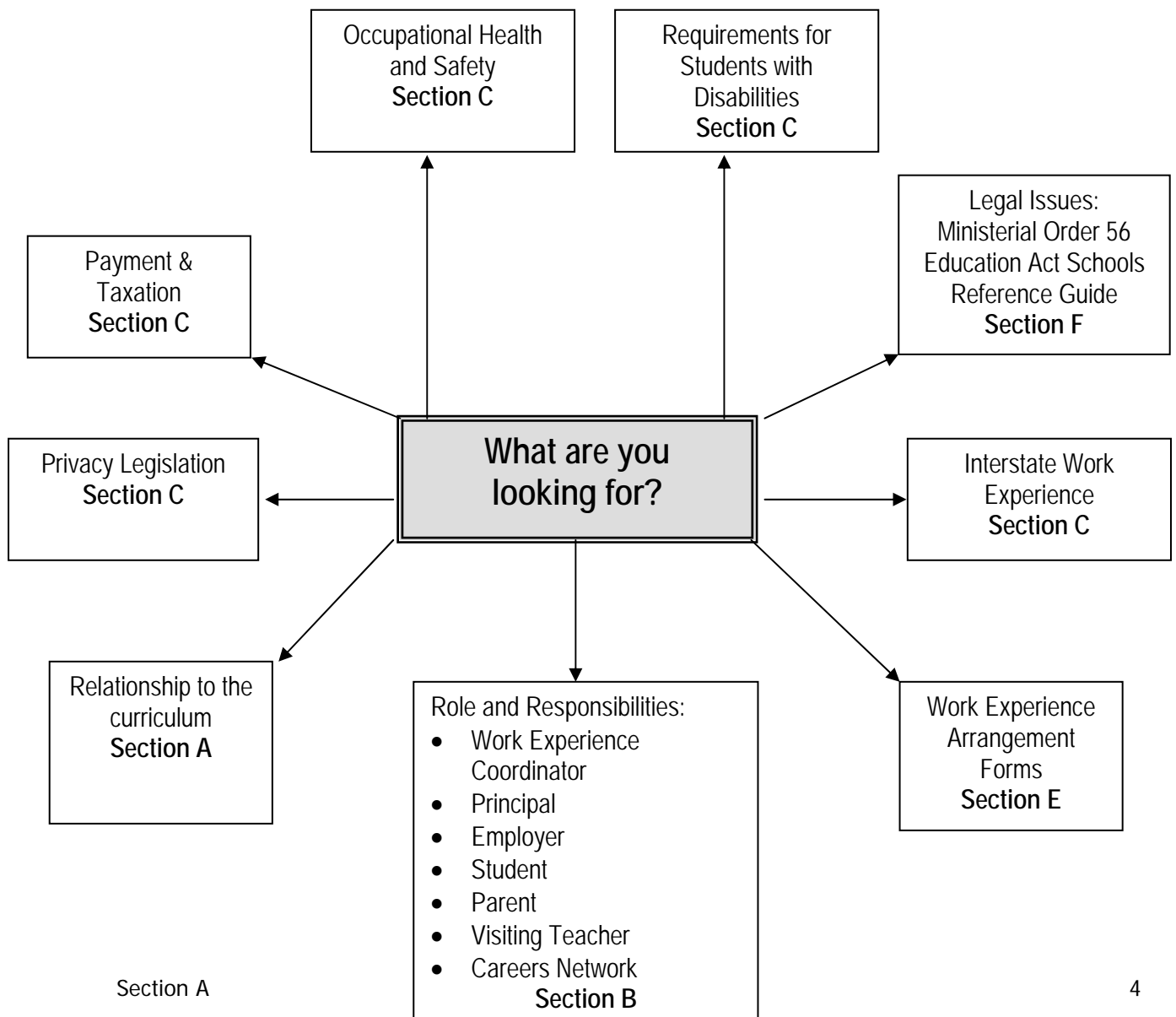
This is different to structured workplace learning, undertaken by students who are undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools programs and in VCAL. These students must undertake tasks or activities that enable them to acquire skills and knowledge in an industry setting as part of an accredited vocational training program.

Work experience students are assessed or evaluated by the school according to school-based criteria. The employers are also asked to provide feedback on the performance of the students in the workplace.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) remains committed to assisting Victorian educators to implement their programs, and acknowledges the role work experience plays in career planning and subject and course selection by students. Given its rapidly changing nature, every involvement a student has in the world of work is an opportunity to enhance the student's awareness and understanding and contribute to his/her portfolio of skills.

The information contained in this Resources Manual pertains to Victorian students undertaking a work experience program in Victoria only. Opportunities for interstate work experience exist but no international arrangements are possible (refer to Section C).

A quick reference guide to this Resources Manual



Benefits of Work Experience

The Victorian Government has committed itself to specific goals and targets for education and training to improve the educational outcomes for all students. Work experience contributes to the provision of more flexible pathways for young people so that they are able to choose from a range of post compulsory education and training options.

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (Adelaide, April 1999) indicates that when students leave school, they should:

“... have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning. The achievement of the national goals of schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia’s social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students.”

Benefits for students:

- improve understanding of the work environment and employers’ expectations
- provide an opportunity to explore possible career options
- increase self understanding, maturity, independence and self confidence, especially in the workplace
- increase motivation to continue study and/or undertake further training
- increase understanding of the relevance of the school curriculum in relation to preparing young people for work
- increase understanding of recruitment practices in the workplace
- enhance opportunities for part-time and casual employment
- provide the opportunity to include the employer’s evaluation in job and course applications
- provide the opportunity to develop work-related competencies
- provide an opportunity to try out the workplace, prior to possibly undertaking a VET in Schools, VCAL or School Based New Apprenticeship program and structured workplace learning in Years 11 and 12.

Benefits for schools/teachers:

- improve knowledge and understanding of changing work environments and assist in developing a positive relationship between the school, local community and industry

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- provide the school with the opportunity to work collaboratively with parents in their students' schooling by assisting in finding work experience positions, helping students prepare for work experience and debriefing after the placement
- assist staff in assessing workplace suitability for student placements
- enable school curricula to be linked to the world of work, which enhances student learning.

Benefits for parents:

- provide the opportunity to discuss with their child the topic of work, including their own previous and current experiences in the workplace
- provide networking opportunities for their child when they commence organising their placement
- provide the opportunity to positively contribute to their child's secondary education
- enable a positive source of interactions to occur between parent and school staff
- provide the opportunity for families to be involved in discussions relating to flexible pathways for their child so that they are able to choose from a range of post compulsory education and training options as part of their transition from compulsory schooling to the workforce.

Benefits for employers:

- provide the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the education and development of students
- provide the opportunity to contribute to the development of students' workplace skills
- enable employers to assist young people in their career decision-making process
- provide an opportunity for dialogue with teachers on aspects of work readiness and other matters related to work
- give employers the opportunity to build an ongoing relationship with a student, that may progress to the student undertaking a VET in schools or VCAL programs or working with the organisation
- create opportunities for building industry/school partnerships that provide for local community needs and endeavours
- encourage students to become involved with businesses in their local community.

Benefits for the community:

- provide links with the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), local government, industry, unions, education and training providers to maximise employment and training outcomes for young people at the local level
- provide career counselling and targeted support for young people who are at risk of leaving school during their compulsory years.

Note: The information contained in this section may be useful when developing aims and objectives for the introduction or maintenance of a work experience program. School coordinators may also find the information useful when preparing resource materials for students' use, such as log books, parent information letters and presentations to staff meetings.

Abbreviations

Listed below are some of the key terms and names of major organizations associated with work experience:

ACACA	Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities
AISV	Association of Independent Schools of Victoria
AQTF	Australian Qualifications and Training Framework
ARF	Australian Recognition Framework
CBA	Competency-based assessment
CBT	Competency-based training
CEAV	Careers Education Association of Victoria
CECV	Catholic Education Commission Victoria
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations
DIIRD	Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
GTA	Group Training Australia
GTC	Group Training Company
IRV	Industrial Relations Victoria
ITAB	Industry Training Accreditation Board
ITB	Industry Training Board
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NETTFORCE	National Employment and Training Taskforce
NTF	National Training Framework
OTTE	Office of Training and Tertiary Education
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
STA	State/Territory Training Agency/Authority
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
ENTER	Equivalent National Tertiary Entrance Rank
VASS	Victorian Administrative Software System
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education

VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Glossary

Ages For Work Experience: Students are eligible to undertake work experience if they are of or over 14 years of age and have the written consent of a parent/guardian. Students up to the age of 21 are eligible to undertake work experience.

When a student aged 14 is undertaking work experience, the employer and any other person who will have direct supervision or control of the student, where that supervision is not in itself directly supervised, is required to undergo Criminal Record Checks before work experience can commence. The requirements of the Declared High Risk Industries also apply (refer Section C).

Students of or over the age of 21 may undertake work experience as part of their educational program if conditions as per Ministerial Order 56 are met (refer to Section C).

A Job Well Done: An occupational health and safety program for secondary school students with disabilities or impairments. DEECD has developed this resource to assist teachers deliver the compulsory occupational health and safety training which accompanies Ministerial Order 56.

Career Education: The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences that will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life (MCEETYA Career Education Taskforce, 1998).

Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV): The Victorian Association of Careers Advisers. Their mission is to support careers practitioners to improve and extend the quality of their program, promote career development as a lifelong exercise and increase the likelihood of appropriate career choices by students and adult learners.

Career Education Quality Framework (CEQF): The CEQF was designed to provide teachers, careers specialists, school leaders and school communities with a practical tool for self-assessing careers education and developing action plans for improvement.

Criminal Records Check (CRC): The *Child Employment Act 2003* and Ministerial Order 56 changed the arrangements for students under 15 who are undertaking work experience. The employer and any person who will have direct supervision or control of the student, where that supervision is not in itself directly supervised, will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Check before work experience commences (refer to Section C).

Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD): This Victorian Government department is the body responsible for issuing approval for students who wish to undertake work experience in factories or other declared high-risk industries. Contact details are: Child Employment Officer, Industrial Relations Victoria, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, GPO Box 4509RR, Melbourne 3001, Telephone 1800 287 287.

Declared high-risk industries: These are places of employment where it has been deemed there is a higher than usual risk of student injury (refer Section C, and to Ministerial Order 56 in Section F).

Duty of care: Section 4.6.1.2 of the Victorian Government School Reference Guide states that:

Whenever a student–teacher relationship exists, the teacher has a special duty of care. This is defined as: “A teacher is to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a student under the teacher’s charge from risks of injury that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen” (*Richards v State of Victoria* (1969) VR 136 at p. 141).

Job Watch Inc: An employment rights legal centre based in Melbourne but covering the whole of Victoria. Its services include a community legal education program aimed at educating both prospective workers and workers about their employment rights. The program includes talks to schools and community organisations on employment issues, providing publications on employment rights such as information sheets, booklets and posters. Job Watch also operates a free and confidential telephone advice and referral service.

The hours of operation are Monday to Friday between 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (except Tuesday 12.00 noon to 2 pm) and Wednesday evening from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm. The telephone advice numbers: 9662 1933 and 1800 331 617 (STD callers only).

Job Watch’s email address is admin@job-watch.org.au; its website is <http://www.job-watch.org.au>

Key Competencies: These are the Mayer Workplace Competencies that enable students to apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace. They are useful for designing an assessment/evaluation tool for employers to complete in regard to the student, for the student/parent/teacher to read later, or to use as a reference for future employment. The competencies are:

- Collecting, analysing and organising activities
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- Working with others and in teams
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Problem solving
- Using technology.

Ministerial Order 55: covers the delivery of structured workplace learning in Victorian secondary schools.

Ministerial Order 56: This covers the delivery of work experience programs in Victorian secondary schools, and includes procedures for students under the age of 15 years, regarding declared high risk industries, criminal records checks and work permits (refer to Section F).

myfuture: This is an Australian careers website – <http://www.myfuture.edu.au>

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S): Before a student undertakes a work experience program, it is vital that the student is made aware of the OH&S rules and regulations which relate to their workplace. Furthermore, students are required to successfully complete a DEECD approved OH&S program prior to commencing the placement. The programs are *A Job Well Done* for students with disabilities or impairments and [safe@work](#) for all other students.

OZJAC: This computerised database includes information on all accredited courses, training providers and occupations. This information is also linked to industry, career and general information. For enquiries, contact Good Guides Group 1800 682 133, Helpline 1800 730 071.

Privacy legislation: Victoria has two Acts dealing with privacy of information – the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (non-health information handled by bodies not health service providers) and the *Health Records Act 2001* (health information and most personal information handled by health service providers). Commonwealth privacy legislation does NOT apply to the Victorian Government or Victorian Government funded services (refer to Section C).

Public liability insurance: A general term applied to forms of third party liability insurance with respect to both bodily injury and property damage liability. It protects the insured against suits brought by members of the public. Section C provides details of arrangements for public liability insurance for work experience.

Regional Careers Network: Across Victoria there are over 30 regional groups of school careers coordinators who meet on a regular basis. A key function of the groups is to coordinate the timing of work experience programs in their region. This is to minimise the demands made on employers, and to maximise the number of places available for student placements within each year. Networks can also work together on designing evaluation forms for employers and students, and other associated documents. The CEAV can assist teachers to identify their local network.

Risk Assessment Form: A completed Risk Assessment Form must accompany the request to DIIRD for students under 15 years of age who wish to undertake work experience in factories or other high risk industries, as per Ministerial Order 56. The risk assessment form can be found in Section E.

[safe@work](#): An occupational health and safety program developed by DEECD to assist secondary school students prepare for work experience and increase their awareness of OH&S issues in the workplace. Under Ministerial Order 56 all secondary school students undertaking work experience must satisfactorily complete [safe@work](#) before commencing their work experience.

School year: The portion of the year beginning with the first school day of that year and ending with the last school day of that year. DEECD mandates those dates each year. A work experience placement can be conducted in the term holidays, but **not** after the last school day of Term 4 or before the first school day of the next year (*i.e.* **not** during the summer vacation period).

Self-insurer: (see WorkCover) A self-insurer is an individual or organisation which does not contribute to the State Government WorkCover scheme but has instead made its own arrangements.

Structured workplace learning: The involvement of students in structured on-the-job training during which they are expected to demonstrate their learning of a designated set of skills and competencies related to the course accredited by the VRQA which they are undertaking.

Taxation: Taxation requirements for employers in regard to students in structured workplace learning are set out in Section C of this Resources Manual.

WorkCover: If a student is injured while attending a work experience program, the employer responsible must complete an injury report and forward a copy to the principal of the appropriate school. Government school principals should ensure that the injury report is recorded on CASES. WorkCover does not cover people travelling to and from work. The processes to be followed when lodging a WorkCover claim can be found in the *Schools Reference Guide*, Section 4.9.2.4 (refer to Section C). 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.

Work experience: The involvement of secondary school students in short-term industry placement, which supports their experience and understanding of the world of work and career opportunities in general. It is generally undertaken in Year 9 or Year 10. Work experience is not part of an accredited VET in Schools or VCAL program.

Work Experience Arrangement Form: The Work Experience Arrangement Form is located in Section E of this manual. Schools can make copies of the forms and can incorporate the school logo, **however the wording on the form must be maintained.** Forms can also be downloaded from the DEECD website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>

Work Experience and the Curriculum

A quality careers education program should incorporate work experience as an integral part of the school curriculum, rather than conducting it as a stand-alone activity. The work experience coordinator should work with the relevant staff on integration of work education and work experience into their curriculum. Lessons should be conducted on occupational health and safety issues, be pitched to match selected workplaces, and on other workplace issues such as harassment.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards recognise that students in years 9 and 10 have a growing interest in the future and in particular the pathways they intend to pursue, so they increasingly are aware of the world outside school. For some this means preparation for work of work-specific training, and for others it means the preparation for post-compulsory schooling on the way to a career. In this sense, adolescents are more likely to judge learning activities and experiences in terms of where they will lead, and respond positively to a curriculum that links with, and has meaning for, their lives outside as well as in the school.

This is the stage of learning where schools can provide students with access to the knowledge and skills which all young Australians need as they take their first steps in adult life.

Work experience can be used to assist students to develop employability skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a positive foundation for their life-long learning. Schools are encouraged to develop a quality work experience program that is embedded in the mainstream curriculum program.

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