

Section D

Delivering Your Program

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This section is designed for work experience coordinators as a framework from which to develop and deliver a quality work experience program for students in secondary schools. It is anticipated that work experience coordinators/teachers will find the following steps useful in the development of their programs.

Program preparation

Timeframe: 12 months prior to program commencing

Step 1: Notification

Explain the school work experience program to students, parents and staff. This will ensure their involvement, commitment and a logical approach to the program requirements.

A variety of communication methods can be used, *e.g.* class and year level briefings, school newsletters, year level and parent information evenings and letters.

Copies of the parents' and employer brochures should be provided to students and parents (refer to Section E).

Step 2: Timing

The timing of the work experience program within the school year is critical in supporting students with work readiness and in the selection of senior school certificate programs.

1. Liaise with school timetabler, year 10 coordinator(s), or other year level and school staff in general, about the timing of placements. Some schools use the "block" system (*e.g.* all year 10 simultaneously, or in two lots), and some use the trickle system (students out on an *ad hoc* basis throughout the year), depending on the needs of the school. Refer to Section G for sample organisation of work experience.
- 2) Have the dates endorsed by the curriculum (or other appropriate) committee. Schools that use a block release system normally determine the dates for work experience during the preceding year to ensure that all teachers, students and parents know well in advance.
- 3) Liaise with other local schools (generally through regional careers networks) to avoid clashes in the timing of work experience with other schools, if timetabling block release.
- 4) Organise appropriate numbers of forms, and printed handouts for students, parents and employers to inform them about the program.
- 5) Organise briefing sessions with the students the year prior so that students can begin to think about their placement and in some cases begin to make enquiries to employers. *Many popular workplaces, like the Zoo, the Melbourne Museum and Victoria Police, fill their work experience positions the year before.*
- 6) Work with appropriate staff on integration of work education and work experience into their curriculum and outline DEECD's occupational health and safety program and the schools' procedures for the delivery of this program.

Step 3: Obtaining Placements

Schools approach work experience placements differently. Some schools provide the placement based on an application system, while others rely on the students to provide their own placement. Communicate the process early enough for students to ensure they obtain a suitable placement that meets their individual needs.

- 1) Provide advice on obtaining placements and how to liaise with employers. (Refer to the *Sample Work Experience Student Booklet*: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>)
- 2) Ensure students have thought about how they will travel to and from the workplace.
- 3) Advise students under the age of 15, and their parents, of the Departmental requirement for a Criminal Records Check for employers and supervisors.
- 4) Advise students and their parents of Departmental requirements regarding country and interstate placements.
- 5) Advise students of payment arrangements, *i.e.* minimum \$5 per day except for Commonwealth Departments or bodies established under a Commonwealth Act and educational, charitable and non for profit organisations.

The above points could influence students and parents in the timing and selection of their work place.

Students with disabilities or impairments will require additional support in the selection of a suitable work place to cater for their individual disability (refer to Section C).

Step 4: Completing the Work Experience Arrangement Forms – Ministerial Order 56

Prior to students organising their placement, or once they have organised the placement, issue them with the Work Experience Arrangement Form and Employer Guidelines, so that the employer, the student's parent/guardian and the student can sign the form.

Issue students with their own copy of the Arrangement Form once it has been checked and signed by the principal. Send a completed copy of this form to the parents and employer if the student is under 18 years of age.

Step 5: Administration

- 1) Organise a procedure for the principal to receive, review, sign and return Work Experience Arrangement Forms to the work experience coordinator
- 2) Check that the principal has indicated the correct information regarding public liability and that all other parts of the Work Experience Arrangement Form have been completed
- 3) Set up a database to record all information on work experience placements, including whether host employers are difficult or unsuitable. Make sure students and employers are given copies of the Work Experience Arrangement Form. For further information on databases, ask your local regional careers group or ring the CEAV on (03) 9349 1900
- 4) Work Experience Arrangement Forms must be retained by the school for a period of at least five years in a bound register, as there is no statutory limit on the length of delay in submitting claims for WorkCover

- 5) When the program is operating, make sure the school switchboard staff know of your whereabouts at all times
- 6) Develop and distribute a Record of Contact form for visiting teachers to take to workplaces (refer to Section E)
- 7) Encourage students to write and thank employers at the end of the placement
- 8) As an end of year greeting, write to thank employers, including dates for your program for the next year if appropriate.

Step 6: Preparing Students for the Work Experience Placement

The work experience coordinator should:

- prepare students to be aware of occupational health and safety issues by showing the Video *Workwise – Workplace Safety for Students* located in the front of this Resource Manual, and ensure that students complete the DEECD occupational health and safety safe@work general and industry specific module. Students with disabilities or impairments should complete *A Job Well Done*
- prepare students to be conscious of potential risks and give them strategies to deal with these risks, such as the need to report perceived hazards or concerns to their supervisor without delay
- ensure students are aware of equal opportunity and unlawful harassment and discrimination and have been given strategies to deal with these, *e.g.* discuss with teacher who visits them or with the work experience coordinator
- ensure students are aware of privacy issues and of what personal information will need to be given to the employer (*e.g.* students with asthma or diabetes) to ensure their safety
- ensure each student is 'work ready' and understands workplace behaviour and etiquette
- ensure students and their workplace supervisors are aware of the 'school tasks' a student has to undertake while on work experience (*e.g.* completion of an assignment and journal)
- ensure students understand their rights and responsibilities and are aware of strategies to deal with problems which may arise
- detail procedures for students to contact the school if they have any concerns while in the workplace
- detail the procedure to be followed if a student is absent, to ensure they notify the employer and the teacher in charge of work experience straight away
- advise students to contact the school immediately if they have any concerns in relation to their placement.

Step 7: Preparing host employers

Communicate facts about the program, including its purpose, organisational details, insurance provisions, student's role, employer's evaluation and supervision arrangements for the student.

- 1) Inform employers that for work experience involving students under 15 years of age a Criminal Records Check for employers and supervisors is required by the Department (refer to Section F for further information on Criminal Records Checks)
- 2) Ensure that the employer acknowledges on the Work Experience Arrangement Form that he/she has read the Employer Guidelines provided by the school
- 3) The employer should undertake to pay the student a minimum of \$5 per day, if applicable. Commonwealth Departments or bodies established under a Commonwealth Act, educational, charitable and non for profit organisations should advise all students about the non payment of the minimum payment
- 4) The employer should contact the teacher in charge of work experience immediately regarding any issues affecting the student that arise in the workplace, or if a student is absent without notification
- 5) Consultation should occur with the school if it is deemed necessary to terminate the arrangement before the specified time
- 6) In the case where a work experience student is injured, the employer must contact the school, either the principal or teacher in charge of work experience immediately.

Final preparation for Work Experience

Timing: 4 to 6 weeks before the commencement of program

Step 1: Confirmation of placement

Confirm placement details with the employers. *It is vital to ensure that students with special learning needs have the most up to date information.*

Step 2: Final student briefing before placement

Conduct final briefings, during which final instructions are given. This could include:

- ensuring students have completed the occupational health and safety program
- ensuring students have all necessary documentation, including a copy of the Work Experience Arrangement Form, school assignment and school emergency contact details
- clarifying any transportation issues with students
- notifying students of the staff member who will be visiting or contacting them and the employer
- reinforcing with students the procedures for contacting the school in case of an emergency (or for absences).

During the placement

The student should:

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- introduce themselves to the employer, supervisor and other staff
- inform the employer and the workplace supervisor of the 'school tasks' to be undertaken while on work experience (*e.g.* completion of an assignment and journal)
- inform the school and employer of expected absences from work, or late arrivals
- inform the school and employer if any unexpected absences or lateness occurs
- report all accidents, 'near misses' and hazardous situations in the workplace to their supervisor and work experience coordinator
- report any grievances to the work experience coordinator, before attempting to handle it themselves in the workplace
- maintain diary or logbook and/or complete work experience assignment and other tasks which have been set by the school (a sample work experience log book is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/sensecyouth/careertrans/worklearn/>)
- undertake the activities set by the employer and/or supervisor in the workplace
- keep contact numbers of their parents/guardians, school and employer with them at all times during their placement. This is to allow students the opportunity to notify either of the parties above regarding any changes to working times and/or other issues which may arise.

The employer should:

- familiarise the student with the running of the organisation and introduce key staff involved
- induct the student into the workplace and ensure that occupational health and safety requirements are communicated (such as emergency procedures and names and location of first aiders)
- provide the student with appropriate clothing and protective equipment where required
- create opportunities for the student to acquire or to enhance skills
- familiarise themselves with the 'school tasks' the student has to undertake while on work experience (for example, completing a questionnaire or keeping a workplace journal)
- provide feedback about the student's performance, *i.e.* complete a student work experience evaluation and/or include a student reference, before the student completes the placement
- discuss the evaluation with the student.

Contacting and visiting students

Work experience coordinators should ensure that employers are aware of the Departmental requirement for schools to contact students (either in person or via telephone) during the placement. Employers should be made aware of their responsibility to provide a private space for the teacher to talk to the students. The teacher making contact should also encourage the employer to discuss the school work requirements the student has to complete, as well as the student's progress. Employers can discuss relevant issues with the student when completing the student evaluation or reference.

If other teachers are involved in contacting or visiting a student, the employer and student must be notified as to which staff member will contact them. Staff must be provided with the relevant

documentation to contact or visit the student. (Refer to Section E for Sample Record of Contact Form.) Staff must also be aware of work requirements so they can discuss the student's progress.

After the placement

The student should:

- evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of the workplace, and inform the work experience coordinator as to the suitability of the placement
- participate in a debrief/ evaluation of the placement at school (this may be in the form of a class presentation or report)
- save employer evaluations if available in their personal portfolio or managed individual pathways plan
- complete a letter of thanks to the employer and detail skills they have learned during the placement.

Debrief and follow up

Timing: within two weeks of conclusion of placement

Students should be provided with the opportunity to 'debrief' after their work experience placement. This will involve reflecting on:

- their learning in the workplace
- the impact on career planning and preparing their pathway plans or portfolios
- their senior school subject selection
- their work readiness
- comments made by the employer/ supervisor on the evaluation form
- any school work requirements for assessment
- written or verbal feedback from employers, parents or visiting staff members.

These reflections provide insight into the value of the placement for the student from the perspective of parents and employers.

Students should also be encouraged to share their experience with other students.

Summary of tasks for Work Experience coordinator

- Liaise with local schools (generally through regional careers network) to avoid clashes in the timing of work experience with other schools, if timetabling block release. This would usually be done sometime in semester 2 of the previous year.
- Ascertain the number of students who may be **under 15 years of age** during the scheduled work experience placement program. Commence the procedure for Criminal Records Checks for these students once employer and placement is known.
- Liaise with school timetabler, year 10 coordinator(s), or other year level and school staff in general, about the timing of placements. Have the dates endorsed by the curriculum (or other appropriate) committee.
- Organise appropriate numbers of forms, and printed handouts for students, parents and employers to inform them about the program.
- Organise briefing sessions with the students in the year prior to their work experience, so students can begin to think about their placement and in some cases begin to make enquiries to employers.
- Work with appropriate 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 like harassment. This may be suitable for embedding the [safe@work](#) program into the current curriculum.
- Organise the delivery and testing schedule for the [safe@work](#) program. Ensure that the industry specific module matches the student placement.
- Ensure that students with disabilities are adequately supported in their preparation for work experience and complete the occupational health and safety program *A Job Well Done*. Liaise with the welfare coordinator or student aide where appropriate.
- Develop and distribute clear procedures for students to follow should they have difficulties during their placement.
- Organise a procedure for the principal to receive, review, sign and return Work Experience Arrangement Forms to the work experience coordinator.
- Check that the principal has indicated the correct information regarding Public Liability and that all other parts of the Work Experience Arrangement Form – Ministerial Order 56 have been completed correctly.
- Set up a database to record all the information on work experience placements, including whether host employers are difficult or unsuitable. Make sure that students and employers are given copies of the Work Experience Arrangement Form- Ministerial Order 56, and the employer guidelines. For further information on databases, ask your local regional careers group, your regional later years consultant, the Catholic Education Office of Victoria, the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria, or ring the CEAV on (03) 9349 1900.
- Work Experience Arrangement Forms must be retained by the school for a period of at least five years in a bound register, as there is no statutory limit on the length of delay in submitting claims for WorkCover.

- When the program is operating, make sure the school switchboard staff know of your whereabouts at all times.
- Develop and distribute a form for visiting teachers to take to workplaces. This form could be used as a checklist to ensure that there is an adequate ratio of staff to students, and that other work experience guidelines are being adhered to.
- Encourage students to write and thank employers at the end of the placement.
- As an end of year greeting, write to thank employers, including dates for your program for the next year if appropriate.

Liaison with Employers

- Remember that the employer's priority is their core business.
- When making contact or visiting the employer, bear in mind the kind of business/industry they are in and recognise their peak busy times.
- Often employers need assistance in understanding the benefits of work experience learning for them and the student.
- Sell the benefits of work experience rather than just the 'good will angle'.
- Always provide clear, simple and concise information; employers don't have time to read lengthy documents.
- Don't leave phone messages (they could phone back when you're in class; find out when they will be available and phone them back).
- Don't promise anything you cannot deliver. Be aware of your own time constraints.
- Maintain regular contact: advise when employers should expect to receive forms and when the student will be in contact.
- Don't leave it until the end of the week to see if the student is okay!
- Employers mostly like to be visited in the workplace whilst the student is with them – this is also a good way to find out more about the industry.

Strategies to enhance and increase the employer network used by the school could include:

- nurturing existing relationships with employers by sending thank you cards at the end of the year and featuring their worksites in articles in school newspapers
- using the school community, including partners of teachers on staff, to establish other employment locations
- use your own network of dentist, hairdresser, accountant, mechanic and other suitable occupations
- publicising requests for placements in local papers
- using friends' and relatives' places of employment

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- liaising with other schools *via* regional careers group, to share employer lists.

Clear and concise documents should be provided to all employers, setting out the requirements for the school and the individual student. It is important that the employer provides a worksite with an appropriate ratio of staff to students, as per Ministerial Order No. 56 (refer to section F), a safe environment, meaningful work, adequate breaks and most importantly, adequate supervision.

The work experience coordinator should ensure that these requirements can be met by checking that the employer acknowledgment section of the Work Experience Arrangement Form has been completed, prior to the placement commencing. It is important that 'first time' employers are fully apprised of the Work Experience Arrangement Form and that occupational health and safety requirements are fully understood.

Checklist of tasks for Work Experience coordinator

Task	Completed	In progress	Action
1. Set dates for work experience program – liaise with regional careers groups to ensure dates are optimised for your school.			
2. Work experience induction program – students – outline program – student tasks and responsibilities explained – outline requirements for Criminal Records Check where the student is under 15 – outline safe@work and <i>A Job Well Done</i> program requirements for your school.			
3. Inform all staff – of work experience program, their tasks and the anticipated outcomes.			
4. Inform parents of work experience program – options through information evening, school newsletter, letter sent home.			
5. Conduct OH&S program – organise the delivery and supervision of tests of the safe@work program general module and relevant industry specific module – organise <i>A Job Well Done</i> for students with disabilities.			
6. Conduct safe@work tests – issue school endorsed certificates to successful students – file a copy of these certificates for school records.			
7. Set up a database to record placements, employer contacts and dates: – record number of Criminal Records Checks required – record number of 'high risk' permits assessments required – complete Criminal Records Checks – complete 'high risk' permits.			
8. Ensure employers have been contacted about program. Check: – Criminal Records Check has been completed where required – correct Arrangement Form, Ministerial Order 56 and employer guidelines have been sent and received – all placements are suitable in regards to OH&S program students are undertaking. – employers have an OH&S induction program prepared for students on their first day.			

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Task	Completed	In progress	Action
9. Organise a system for principal to receive, review, sign and return work experience arrangement forms.			
10. Send copy of completed arrangement form to employer and parent/ guardian or students of 18 years and older.			
11. Set up workplace visit and assessment roster. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – if including other staff, distribute all necessary documentation – organise assessment of students – ensure students and employers have a copy of assessment / workplace visit dates. 			
12. Collate and send evaluations of student placements.			
13. Organise debrief of students at conclusion of placement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Record information on suitable and unsuitable placements for future reference. - Collect and organize assessment of work experience journals, diaries and work requirements. 			
14. Organise letters of thanks / appreciation for employers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student letters - School letters. 			
15. Provide students with evaluation of placement as evidence for their personal portfolios.			
16. File and archive Work Experience Arrangement Forms and copies of evaluations in a bound register.			
17. Write a report on work experience program, placements, issues and strategies for improvement.			

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