

# About work placements

Work placements provide students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained from their studies in a work environment. Unlike general work experience, work placements are 'structured learning experiences'. This means that they have specific learning outcomes to be achieved in relation to a qualification.



## What are they?

Work placements form part of the overall assessment of a student's competency in elements of the Certificate III in Individual Support. They require students to demonstrate they can complete particular tasks in real workplace settings to the standard expected by the industry. Evidence provided by the student's workplace supervisor during the placement contributes to the RTO's assessment of the student's competency.

Work placements are conducted in one or more blocks to meet the 120 hour mandatory work requirement. Students undertake a range of agreed tasks during each block and workplace supervisors provide feedback on their performance of these tasks.

Student work placements as part of the Certificate III in Individual Support are unpaid, as they meet the requirements of the Fair Work Act 2009.

## How do they work?

Different RTOs send their students out on work placement at different points within the course, with different benefits arising from the timing of placements. For example:

- Some employers prefer work placements to take place toward the completion of the course to maximise their ability to employ suitable students.
- Others see value in providing students with exposure to the job early in their training to test their commitment to the industry.
- Some suggest that the delivery of work placements in three blocks across the course is ideal as it allows students to learn, apply and reflect on their training along the way.

While the timing of work placements is a matter for each RTO to determine based on their student needs and industry feedback, employers and RTOs agree that it is essential that students cover fundamental theoretical components of their course (such as following safe work practices) before commencing their first placement.

### [Vocational placements \(fairwork.gov.au\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au)

You can read more about the criteria for vocational placements under the Fair Work Act 2009 in this fact sheet.

### A different approach to scheduling work placements

Based on their learnings from the National Disability Services' Disability Workforce Innovation Project, one of the participating RTOs has changed their approach to work placement scheduling. They have moved away from block placements, which were not working well for their students.

Their new approach involves students spending two days a week in first term learning core subjects such as workplace health and safety and participating in skill set workshops in manual handling which prepares them for the workplace.

In the second term, when students are considered job ready, they spend one day a week in class and one or more days a week on work placement.

This enables a weekly check-in with students when they attend class during the work placement. The RTO also visits students on-site every three weeks across the duration.

(Read more in the [National Disability Services case study](#))

