

Clear roles, responsibilities and expectations

The ability to collaborate in the design and delivery of quality work placements is enhanced when the RTO and Service Provider (and the student) have clearly delineated and agreed roles and responsibilities. Having all parties understand and carry out these roles and responsibilities is a critical factor in successful work placements.

There are also a range of legislative issues that need to be discussed and agreed upon before work placements commence.

In this section you will find guidance on the roles, responsibilities and expectations of RTOs and service providers.



Roles and responsibilities of RTOs

RTOs are responsible for assessing students' readiness for work placement opportunities and ensuring they are prepared for placement

While students are not expected to be fully capable, they are expected to have received sufficient training to safely undertake the placement and to work safely with vulnerable clients.

Properly preparing students for placement helps alleviate any anxiety the students may feel about entering a workplace.

RTOs must inform prospective students about work placement requirements before they enrol

As part of the enrolment process, RTOs have a responsibility to inform prospective students of specific requirements they need to meet to successfully complete the program. For example, students have to successfully undergo pre-employment checks (such as a police check) in order to undertake a work placement in disability or aged care service and may need to meet proof of vaccination requirements.

Students who enrol when they do not meet these requirements may be unable to complete the required work placement and unable to gain the qualification.

RTOs need to match their students to suitable placements

Service providers will want to know about the students being recommended for placement and may wish to be involved in the student selection, including interviewing potential candidates.

RTOs should discuss selection of students with the Service Provider when establishing work placement arrangements.

RTOs need to understand workplace assessment requirements

The Mandatory Work Requirements for the Certificate III in Individual Support are contained in the core unit of competency CHCCCS023 - Support independence and wellbeing.

It is the RTO's role to understand and comply with the formal assessment requirements for this unit and to ensure that workplace supervisors are clear about their role in assessment. The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) provides guidance on assessment of competency using supplementary evidence provided by another party. In the case of work placements, the other party is the workplace supervisor. ASQA explains:

“Assessment of evidence, and judgement about competency, must be undertaken by a person who meets the specific requirements for an assessor in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.”

VET regulators in Victoria (VRQA) and Western Australia (TACWA) provide similar guidance.

In some cases, an assessor cannot directly gather all the required evidence that supports a competency judgement. In these cases, the evidence may be gathered or reported by other people. This type of evidence is categorised as supplementary evidence.

The resources listed below can help you with understanding these evidence requirements.



RTOs are responsible for assessing a student's competency. This cannot be outsourced to work placement hosts

Service providers inform the RTO's assessment by collecting supplementary evidence during the work placement. RTO assessors use this supplementary evidence in combination with other information to form a valid judgement about competency against the requirements of the unit.

Competency is not a judgement for a workplace supervisor – this is a judgement for the RTO assessor.

The role of the workplace supervisor is to observe and record that the student can complete a set of tasks satisfactorily to industry standard. Workplace supervisors do not have the full range of information available to make valid assessment about student competence.

RTOs need to develop a workplace learning plan for each student

The learning plan:

- documents the learning objective of the placement
- specifies the units of competency from the Certificate III in Individual Support that need to be covered in the work placement
- translates the VET competency statements into workplace tasks that are easily understood by workplace supervisor
- specifies requirements for access to types of clients, the use of specialist equipment and access to provider and client documentation
- is supported by a logbook and other supporting templates that a student must complete
- sets out clearly the role of the supervisor to sign off student logbooks and the framework for evidence collection and supervisor judgements
- establishes a mutually acceptable time(s) for the RTO assessor to visit the workplace, to observe and assess the student in the workplace performing daily tasks.

The RTO and service provider should discuss the workplace learning plan to ensure the student learning needs can be met during the placement.

The tips below can help you with developing learning plans.

RTOs need to ensure workplace supervisors understand their role and are supported to record evidence of student practice

The RTO should provide support, and where necessary, training, to workplace supervisors to ensure they understand the requirements of the student's learning plan, the RTO's assessment processes and the workplace supervisor's role in the assessment process.

The RTO should also make clear any specific requirements for workplace supervisors in terms of relevant qualifications and/or length of service.

As much as possible the RTO should seek to reduce the administrative burden for workplace supervisors by streamlining and simplifying processes for reporting feedback and supplementary evidence. Large amounts of paperwork can be a deterrent for service providers to offer student work placements.

RTOs need to ensure that students understand the supervisor's role in the placement as well

Where a student is under the misapprehension that their workplace supervisor will determine their competency, this can cause unnecessary anxiety. This can especially be the case for students from disadvantaged or non-English-speaking backgrounds or in situations where there is a personality clash between a student and their workplace supervisor.

Making sure students clearly understand the supervisor's role in the placement can help to alleviate any anxiety they may have.



Tips for workplace learning plans

- Use simple language that has relevance for the workplace, rather than technical VET language. Describe specific work tasks rather than making broad statements about competencies.
- When describing the role of the RTO assessor use the terms like “assessment”, “performance evidence” and “competency”.
- When describing the role of the workplace supervisor use different words, such as “confirming the student is able to perform tasks in a safe way to industry standards”.
- Make workplace learning plans easy for workplace supervisors to use and consider moving away from paper-based logbooks.

Selecting a service provider – A guide for RTOs

This resource contains a series of topics to help RTOs find out more about a service provider, and assess their ability to provide an effective work placement experience for students and their suitability as a potential work placement partner.

Fact Sheet: Regulation of aged care and disability support services

This resource provides some facts about regulatory arrangements for aged care and disability support, as well as links to further information.

CHCCCS023 - Support independence and wellbeing

This link will take you to the entry for this unit of competency in the National Training Register.

Using other parties to collect assessment evidence | Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

You can find further information about assessment by another party in this ASQA fact sheet. If your RTO is regulated by the VRQA or TACWA you will need to check any additional guidance they may provide.

Mandatory workplace assessment – CHCCCS023 Support Independence and Wellbeing - YouTube

This video also contains useful guidance for RTOs on workplace assessment requirements.



Roles and responsibilities of service providers

Service providers need to select appropriate workplace supervisors and/or buddies for student placements

Workplace supervisors provide guidance and support to students during their work placement and sign off on the completion of tasks specified in the learning plan. Every student needs to be assigned a workplace supervisor. Some service providers also assign the student a buddy to provide practical daily support for students.

Depending on the size and the type of service delivery, these roles may be undertaken by the same person, or by a combination of a formal supervisor and an informal supervisor or buddy. It is important that students have continuity in these arrangements across the duration of their placement.

Some larger service providers may establish additional roles to support work placements, such as administrative and liaison roles.

Service providers will need to select staff who hold relevant qualifications, are experienced and well-suited to the role, and are positive advocates for the service provider and the industry. The RTO should tell you about any requirements for workplace supervisors' qualifications or experience in your initial discussions. You should also discuss your internal support arrangements with the RTO to ensure there is clarity about these roles and responsibilities.

Service providers need to consider how to support their workplace supervisors and buddies to undertake their roles

Consider how you will:

- ensure the roles, responsibilities and expectations for the roles are clearly documented
- ensure workplace supervisors and buddies understand the student's work placement plan, including the learning objective of the placement and have contact with the RTO trainer/assessor as needed
- consider the impact of undertaking these roles on other work responsibilities and outputs

- provide training to support these roles. This may take the form of training provided by the RTO on workplace supervisor roles, their processes to collect evidence, and expectations of supervisor feedback and judgements
- recognise and reward staff undertaking these roles.

The role of workplace supervisors is to:

- discuss the work placement learning plan with the student and the RTO assessor to ensure there are appropriate learning opportunities available to meet the objective of the placement
- ensure the student is provided with an appropriate orientation and/or induction to the work environment, including key policies and procedures such as Workplace Health and Safety
- ensure there is a clear understanding of the training the student has received and that work tasks do not exceed the student's scope of practice
- sign off on the student's attendance and completion of tasks specified in the workplace learning plan
- monitor the student in the workplace and provide regular feedback to them
- schedule mutually acceptable time(s) for the RTO assessor to visit the workplace during the placement to observe and assess the student in the workplace performing daily tasks
- participate in scheduled meetings at agreed points or complete forms in a timely manner to provide formal feedback on student performance in the workplace. This feedback will be used by the RTO as part of the student's assessment evidence for the course.



Where a workplace buddy has been assigned, their role is to:

- identify learning opportunities relevant to their training programs
- provide instruction to students before and during tasks and informal feedback after
- share knowledge while demonstrating tasks
- act as a point of contact and role model for good practice

provide advice and information to students and clarify student concerns or queries.

Legislative requirements

There are a range of legal requirements, such as insurance, pre-employment checks and vaccinations, that will need to be discussed and documented prior to the work placements to ensure there is complete clarity about which party is responsible for these matters and to mitigate risk for all parties.

The fact sheet below provides more information about these requirements.

Documenting agreements

Once you have come to an agreement about the roles and responsibilities of each party, these should be documented in a Work Placement Agreement. This should be signed by the RTO, service provider and the student before the work placement starts.

The template below provides an example of a Work Placement Agreement.

[Fact Sheet: Meeting legal requirements for work placements](#)

This resource outlines current legal requirements related to student work placements.

[Work Placement Agreement template](#)

This template can be used as a basis for developing your own Work Placement Agreements.

[An approach to buddying](#)

ARC Disability Services appoints a student facilitator to provide support to students.

As the designated person to guide students through the work placement process, the student facilitator provides continuity and a single point of contact for students throughout their four-week placements, as well as a deep understanding from their own experience as a student.

The student facilitator is also a support worker, which enables them to keep their skills up to date, and they have a Certificate IV in Teaching and Assessment (TAE). This means they can fulfil a workplace supervisory role if required. They are allocated 15-20 hours a fortnight to undertake the student facilitator role.

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

