

## Work placement checklist for RTOs

This checklist is designed to help RTOs work through the tasks involved in organising successful work placements for their students. Before organising placements, you'll need to have found a suitable service provider to work with (see the resource *Selecting a service provider – a guide for RTOs*) and have a work placement agreement signed or ready to sign (see the *Work Placement agreement template*). Note that this checklist list may not cover everything you agreed to do as part of your agreement.

It's likely that various staff members will take responsibility for different aspects of the work placement. You might find it useful to assign some of the checklist tasks, along with timeframes, to those with appropriate responsibility. Completed checklists and supporting documents can be stored with student management files for future reference.

### Pre-placement

#### Check that students are suitable and ready

Before students can start work placements, you need to confirm that they're suitable and ready to enter a workplace. Students must undergo criminal history screening, meet other legislative requirements (e.g. hold vaccination certificates), and be fit enough to perform workplace roles. They also need to have enough knowledge and skill to complete the required tasks safely.

Note that pre-employment criminal history checks can take some time, depending on whether parental (or guardian) permission is required, how common the student's name is and whether there are any matters to be considered. Make sure you allow enough time for these checks to be finalised.

Check that the following have been done before the start of placements.

- Have you (or your students) applied for the relevant pre-employment checks? Students may need one or more of these clearances:
  - National Police Check – required for aged care services
  - NDIS screening check – required for disability support services
  - Working with Children Check – required for services involving young people under the age of 18.
- Have you assessed your students' knowledge and skills in the following areas?
  - workplace health and safety
  - manual handling skills
  - infection control procedures
  - communication skills.
  - (Note that students may still be developing in some areas, but they should at least have enough knowledge and skills to work safely and minimise harm to themselves and others.)
- Have you checked that students have complied with all relevant government health directives regarding vaccinations?
- Have students been made aware of the following obligations they have in the workplace?
  - not attending unwell – students must not come to the workplace if they're unwell as they could put vulnerable clients at risk
  - presenting to work in a fit state – students must not present to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including certain prescription medications)
  - behaving in a professional manner – students must comply with relevant codes of conduct and behave appropriately in the workplace
  - workplace health and safety (WHS) – students must comply with all workplace health and safety policies and procedures
  - documentation requirements – students need to complete all documents and records required by the service provider, legislation and accrediting body
  - following directions – students are to comply with safe and reasonable directions and let staff know if they're asked to do tasks that are beyond their capability
  - not attempting tasks beyond their learning – while students are encouraged to show initiative, they shouldn't attempt work tasks that are outside their scope of practice

- confidentiality – students must keep all information about clients, visitors, other staff and the service provider confidential
- dealing with challenging behaviour – students should know how to deal safely with challenging behaviours and have strategies to de-escalate issues
- duty of care obligations and mandatory reporting – students should know their duty of care obligations and when and how they're required to report suspected abuse
- taking care of property – students must not misuse or damage property while on work placement
- any other matters as agreed with the service provider.

### Liase with the service provider about selection of students

- Have you confirmed with the service provider:
  - the type of students that will be best suited to a placement in their service
  - the range of learning experiences and work tasks they can offer students
  - the location of placements
  - placement work hours?
- Have you talked to the service provider about how students will be selected and their role in the selection process? For example, the service provider may want to interview potential students before the placement. If so, you'll need to give them student details and let students know about the interview process.
- Let students know when they've been selected for work placements and confirm that they have accepted the offer. Advise students who were not selected by the service provider.

### Develop workplace learning plans

- Have you worked with students to develop workplace learning plans which include a learning objective, associated learning experiences and work tasks?
- Have you confirmed with the service provider that they can offer the tasks and experiences in the plan and provide an appropriately qualified supervisor?

### Confirm agreements and arrangements

- Have you, the student and service provider all signed the work placement agreement?
- Does each party have a copy of the agreement, workplace learning plan and any other supporting documents for their records?
- Does the service provider have copies of all relevant student documents? For example:
  - criminal history screening clearances
  - vaccination certificates
  - driver's license (if required).
- Has the service provider given students the information they need to start the placement, such as when and where to turn up?
- Have you introduced the workplace supervisor to relevant RTO staff? Have you confirmed that they understand their role and the role of RTO staff in conducting assessments and completing documentation?
- Have you offered a briefing session and other support to the supervisors, buddies, student co-ordinator or other staff about the student placement arrangements and objectives?
- Have you inspected the workplace site to check workplace health and safety arrangements? Has this been documented?
- Have you considered inviting staff from the service provider and/or previous work placement students to talk to students about what to expect at their workplace, how they support students on work placement and to answer any questions students may have?



## During the placement

Once the placement starts, the RTO plays a critical ongoing role in supporting students and conducting assessments. Your continued investment and commitment will help to make the work placement a success, and will also help foster a strong, collaborative relationship with the service provider.

Have you done the following?

- Planned for an RTO staff member to attend the site orientation and induction with the students, so you know that students understand what's required of them and their questions have been answered.
- Scheduled weekly check-ins with the student and workplace supervisor, allowing enough time to discuss and resolve any issues (usually about an hour). Agree how you'll meet (i.e. remotely or onsite).
- Given contact details of relevant RTO staff to students and supervisors in case any issues arise.
- Agreed with the supervisor when and how you will carry out assessments.
- Agreed on a process for resolving any issues, including:
  - when and how you'll be notified if there's a student concern or issue which can't be resolved directly between the student and the other party
  - when and how you'll be notified if the service provider has a concern or issue which can't be resolved directly between the staff member and the student
  - who from the RTO and the service provider will meet to discuss these concerns or issues
  - who will investigate the concern or issue further if it is of significant concern and remains unresolved
  - who will initiate the formal dispute resolution process as outlined in the agreement.

## Post placement

After the placement, it's a good idea to gather feedback as soon as you can, and to reflect on and document what went well and what you'll do to improve future placements.

When the placement has ended:

- check that the supervisor has completed all necessary documentation
- seek written feedback from students, RTO staff and service provider staff on their placement experience
- arrange a briefing session with your staff to discuss and document what worked well, any issues or concerns, and opportunities for improvement
- arrange a meeting with the service provider to discuss student and staff feedback and the outcomes of your staff debriefing session
- agree and document actions that can be taken to improve future work placements
- consider how feedback from the service provider can be used to improve the quality and industry currency of your training and assessment services
- document feedback from the service provider to inform self-assurance and continuous improvement strategies and as evidence of industry engagement
- record the costs and benefits to your organisation of the placements, including whether students go on to work for the service provider and the service provider's performance during the work placement. This will help you track performance improvement over time and will contribute to future evaluations.
- consider recording interviews with students who have completed their placement, to show future students
- if your students received exceptional support from any particular staff at the service provider, consider passing this on to their senior manager(s)
- consider promoting work placements in your newsletter or through social media, congratulating students, the service provider and your staff on the successful completion of their placement.