

Selecting a service provider: A guide for RTOs

Questions to ask service providers

If you're looking for a service provider to take students on work placement, before entering an agreement, take some time to find out about the values of the organisation and the quality of services they provide.

This checklist gives you some sample questions to ask.

About the service provider

Find out some general information about the service provider. For example:

- how long they've been operating
- the range of services they offer
- whether they have multiple delivery sites
- the number of staff employed at each site
- the number of clients and client profile (e.g. whether they service clients with dementia, challenging behaviours, physical or intellectual disabilities, CALD or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background).

Evidence of high-quality delivery and outcomes

Ask the service provider about:

- their client satisfaction rate
- the general levels of qualifications held by staff.

Their approach to work placements

Find out whether the service provider currently offers work placements and how they approach them, or how they would approach them if they don't already. Discuss with the service provider:

- how many students they can accommodate on work placements
- how their hours of work are structured for placements (i.e. start and finish times and available work days)
- the kinds of clients students will work with
- what equipment students have access to

- whether students can access service and client documentation, including access to IT facilities if needed
- the range of workplace experiences and tasks they can offer students
- whether they have someone in a student co-ordinator role to oversee student placement arrangements and liaise with the RTO
- workplace supervision, including:
 - how they select and support workplace supervisors
 - what qualifications and experience their workplace supervisors have
 - whether workplace supervisors have experience in completing documents associated with work placements, such as student logbooks
- whether staff are familiar with work placement learning plans
- whether they're willing for relevant staff to receive training and support from you in relation to workplace assessment practices, completing student logbooks and other arrangements
- whether they have a documented process to support work placements
- What public liability and professional indemnity insurance they have
- whether they're willing to sign a work placement agreement which sets out the roles and responsibilities of each party
- whether they're willing to agree to a forward schedule with numbers of students and timing of work placements.



Support for students

It's critical that students are well supported through the placement. Find out what support the service provider currently offers or would be able to offer. For example:

- what introduction to the organisation students are given
- what measures are taken to make sure other staff know students are coming and help to make them feel welcome
- how they communicate with students about their daily roster and work duties
- how they ensure students aren't asked to do tasks that are outside the agreed scope
- how often their workplace supervisor meets with students and provides feedback
- whether students are given:
 - a designated workspace
 - a locker to store their personal belongings
 - a uniform and name tag
- what procedures they follow when students or RTO staff experience a problem during the placement which can't be resolved onsite
- whether students are given a work buddy to provide informal supervision and day-to-day support
- how work buddies are selected and what support they would be given.

Review and evaluation

Ideally you can establish a process of working with service providers to review and evaluate work placements, so they improve over time. Ask the service provider:

- whether they record and share students' feedback about their work placement experience with RTOs
- how they measure the success of work placements for their organisation
- how they refine and improve their work placement processes, based on student and RTO feedback
- how they use their experience in hosting work placements to help RTOs improve the quality of their training and assessment.

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