

Work placement checklist for service providers

This checklist is designed to help service providers work through the tasks involved in organising successful work placements. In the first place, you'll need to have signed a work placement agreement with an RTO which sets out your respective roles and responsibilities.

It's likely that various staff members will be responsible 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.

Before the placement

Select students

It is good practice for service providers to be actively involved in selecting students for work placements. This helps make sure students are well-matched to the needs and culture of your organisation.

- Establish and document a process for assessing prospective students referred to you by RTOs.
- Agree with the RTO about what type of information you'd like to receive about prospective students, when you'd like to receive it and in what form. For example, you might like to know a bit about students' background, prior work experience, strengths, career goals and whether they have any additional support needs.
- Nominate staff to be involved in the selection process. For example, you may appoint a student co-ordinator to oversee work placements who can:
 - review student information and select students to interview
 - conduct interviews
 - inform the RTO of outcomes.
- Develop your approach to interviews and the questions you'll ask. While interviews may be quite informal, it's important that the selection process is fair and non-discriminatory. Interview questions should relate directly to the placement requirements and all students should be asked the same or similar questions.

- When you receive information from the RTO about prospective students, confirm that students:
 - are suited to the placements you're able to offer
 - can work within your desired work hours
 - can travel to your site
 - meet any other requirements you have.

Confirm that students are prepared for their placement

- Confirm that students have the required knowledge and skills for their placement. The RTO should assess students' knowledge and skills in the following areas:
 - workplace health and safety awareness
 - manual handling skills
 - infection control procedures
 - communication skills – the RTO should feel confident that students have sufficient English language skills to communicate effectively with clients and staff.

Note that students may still be developing in some, or all these areas. At this stage, it's enough that they have the knowledge and skills to work safely on placement.

- Confirm with the RTO that students have:
 - Had any required pre-employment screening checks, such as:
 - National Police Check
 - NDIS Worker Screening Check
 - Working with Children Check
 - confirmation of vaccination
 - driver's license (if required).



- ❑ Confirm with the RTO that students have been made aware of their obligations on work placement, which include:
 - ❑ 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 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.

Appoint a workplace supervisor and workplace buddy

Workplace supervisors and buddies play a critical role in making sure students are well supported and have a successful work placement.

- ❑ Develop duty statements for the roles of workplace supervisor and workplace buddy and consider how these extra duties will be accommodated and recognised.
- ❑ Appoint suitable staff to these roles.
- ❑ Brief supervisors and buddies on the work placement agreement, workplace learning plans and their roles and responsibilities.
- ❑ Provide supervisors and buddies with information about each student and the work placement arrangements, including a copy of the work placement agreement, workplace learning plan and supporting documents.
- ❑ Arrange for supervisors and buddies to receive coaching, mentoring, or training as required.
- ❑ Let supervisors and buddies know if any students have any additional support needs.
- ❑ Arrange an introductory meeting between workplace supervisors and buddies, and the RTO student facilitator and/or RTO assessor to discuss roles and responsibilities in supporting and assessing students and completing documentation.



Preparing for placement

- ❑ Check that you have the following information and documents:
 - ❑ a copy of a signed workplace agreement and workplace learning plan for each student
 - ❑ relevant information about the student, such as:
 - ❑ contact details
 - ❑ proof of identity – passport, birth certificate
 - ❑ pre-employment checks
 - ❑ vaccination certificates
 - ❑ driver's license.
 - ❑ a copy of any relevant supporting documentation such as student logbooks.
- ❑ Send the student (and cc the RTO) a letter of introduction that includes relevant information about your organisation and the work placement, such as:
 - ❑ arrangements for the first day—where to go, what time to arrive and who will meet the student
 - ❑ transport options for travelling to the facility—carparking, bike racks, change facilities and public transport options
 - ❑ a map of the site and facility
 - ❑ what to bring (and what not to bring) to the workplace on the first day
 - ❑ dress and uniform standards (if relevant)
 - ❑ facilities available for personal storage
 - ❑ facilities nearby (food outlets, banks, post offices and other amenities)
 - ❑ a roster with mealtimes and breaks
 - ❑ name and contact details of their supervisor and buddy
 - ❑ who to contact if they are unwell or unable to attend.
- ❑ Inform residents/clients and their families about the work placement, explaining the purpose and benefits of student placements, and seek their consent (where necessary) to the student providing care and support.
 - ❑ Tell your staff about the work placement and explain the benefits to your clients, staff and the sector of student placements.
 - ❑ Make sure the student is entered into relevant information technology (IT) and human resource (HR) systems before the placement begins.
 - ❑ Organise a space for the student to store their personal belongings and to work on assessment tasks.
 - ❑ Organise an orientation and induction session for the student/s' first day.



During the placement

Site orientation and induction

It's important that students receive a thorough orientation and induction on their first day. Placements can be daunting. A comprehensive introduction to your organisation will help the student feel welcome, comfortable and confident, and to enjoy their work placement experience. It also helps to protect the student, clients and other staff during the placement, and serves to build your reputation as an employer of choice.

- ❑ Organise an orientation that includes:
 - ❑ a general introduction to the organisation (mission statement, philosophy, services offered, units/departments, standards of practice, lines of communication/reporting, hours of operation, etc)
 - ❑ a tour of the site and facility
 - ❑ an introduction to key staff members, including supervisors and buddies.
- ❑ Check that on the first day, the student is given all the information and documents they need.

Important workplace policies and procedures

- code of conduct
- how to identify and report any concerns about resident/client welfare
- WHS and emergency procedures
- confidentiality and privacy policies, conflict of interest policies, codes of practice and any other documents regarding ethical issues
- bullying, harassment, and discrimination policies
- expectations of professional behaviour, including any written protocols on behaviours (for example, protocol for observing clients, codes of conduct)
- information or guidelines for providing sensitive and culturally appropriate communication and care for specific client groups
- dress/uniform standards (where relevant).

Relevant information about staff and the organisation

- map of the workplace
- staff lists with roles/delegations
- a list of staff you'd like the student to meet during the placement
- information on routine procedures (in/out communication board, phone messages and use of email/internet/computers)
- job descriptions, particularly of roles the student is learning
- policy and procedures manuals and how to access them
- administrative procedures (report writing protocols and standards, guidelines for recording information/statistics)
- relevant legislation of which students should be aware
- other special or specific workplace requirements.



Other helpful information

- who to go to if they have concerns or questions
- facilities nearby (for example, food outlets, banks, gyms, post office, public phones and amenities)
- mealtimes/breaks
- use of site facilities, for example, lunchrooms and other amenities.
- Conduct and document your own assessment of the student's knowledge of WHS requirements.
- Clarify work tasks with the student, distinguishing between:
 - tasks they can perform on their own with indirect supervision
 - tasks they can perform with direct supervision
 - tasks they should not perform under any circumstance during the placement.
- Let them know what to do if they're asked to do tasks that are outside the agreed rules.
- Collect relevant information and forms, for example, next of kin and emergency contacts.
- Give the student what they need for the placement, such as a locker key, access card, IT system access and uniforms.
- Give the student a copy of their roster with details of their work tasks and expectations.

Support for the student

- Explain to the student the role of the workplace buddy and supervisor.
- Set up a process for checking that supervisors and buddies are performing their roles adequately.
- Make sure the supervisor schedules regular meetings with the student, allowing enough time to:
 - check the student is receiving adequate guidance and feedback
 - check if the student is experiencing any difficulties e.g. with tasks or because of differences between work practices and their training
 - check the student is getting the learning experiences, tasks, equipment and documentation they need to meet the learning objective of the workplace learning plan

- review the student's written work
- give constructive feedback that is:
 - aligned with the student's learning goals
 - focused on observed behaviours
 - positive and encouraging
 - based on facts (not generalised)
 - documented as relevant, and
 - followed up at a later date
- complete relevant sign-offs and other documentation.
- Make sure the student is informed if buddies or supervisors aren't available on any given day or for a period of time.
- Offer to debrief students, either individually or as part of a group, if an incident occurs. Debriefs should be structured and timely—usually within 48 hours of an incident occurring.
- Check that the RTO assessor (or student facilitator) is meeting regularly with the student and the workplace supervisor. If not, follow up with the RTO.
- Check that the RTO assessor has (or plans to) attend the workplace to formally assess the student's performance.



What to do if there are issues or concerns

- Establish and communicate processes for dealing with issues or concerns, including:
- who the student can approach if they have a concern about or issue with their buddy, supervisor, or other member of staff (including contractors or other students or volunteers)
- who the student's buddy or supervisor, or other member of staff can approach if they have a concern or issue with the student
- who will notify the RTO if the concern or issue cannot be resolved on-site directly between the student and the other party
- who, from the service provider and RTO will meet to discuss the concern or issue if it cannot be resolved on-site directly between the student and other party
- who's responsible for investigating the concern or issue if it remains unresolved and of significant concern
- who's responsible for initiating the formal dispute resolution process outlined in the agreement.
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After the placement

To fully realise the benefits of a work placement and improve future placements, it's important to take the time at the end of the placement to:

- finalise any outstanding requirements
- discuss possible job opportunities with the student (if appropriate)
- reflect on what went well and what could be improved
- capture written feedback.
- At the end of the placement, check that:
 - you've formally recorded the end of the placement and cancelled IT and site access
 - the supervisor has completed all necessary documentation
 - the student has returned any equipment or items belonging to the service provider
 - the buddy, supervisor and other staff have given feedback on the student's performance to the student co-ordinator or other nominated staff member

- a nominated staff member has conducted an exit interview with the student and sought feedback on their placement experience.
- Debrief with your own staff and with the RTO:
 - schedule an internal meeting with relevant staff to discuss what worked well, issues or concerns, and opportunities to improve future placements
 - schedule a meeting with the RTO to jointly consider student and staff feedback and outcomes of internal meetings
 - agree and document actions in response to these learnings.
- Assess and record the costs and benefits to your organisation of hosting the placement, including whether the student goes on to work for your organisation. This will help you to track performance improvement over time and will contribute to future evaluations.
- Consider celebrating and promoting a successful work placement. For example:
 - hold a social function for staff, residents/clients and their families to mark the end of the student placements
 - write an article for your site's newsletter and/or social media site congratulating students and staff on the successful completion of their placement.

