

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Work Experience

What is work experience?

Work experience is designed to give people exposure to working life and insight into employment in a particular industry. It is one of several types of assistance that organisations can offer under the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* (SQW) initiative.

Under the *Education (Work Experience) Act 1996*, work experience is an arrangement made between the educational establishment and a work experience provider under which the provider may provide work experience. An educational establishment under this arrangement can be a school or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or an Agricultural Training College recognised by the *Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges Act 2005*.

A work experience placement is distinct from a vocational placement, which is to give the student practical training and experience that is required under, and is an assessable part of, the person's accredited vocational education and training course.

Who can be a work experience provider?

A work experience provider (generally referred to as the 'employer') may be a person, a company, a business, an association, a local authority, a government department, a statutory authority or any other body, able to provide the necessary workplace exposure identified as part of the person's educational plan.

A sponsor organisation that is not an RTO, and which wishes to include work experience as part of a SQW project will need to negotiate with an RTO to facilitate the work experience arrangements. This should be a formal arrangement which outlines each party's roles and responsibilities. This arrangement should identify how the role of the RTO is to be delegated and include the details of the appropriate insurance coverage for the participant.

The decision to provide work experience rests with the sponsor organisation or delegate, in consultation with the RTO, the person and work experience providers. At all times, the educational value of the program for the person should be the prime consideration.

Why do work experience?

Work experience can:

- prepare people for the demands and expectations of the working world
- help people make informed career decisions by assessing their aptitudes and interests, and exploring a potential career
- improve people's maturity, confidence and self-reliance.

What conditions must be met when offering work experience?

The following conditions must be met before work experience is offered to a participant:

- Where a person is less than 18 years of age, an arrangement must only be made with written consent of the parent or guardian. If a person is under 18 years of age and is not in care and control of an adult, this written consent is not required.
- The sponsor organisation is required to ensure that staff delivering services to young people aged under 18 years hold a positive suitability notice (blue card) as required by the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act (2000)*.
- A person must not receive work experience for more than 30 equivalent full-time days in a year, unless the person is a person with disability under the *Disability Services Act 2006*. The RTO or delegate may approve work experience for more than 30 days in a year for a person with disability.
- The full period of the work experience must fall between the first and last day of any one calendar year.
- The work experience arrangement must be made in writing before the commencement of a work experience placement.
- A person undertaking work experience is not an employee of the work experience provider and the provider is not the employer of the person. The role of the person is that of learner and not that of employee.
- The person must not be paid for work experience.

- While on a work experience placement, the person is accountable to the work experience provider, as well as their RTO or delegate for their conduct and behaviour. The person must comply with all reasonable directions given by the work experience provider.
- A work experience provider may not provide work experience to more than the number of people equal to the number of persons in the full-time employment of the work experience provider.
- The work experience provider must not provide work experience at a time other than during ordinary working hours of the place where the work experience is being provided.
- The RTO must have in place a contract of insurance indemnifying the person and work experience provider against liability for personal injury or property damage, arising out of the work experience. The RTO must ensure that their Work Cover policy also includes provision for work experience participants. The RTO or delegate may not enter into work experience arrangements that require people to undertake activities excluded from the insurance cover. If an arrangement may involve an excluded activity, the RTO or delegate and the work experience provider should ensure that the person is not included in that activity.
- If a placement is planned in any other hazardous or unusual activities, the RTO or delegate must undertake a thorough risk assessment of the placement. Risk management includes identifying the hazards, assessing the risk, controlling the risk, and reviewing the outcome. Work Experience participants must have undertaken a generic occupational health and safety induction prior to placement.

Organising work experience

If not already a RTO, the sponsor organisation should negotiate with a RTO to auspice management rights for work experience arrangements.

The RTO identifies an appropriate employer (i.e. work experience provider).

The RTO, employer, person (and where applicable parents/guardians) sign a work experience placements for school students agreement form. The work experience placements for school students procedure and agreement form can be accessed [here](#).

Further research on work experience can be found at the following website: www.ncver.edu.au.

More information

For more information:

- Visit www.training.qld.gov.au/sqw
- Phone 1300 369 935
- Email sqwapps@desbt.qld.gov.au