

WORK PLACEMENT

4Life College



GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

Your guide to hosting students undertaking workplace learning programs from 4Life College.

This guide has been developed in line with best practice procedures adopted by the NSW Department of Education in their document 'Workplace Learning Guide for Employers' and complies with copyright permissions advised therein.

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Section One: About workplace learning

This guide introduces you and your staff to the concepts of workplace learning. It explains the workplace learning programs available to our students, the support available to employers, and your roles and responsibilities when hosting students in your workplace. It also includes a summary checklist for employers, both large and small, to help guide you through the workplace learning process.

What is workplace learning?

Workplace learning programs form part of the Australian Learning Group's curriculum. They enable students to spend a planned period of time – 10 weeks – in the workplace, gaining practical experience, assisting their career choices and building their industry skills.

Workplace learning is available to students who have completed a qualification. We aim to place students in the type of workplace of their choice, reflecting the type of work they plan to do after completing their studies.

For some students workplace learning is their very first experience of the workplace while others have done many hours of paid work in their part-time jobs.

What kind of workplace learning program is this?

Australian Learning Group requires mandatory work placement for students studying the Structured Workplace Learning course. This program is designed to bridge the gap between qualification and employment. This course is only available to students who have completed a qualification.

Work placement ensures that these students spend a period of time as voluntary workers in a relevant workplace. Employers supervise the students as they practise and extend the specific industry skills they have learned in their course work. During their work placement, students work towards gaining specific industry competencies. They are assessed by our trainers and assessors. Students achieving competency attain units of competency that are recognised throughout Australia.

How long will the student spend in your workplace?

This would usually happen over 2 days. However all work placements can be negotiated based on the requirements of the workplace.

The benefits for employers

Hosting students allows you to:

- participate in the education, career development and vocational training of students in your community.
- talk to students about your industry, its career paths and future directions.
- promote the attitudes and skills you want in your workforce.
- identify students with potential for your workplace or industry.
- increase the supervisory, training and mentoring skills of your staff.
- give students knowledge of the value of work and raise the quality of those coming into your industry.

As you will see in this guide, there is plenty of support and resources available to host employers. If you have any queries or concerns, ALG and the Work Placement Supervisor is only a phone call away.

Section Two: How Workplace Learning works

What is the general procedure for a placement?

Before the placement

- Host employers receive workplace learning guidelines with essential information about completing documents to meet ALG's requirements (based on standards set by the NSW Department of Education).
- Workplace positions are negotiated with employers and submitted to the College for approval.
- Arrangements are confirmed to support student safety.
- Students are matched to a position based on their course work and/or career planning. They must sign off on these arrangements.
- Teachers conduct work ready activities to prepare students for the experience.

During the placement

- Students attend the workplace every day of the program.
- Host employers or nominated workplace supervisors supervise the students in the workplace, providing tasks that are agreed and appropriate and at times, challenging for the student.
- The employer and workplace supervisor take action to provide a safe working environment, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant state or territory Work Health and Safety legislation and anti-discrimination legislation.
- Teachers make a supervisory visit or phone call to the employer and the student to check on their progress, safety and welfare. Where relevant, students are assessed for industry-based competencies.
- Students complete their structured distance education training and assessments.
- Host employers report any incidents involving the student to the College.

After the placement

- Students record their experiences and review their career preferences and training pathways.
- Host employers report on the student's performance in the workplace.
- Teachers immediately follow up with the students to ensure maximum benefit and check on student safety.
- Students attend a debriefing session and submit or resubmit any outstanding assessment items.

Who has duty of care?

Australian Learning Group maintains a duty of care to students undertaking workplace learning. They are responsible for deciding if placements are suitable, preparing students for workplace learning, monitoring the student's progress and welfare during the placement and following up with them immediately afterwards.

It is the responsibility of the host employer to provide a safe workplace environment and appropriate supervision for the student. Host employers must report WHS issues or concerns to the College.

Providing a richer, deeper, quality experience - employers share their tips for success:

- Engage the student straight away as the first hour can set the tone for the week.
- Talk to the student so that they understand their safety rights and responsibilities.
- Talk with the student about their level of skills and experience so you can set the work at the right skill level for them.
- Consider hosting students in pairs to give them buddy support to solve problems and get the work done.
- Busy students tend to be happier and learn more.
- Have a reserve list of jobs for them to do.
- Debrief with the student at the end of each day and plan tomorrow's work.

Working together: the workplace learning partnership

Workplace learning programs are a partnership between educators, employers and students. We seek the input and approval of all parties in the arrangement of placements, with every party agreeing to certain roles and responsibilities.

Central to this process is the **Student Placement Record**, a form that records contact details, arrangements and approvals relating to the student's placement. Once everyone has completed their section of the form, copies are held by ALG, host employer and student.

The Student Placement Record also records information regarding any disability, learning and support needs, medical condition, allergy or restriction that may affect the safety and supervision of the student in the workplace. It will indicate if employers need to make adjustments to accommodate a student's additional support needs or disability.

Section Three: Legal requirements and documentation

Are the students paid?

No. Students on placement are classified as 'voluntary workers' and host employers are not required to make any payment to them under the Federal or State award covering their industry, the NSW Annual Holidays Act or the Workers Compensation Act. Any payment to the student may invalidate the Department's insurance and indemnity arrangements. The one exception is where the student uses their part-time employment as part of their mandatory work placement requirement. In this

case, the student is not a voluntary worker and the insurance arrangements of the employer apply to the student. This arrangement must be negotiated with the employer and approved by ALG.

Do I have to sign any documents?

Yes. Each student is issued with a **Workplace Confirmation Form** to document the arrangements for their placement. This important form allows for information to be shared and approved by all parties – the student, the host employer ALG.

As an employer, you will be asked to provide your workplace details, the student's working hours, arrangements for their supervision, the activities they will undertake during their placement, any pre-training required and the measures you are taking to enable them to do the work safely.

Once all parties have provided and approved the information on the Workplace Confirmation Form, ALG's insurance and indemnity arrangements for you and the student are in place. A full copy of the Student Placement Record with all sections approved will be provided to you before the placement starts.

Are there any other conditions?

- Participating students must have completed a relevant qualification.
- No student can be asked or directed to carry out any task that is not safe, taking into account their level of skills and experience.
- Employers and employees must respect the rights of students to a safe and healthy host workplace, free from harassment, discrimination and any conduct that is unacceptable.
- Host employers are expected to consult and cooperate with ALG under the relevant Work Health and Safety Acts in their state.
- Host employers must notify ALG immediately of any health and safety incidents involving a student while on placement, including near misses, to enable ALG to fulfil its WHS obligations and support a safe placement.
- Host employers must advise ALG immediately if they need to change sites, redirect students to another location, or find asbestos on the site.

What about insurance?

Insurance and indemnity requirements are arranged by Australian Learning Group. Australian Learning Group indemnifies employers participating in approved workplace learning programs for any amount which they may be legally liable to pay for injury to students or teachers arising out of an approved workplace learning program, up to \$20,000,000 and for damage to property belonging to or in the care, custody or control of the host employer, up to \$200,000 provided that:

- any claim made against the employer in respect of a student or teacher participating in an approved workplace learning program is immediately notified to ALG and that ALG has full conduct and control of the claim against the employer as is normal practice for the party providing the indemnity
- the employer cooperates fully with the ALG and the insurer in the conduct of the claim
- the employer has complied with work health and safety legislation. These insurance and indemnity provisions also apply to approved interstate placements

Will my business need to change its insurance arrangements?

No, as long as you follow the requirements in this guide, you will not need to change your insurance or SafeWork NSW arrangements when taking on a student for workplace learning. You are expected to have current public liability coverage as is standard business practice. If you are a private or community registered training organisation, arranging workplace learning activities for students within your own organisation, your company's own insurance and indemnity arrangements will apply.

What is the claims process?

All claims for injury, loss of property or damage to property should be referred to ALG in the first instance. Depending on the nature of the claim, ALG may then forward the claim to our insurer.

Section 4. Accidents and emergencies

If a student is sick or injured:

- Seek medical help immediately, using the student's Medicare number as provided on the Student Placement Record. As students are not employees, do not treat this as a workers compensation claim. (Unless they are using their workplace as their placement, see Section 3)
- Contact emergency services for Ambulance or other emergency services immediately where required.
- During normal business hours, contact ALG
- Outside normal business hours, contact the student's nominated emergency contact.
- Note that students should carry their personal Student Contact Card with details of their trainer's contact numbers and their Medicare number.
- If the student doesn't have a Medicare number, ask if they wish to contact their general practitioner (GP). Contact details should be provided on your copy of the Student Placement Record.
- Medical invoices should be made out to the student and are payable by them.
- Ask the doctor attending for a medical certificate.
- Contact ALG immediately to advise of the situation. As soon as possible, complete a written report of the accident and forward it to ALG. The report must include a full statement from the student, the supervisor and relevant witnesses.

Section 5. Providing a safe workplace for students

The safety and wellbeing of students during work placement is our number one priority. Before any placement can be approved, employers need to satisfy ALG that they can provide a safe and healthy host workplace for students, compliant with the relevant Work Health and Safety Act in their state and anti-discrimination legislation.

You will be asked to provide the following information on the Student Placement Record:

- areas of possible risk in the student's workplace tasks and your strategies to eliminate or minimise the risk in detail. See Completion of the Student Placement Record to meet the ALG's standards.

- any compliance, or any pre-training or induction required by the student to undertake certain tasks.
- your supervision arrangements for the student.
- any special clothing required by the student e.g. enclosed footwear.
- any steps you will take or adjustments you will make to support students with a disability or other additional needs as described on their Student Placement Record.
- awareness of your responsibilities when working with students.
- commitment to reporting any health and safety incidents or near misses involving students.

During the placement you will need to provide:

- a site-specific workplace induction for students at the beginning of the placement, including relevant safety matters.
- activities and skill development tasks appropriate to the student's skill level.
- ongoing instruction and supervision by a capable and trustworthy employee briefed for the task.
- any personal protective equipment (PPE) required and training in its correct use. Likewise, the students are expected to comply with the employer's workplace safety requirements and procedures. They are not to act in any way that could jeopardise the safety of themselves or others.

Students must:

- Participate in orientation and any pre-training or induction identified.
- Use safety equipment and protective gear where relevant.
- Follow safety rules and procedures.
- Not do anything to jeopardise the safety of themselves or others.
- Report any risks or hazards immediately.
- Understand and follow emergency procedures.
- Cease work if they have a concern about their health and safety and contact their supervisor and College.
- Report any concerns about the placement or incidents to ALG.

Are any activities prohibited for workplace learning students?

Yes. Some activities are completely prohibited e.g. working on a roof or working where asbestos is present, while other activities have conditions attached. There are restrictions on the operation of machinery and equipment, the service of alcohol, work on construction sites and some adventure or sporting activities.

Students are not allowed to undertake activities requiring a licence (e.g. a driver's licence), permit or certificate of competence unless they already hold the relevant licence, certificate or permit. Even then, the activity must relate directly to the learning activities of the placement. Employers must list these activities on the Student Placement Record prior to approval.

We encourage you to get to know your student and set them work that is appropriate for their skill level. As all our students come with an existing qualification in your industry, you can ask them to perform any of the roles or tasks that someone with that qualification would reasonably be expected to perform in your workplace.

Please don't limit them to the jobs that no one else wants to do. It is important to give them a broad range of experience. You never know, they may be so good at the tasks that you assign that you might just find your next employee!

Section 6. A checklist for employers

- Decide when it is convenient for you to host students for work placement.
- Appoint an experienced staff member to supervise the students.
- Consult with staff to draw up a list of activities that can be achieved and safely managed by students.

Appropriate activities should:

- ✓ offer insight into the industry and workplace.
- ✓ be varied, safe, interesting and sometimes challenging.
- ✓ not contravene the prohibited activities indicated in Section 5 of this guide
- ✓ include tasks and skills appropriate to the student's coursework requirements
- ✓ provide time for some career conversations.

Appoint supervisory staff for each student.

Supervisory staff should be capable and trustworthy with good communication and delegation skills. They should be briefed for the task and given sufficient time to instruct and monitor the student and provide feedback. We also advise you appoint a separate workplace advisor or mentor to provide the students with general support and advice.

Prepare your staff by ensuring they:

- ✓ understand the purpose of the workplace learning activity.
- ✓ are aware of the responsibilities of working with students.
- ✓ do not use the students in place of regular paid employees.
- ✓ receive a timetable of proposed student activities and arrangements for their supervision and induction.
- ✓ understand special needs including how to respond to medical conditions e.g. anaphylaxis.
- ✓ comply with agreed arrangements.

Complete the employer section of the Student Placement Record (see Sections 2,3 and 5 of this guide) and return it to ALG.

An employer's coaching tips

- Tell ... Them about it
- Show ... Them how it's done
- Watch ... Them do it
- Praise ... What they do well
- Correct ... Any shortcomings
- Repeat ... For practice

Providing a quality workplace learning experience

Ensure that the student completes a first day induction and orientation tour.

The student's induction should include:

- a welcome and introduction to supervisors and co-workers.
- a brief overview of your business, products, purpose and values.
- an outline of the planned activities and supervision arrangements.
- clear expectations of behaviour, attitude and dress.
- clarification of working hours, breaks and other workplace routines.
- a tour of facilities including the student's work area/ desk, toilets, change rooms, exits, food outlets etc.
- consideration of any student health matters.
- an explanation of safety - its importance, reasons and procedures.
- how to report work health and safety issues and to whom.
- an explanation that the student has the right to cease work if they believe it is unsafe.
- first aid and evacuation plans and other emergency drills.
- a brief outline of policies on bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- procedures for lateness or absence.
- codes and passwords (doors, photocopier, computer access etc.).
- contacts at ALG in case of an emergency.
- rules regarding security, privacy, confidentiality and the use of computers, the internet, mobile phones, cameras etc.

Students should be given the opportunity to ask questions about the workplace and to be told to whom they can go to for advice or help.

Ensure that the student is sufficiently challenged and supervised in the workplace.

Supervisory staff will need to ensure that the student:

- undertakes varied activities appropriate to their skill level and workplace learning requirements.
- is not inadvertently put at risk by undertaking a task away from the view of others or with just one employee or client - unless this is unavoidable.

- does not undertake any prohibited activities as indicated in Section 5 of this guide
- does not undertake any activity requiring a licence, permit or certificate of competence unless they already have the relevant qualification and the activity has been approved by all parties before the placement.
- is provided with all necessary safety equipment required to complete a task.
- receives full instruction on how to complete activities including the risks, the purpose of safety equipment such as PPE, and how to use it appropriately.
- is given appropriate feedback and encouragement.

Providing feedback on the student's time in the workplace

Before the placement ends, please:

- complete the student report or evaluation form supplied by ALG
- ensure that any property or identification cards on loan have been returned.
- take time to provide the student with helpful feedback and encouragement.

Section 7. Important contacts

Thank you for taking time to read the information in this guide. We hope that you feel confident and well-prepared to support a student as they take up these valuable workplace learning opportunities.

If you have any queries, please contact:

Work Placement Officer

workplacement@alg.edu.au

(02) 9112 4599