

# VOCATIONAL PLACEMENT

PLACEMENT PROVIDER INFORMATION BOOKLET

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## Overview

As a Placement Provider in TAFE SA's vocational placement program, your organisation and yourself are integral to this program. You, and/or any employee you have nominated to be a workplace supervisor for the purposes of the vocational placement, will be playing an important role in assisting TAFE SA students in developing their skills to industry standards and to become job ready.

This Placement Provider Information Booklet has been prepared to inform you, and/or a nominated workplace supervisor, of the benefits of vocational placement and the essential provisions of a TAFE SA student vocational placement, including details of your roles and responsibilities. It also provides details of the TAFE SA insurance arrangements and the insurance required of you. You should read it carefully as it will inform you of most of the information required to ensure a successful outcome for both the student and your organisation.

Any questions you or your nominated workplace supervisor have about TAFE SA vocational placement should be referred to the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator who has made contact with you, or whose details have been provided by the student proposing to undertake a placement opportunity with you. These contact details are also stated on the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Agreement(s) that you have, or are to be asked to, enter into to formalise the placement of a TAFE SA student(s).

### What is a vocational placement?

A vocational placement is any structured, assessable workplace learning that prepares TAFE SA students for the workforce and is linked to specific units of competency within their program of study. This experience in the workplace will:

- help students link knowledge and skills with jobs;
- help students to better understand theory they have learnt by putting it into practice;
- give the students hands-on experience in the workplace; and
- be an assessable part of the student's course.

It is generally different from work experience. Instead of just observing what goes on, students are given the opportunity to undertake practical tasks to demonstrate skills related to their program under the supervision of a workplace supervisor. You will be briefed on your role and responsibilities by the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator.

### How does vocational placement work?

By now, a TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator and/or a TAFE SA student will have made contact with you about the potential for a placement to occur. The TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator will ensure your workplace is suitable for the placement (e.g. work health and safety compliant, able to provide the practical training required) and negotiate and agree to placement arrangements that suit your needs. The TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator will also negotiate the practical activities/specific tasks to be given to a student with you and/or a workplace supervisor if you have nominated one to supervise the student.

The TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator will speak with you about the placement requirements, assessment of skills/training and any special conditions you require, before a student placement can be formalised (through the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Agreement) and commence e.g.:

- attendance requirements (dates and start/finish times) and duration of the placement;
- particular safety or clothing item requirements;
- any required skills you wish the student to have;
- any Criminal History Screening Check/Police Check requirements;
- any immunisations or medical/health checks that are required; and/or
- any pre-reading required of the student e.g. relevant workplace policies or procedures.

You may also wish to interview the student before the placement commences to make sure that he/she is appropriate for your workplace.

The student will then undertake a placement in accordance with the Vocational Placement Agreement in order to undertake the agreed activities/tasks to practice the skills that they will subsequently be assessed on. These skills will not be any different to those currently undertaken by employees in your workplace. If you are too busy to personally monitor the student, you may wish to select an employee to act as the student's workplace supervisor.

## What's in it for me?

Your participation will enable you to:

- become involved in making education more relevant to the workplace;
- provide existing employees with opportunities to pass on their valuable skills and knowledge;
- have exposure, without obligation, to potential future employees;
- gain community and professional goodwill for helping students improve their skills and increase their employment opportunities;
- provide feedback to TAFE SA on course (and vocational placement) structure and requirements; and
- help to bring in training systems that will improve productivity.

## Is there a cost involved?

Normally students are not paid for work placement. However, if you decide to pay the student, this may change your relationship to that of employer/employee and may make you responsible for worker's compensation payments.

There is no financial outlay involved in having a TAFE SA student on placement; however it is acknowledged that there is an indirect cost in terms of the time required to induct and supervise the student. The trade-off for your organisation and your industry in general is the increased skills base and improved career paths of the students who are able to come into your workplace.

In addition, should you decide to employ a student following a placement, you save the time and money involved in advertising the position and interviewing applicants through already having the opportunity to observe their performance in a real working environment.

## What are my roles and responsibilities?

You, or your workplace supervisor, are required to:

- provide opportunities for the student to practice a variety of skills that have been discussed between you and the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator;
- provide the student with a safe working environment to practice their skills in;
- ensure that the student is adequately supervised by yourself or another appropriately skilled employee; and
- observe the student undertaking specific tasks as agreed to with the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator which may require completing some documentation at appropriate times and provide feedback on their knowledge, skills and attitudes during placement, as part of the student's skills assessment e.g. in a Student Logbook (or similar).

If students are rotated in your workplace and another employee becomes the workplace supervisor, they should be aware of the requirements of the placement and the details of this Placement Provider Information Booklet. Remember that there might be a requirement that the supervisor have certain characteristics or hold a certain qualification, so please discuss all potential workplace supervisors with the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator who is your TAFE SA contact.

## What are my legal obligations?

As a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA), you have certain legal responsibilities relating to the duty of care you owe to all persons on your premises, including students on placement. The definition of "worker" in the Act includes (subsection 7(1), paragraph (g)) "*a student gaining work experience*". By extension, this includes TAFE SA students undertaking a vocational placement. The Act places an onus on a person conducting a business or undertaking (as defined in the Act but essentially meaning an employer), to safeguard the student undertaking a vocational placement **in the same manner** as they would one of the businesses' employees (**but not as an employee**).

While you have a student in your workplace, he/she needs to be aware of situations that you may take for granted. He/she should be treated as you would a new employee. You may need to point out safe operating procedures and relevant work health and safety practices, as well as identify any risks or hazards that may exist, in your workplace. This is all part of the student's learning about the world of work.

In addition, as an employer, you have legal responsibilities under legislation relating to equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, sexual harassment and racial harassment. TAFE SA students undertaking a vocational placement within your organisation should be treated **in the same manner** as your employees in terms of these laws (**but not as an employee**).

## Criminal History Screening Checks/Police Check

Some Placement Providers, particularly those within the Community Services and Hospitality sectors and other sectors working with underage persons or persons who are vulnerable, disabled or aged, will require a student to provide a Criminal History Screening Check(s) and/or a Police Check (National Police Certificate) before accepting TAFE SA students for a vocational placement. These requirements are generally consistent with the requirements of employees for each sector.

In engaging with Placement Providers about the potential placement of TAFE SA students, TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinators should identify any Criminal History Screening Check(s)/Police Check (National Police Certificate) requirements that students will need to provide to the Placement Provider, in order for their placement to proceed. Placement Providers may require one or more of the following Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) screenings: Child related, Vulnerable Person, Disability Services, Aged Care, Employment Probity; and/or a Police Check (National Police Certificate).

Students should be advised of any Criminal History Screening Check(s)/Police Check requirements for vocational placement during course induction processes, with reinforcement of the requirements, including whether you require a copy of their DCSI clearance letter or Police Check for your records or you just need to sight the clearance document(s), given to students during class/individual discussion on vocational placement. This will generally provide students with reasonable lead time to apply for the required check(s). Where such a check(s) is required by a Placement Provider, any fees associated with the requisite application(s) must be borne by the student.

To obtain a Criminal History Screening Check(s), students must complete the appropriate application form (refer [Application forms and payment](#)) and submit it, with the requisite fee, to Australia Post, who will redirect the request to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening Unit, or direct with the DCSI Screening Unit. For TAFE SA student applications, the DCSI Screening Unit requires either TAFE SA or the Placement Provider to be the Requesting Organisation. This should be pre-determined through the initial liaison between the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator and the Placement Provider. Where TAFE SA is going to be the Requesting Organisation, TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinators are authorised to be the Requesting Officer for the purposes of the application. It should be noted that no signature is required (TAFE SA is not paying the required fee). Where the Placement Provider is to be the Requesting Organisation, a representative from the Placement Provider must be the Requesting Officer.

A DCSI screening process will generally take about 20 business days, but may take longer in peak periods (e.g. January – April) or when DCSI identify a risk which requires further assessment of the applicant (more investigation and/or analysis) or if information provided is illegible, incorrect (e.g. spelling) or not provided at all. In such cases, the screening process may take up to 8 weeks or more.

The standard timeframe to process a Police check (National Police Certificate) is generally between 5 and 15 business days.

Should the DCSI Screening Unit not identify any issue following a student's screening check, the student will be sent a clearance letter confirming this. A subsequent email, advising that no issues were identified, will be sent to the Requesting Organisation. If the Requesting Organisation was TAFE SA, this will be forwarded to a TAFE SA Program Area responsible for coordinating that student's placement.

Where an issue is identified by the DCSI Screening Unit, contact will initially be made with the student and subsequently with the Requesting Organisation's Authorised Officer. For TAFE SA student related screenings, the Authorised Officer is the Executive Director, Education. The Authorised Officer will then liaise with the relevant Business Unit/Workgroup Manager re the impact to the student and their studies.

If the Requesting Organisation is the Placement Provider, an individual will have been nominated by that organisation to be an Authorised Officer for screening purposes and DCSI will liaise with that person after notifying the student.

Police Checks (National Police Certificates) can be applied for, by students, through <https://www.police.sa.gov.au/services-and-events/apply-for-a-police-record-check> or at any Police Station.

The DCSI Screening Unit website states that a clearance letter is currently **valid for 3 years** from the date of issue and that clearance letters are designed to be portable across relevant organisations within South Australia. A Police Check (National Police Certificate) only reflects the completeness and accuracy of the records accessed on **the date of issue**.

Placement Providers have the final say in determining whether to accept a DCSI clearance letter or a National Police Certificate and/or whether the content of a student's Criminal History Check(s)/Police Check will prevent the student's proposed placement with that Placement Provider.

## What if the student has identified additional needs?

Students with identified (as disclosed on the Vocational Placement Agreement) additional needs (which may include students from other cultural backgrounds with language or learning barriers, students with literacy/numeracy challenges, pregnant students, students with a disability or significant medical conditions and/or any substantiated reason why the student cannot comply with the requirements of a placement) will need additional workplace and safety considerations before being placed in a vocational placement.

TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinators will discuss a student's particular needs with the student before discussing a proposed appropriate placement. The student may require additional reasonable adjustment to placement arrangements or assessment procedures. The duty of care to a student with identified additional needs is higher than that of a student not having them, so particular attention should be paid to work health and safety aspects of a proposed placement.

With student consent, the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator will discuss any identified additional needs with you prior to finalising a placement opportunity.

In some cases, you may require the student to provide a medical clearance before they can start a proposed vocational placement.

## Medical Conditions/Immunisations

Pursuant to the Vocational Placement Agreement, a student proposing to undertake a vocational placement is obligated to advise their TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator and the Placement Provider of any known medical factors/conditions, including medication or treatment being taken/given in relation to the condition, that may affect the student, and/or be a safety issue to the Placement Provider and its staff, while on placement.

In some cases, a Placement Provider may require a student to have a medical examination before a proposed placement can commence. Should this occur, any medical costs incurred are to be borne by the student.

Some Placement Providers e.g. SA Health clinical (Nursing/Dental/ Aged Care/General Health/ Allied Health/ Pathology) facilities, require students proposing a placement in their facility to be appropriately immunised before the proposed placement can commence. This is generally required to meet clinical facility accreditation standards and to protect staff and patients/clients from vaccine preventable diseases.

The following site [http://in.tafesa.edu.au/programs/community/educational\\_staff.php](http://in.tafesa.edu.au/programs/community/educational_staff.php) details the protocols and documents relating to immunisation requirements of SA Health clinical facilities.

Students who refuse to have the requisite immunisations (whether for medical, religious or other reasons) may be prevented from undertaking a placement with a SA Health clinical facility. A refusal to have the requisite immunisations may impact on the student's ability to complete a vocational placement module and receive a qualification and may also impact on the future employability of the student in SA Health clinical facilities.

Where a student refuses to have the Placement Provider required immunisations, an alternative non-SA Health placement may be sourced or the student may be referred to the proposed Placement Provider for further discussion. It should be noted that this may be difficult to source a Placement Provider which does not require the recommended immunisations.

TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinators should discuss any immunisation requirements for a vocational placement with students at the beginning of the year and during class/individual discussion re vocational placement.

## What are the insurance arrangements for a student on vocational placement?

The TAFE SA insurance arrangements are detailed in the Schedule of Insurance attached to the Vocational Placement Agreement provided to you by the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator or the student.

Broadly, TAFE SA will provide capped personal accident cover to students for:

- out-of-pocket medical expenses (hospital, ambulance, dental, optical, physiotherapy, chemist and other related health care expenses, up to \$2,500 in aggregate), following initial pursuit of expense reimbursement/payment from Medicare/private health/other insurance policies/Health Care Card or other health care claim sources;
- lump sum and death benefits similar to employee entitlements under sections 43 and 44 of the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986* (SA) (**but NOT payable under that Act**);
- personal property loss or damage, up to \$300, resulting from an accident/incident which causes personal injury to the student or a third party and for which reimbursement/payment has been made under the TAFE SA insurance cover.

The cover includes personal injury suffered while travelling between their place of study (TAFE SA Campus) and the site of the vocational placement or between various sites of the Placement Provider for the purposes of the placement but does **NOT** extend to travel from the student's home or lodgings to the placement site.

Benefits payable under this personal accident cover may be denied should a student undertaking a vocational placement sustain injury or loss due to their direct or indirect serious or wilful misconduct.

In addition, TAFE SA will provide public liability indemnity cover:

- to TAFE SA staff or students for their legal liability, up to \$15 million, to third parties for personal injury or property damage resulting from TAFE SA's or the student's negligence. Third parties include a Placement Provider, its employees and site visitors; and
- to the placement Provider, up to \$15 million, for the legal liability of a Placement Provider with respect to a student who is injured as a result of the Placement Provider's negligence and chooses to pursue litigation, **following initial pursuit of a claim by the Placement Provider under its own public liability insurance(s)** (NB Placement Providers are required, on the Vocational Placement Agreement, to certify that formal or self-insurance arrangements are in place to cover the student during a vocational placement).

TAFE SA staff who visit a Placement Provider for the purposes of a vocational placement related activity, are covered under the State Government Workers Compensation arrangements.

### Who needs to be informed if a student is injured in an accident?

Should a student be injured in an accident while under your supervision, you should:

- provide first aid treatment on site or seek medical help immediately (as appropriate);
- for a notifiable incident, you will need to inform SafeWork SA
- contact the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator (in all cases) and the student's Emergency Contact (if the injury requires medical treatment). The contact details for the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator and the student's Emergency Contact are detailed in the Vocational Placement Agreement;
- ensure any medical practitioner treating the student is informed that the student is not an employee and any charges should be made out to the student, who may then initiate a claim in accordance with the TAFE SA insurance arrangements;
- ensure the student requests a medical certificate (non-Workers Compensation related) from the attending doctor;
- ensure you and the student complete a written report of the accident.

A copy of any documentation related to the accident e.g. Accident/Incident Report; witness statement(s) must be forwarded to the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator.

### What do I do if the student causes damage or loss whilst on placement?

If the student causes loss or damage that must be rectified urgently (e.g. a locksmith needs to be called in to ensure that your work premises can be secured if the student loses the keys), after informing the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator of the issue, you can proceed and make those arrangements immediately, rather than waiting for the Vocational Placement Coordinator to provide the paperwork required to make a claim.

### Do I need to consider any industrial relations issues?

As agreed with unions when vocational placements were first introduced, the hours of a vocational placement undertaken by a student should be no more than that stipulated in the *Vocational Placement Agreement* and in accordance with any applicable award for your industry sector. Where a Placement Provider and/or its industry body require a vocational placement to exceed the following guideline, you should contact the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator to discuss further.

Students are not to replace an employee (other than an employee on paid annual leave or sick leave), or used to reduce an employee's hours, or be used to replace employees on industrial action. In addition, the following guidelines apply:

- Students must not undertake placements for more than 240 hours per 12 month period; unless a specific exemption from the appropriate union has been sought and permission given, in writing;
- Students should not undertake more than 6 separate placements in a 12 month period;
- Students should not be placed with the same Placement Provider to do the same type of practical activities more than once in a 12 month period;
- The hours of the placement that a student does should be in accordance with the relevant industry award; and
- Students are instructed to contact their TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator immediately if they have any concerns relating to industrial issues/disputes or on site/personal safety issues.



## What do I do on the student's first day?

The student may be feeling nervous so you should try to make them feel welcome, relaxed and a "part of your team". You will need to induct the student as you would a new employee including, but not limited to:

- emergency evacuation procedures;
- policies and/or procedures that the student needs to be aware of and adhere to;
- relevant work, health and safety guidelines to be followed, as well as any safety equipment and clothing requirements;
- 'housekeeping' details e.g. location of toilets, kitchen/canteen facilities, telephone, secure storage for their personal belongings;
- start and finish times and when breaks are to be taken;
- any security/confidentiality arrangements;
- introducing the student to other staff members with whom they are likely to come into contact with during the placement; and
- if the student will be dealing with customers/clients, identify the student (e.g. with an appropriate badge) so that customers or clients will know the individual is new/in training.

## How do I plan the placement?

You may wish to:

- consider the current skills of the student, the skills that the student needs to achieve, the learning objectives and the activities to be undertaken to achieve this, as discussed with the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator;
- discuss the skills to be learnt and the activities to be undertaken with the student;
- sequence the skills by starting with the simple ones first, then moving on to the more difficult skills as the student becomes more able and confident;
- set work aside for the student to do when placement day approaches.

Where possible, it is preferable to group a series of skills together so that the student can obtain an overall picture of the job and see how the skills are related. For example, to re-stock shelves in a supermarket, a student will learn skills such as stock rotation, using pricing equipment and workplace health and safety practices.

A plan is only a guide for you and the student. It should be flexible enough so that if unexpected tasks occur during a placement day, the student will benefit from these and assist your workplace.

## How do I help the student learn the skills?

During the period of the placement, you should provide the student with opportunities to perform the skills multiple times and where possible, under different conditions, range of situations and/or a variety of scenarios. This will show the student how various skills are transferrable between different organisational roles. In some instances, this will be specified in their logbook (if applicable) as it is a mandatory assessment requirement. By doing this and receiving feedback from you, the student is able to practise the skill until he/she is able to perform it competently.

Feedback to the student during the placement (during a particular activity/task or in time set aside at the end of the day specifically for this purpose) may be verbal and/or written to provide them with an idea of how they are progressing. Feedback can highlight areas in which the student needs to improve. Positive comments also give the student motivation and confidence and you will find that this will improve the student's performance.

## What is my role in a student's assessment?

In order to be assessed as achieving a skill, a student needs to demonstrate the skills undertaken while on placement. TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinators overseeing a student placement(s) within your organisation will discuss the range of activities/tasks for the placement which will enable the student to fulfil the training required for assessment. You will also be advised of how to document your observations and assessment. It is also your role to monitor and advise the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator of the student's progress.

Your observation and assessment of the student's skills can occur during or towards the end of the placement, depending on how quickly the student learns and what he/she already knows.

The student needs to demonstrate that they can perform the real-life task associated with the skill. When supervising the student, the skills should be demonstrated in real life situations and must be observed by you. If a situation arises where this is not possible, other ways could include:

- setting up a 'simulated' situation, for example, imitating stock receiving procedures;
- asking the student questions to explain a situation, for example, evacuation procedures or a safety procedure. Answers can be verbal or written depending on your preference.

Ideally, recording your observations, assessment and any feedback should be completed in the presence of the student. This will give you and the student the opportunity to discuss some of the decisions and to clarify them if necessary. Should you not feel comfortable with completing the assessment record in the presence of the student or you require some assistance, you should liaise with the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator.

Should a student leave the placement before the end of the allocated time, you may wish to sign off some of the skills achieved up to that date.

In some cases, TAFE SA will require your observations and assessment to be recorded in a TAFE SA Student Logbook (if applicable) or other documentation. The student is responsible for the Logbook/other documentation and will need to provide it to you to sign off the relevant activities/tasks completed and the skills acquired after observing the student undertaking/demonstrating these activities/tasks.

The TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator will liaise with you (as the industry expert) to determine whether the student has satisfactorily demonstrated the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to satisfactorily complete the vocational placement module of their course.

However your observations and assessment are recorded, the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator is ultimately responsible for determining the student's competency.

### **What do I do with the student if I am too busy to supervise them?**

There may be times when your work commitments mean you are too busy to organise tasks for the student. If this happens, you can:

- organise work and/or routine tasks for the student that can be done without your supervision. This can be documented by a list of simple duties that the student can do which you can subsequently check on at a later time;
- organise with other staff members to give the student relevant tasks; and/or
- encourage the student to read organisational policies and procedures or manuals, brochures and publications that are relevant to the duties they are undertaking.

### **Can a placement be terminated?**

A placement may be terminated at any time by TAFE SA (including on behalf of the student), by notice in writing to the student and the Placement Provider. A notice of termination by TAFE SA should be sent by the appropriate Educational Manager. In writing such letters, Educational Managers should be mindful of using emotive text or including references to unsubstantiated claims.

A Placement Provider may also wish to terminate the placement, with or without cause. Where a Placement Provider wishes to terminate a placement due to alleged behavioural issues of the student, this should generally only occur after the student has been given notice of the proposed termination, the rationale for the decision to terminate and an opportunity to respond, through the Vocational Placement Coordinator, to the allegation(s) against them (the principles of natural justice/procedural fairness).

Any inappropriate student behaviour identified while on placement will be managed in accordance with the *TAFE SA Student Conduct and Discipline Policy*.

Notwithstanding this general approach, a placement may be terminated instantly, at the instigation of any party, in the event of a critical incident.

### **What do I do when the vocational placement has finished?**

When the placement has finished, you may wish to interview the student to discuss:

- whether they enjoyed the placement;
- the benefits of the placement;
- any issues or concerns that arose during their time on placement;
- your feedback on, and assessment of, their performance; and
- possible improvements / considerations to be undertaken prior to future placements.

You will need to sign off on the student's placement (through a Student Logbook or other document provided by the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator). Normally, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student logbook (or other document) is completed correctly. He/she would have organised for the assessment of skills to be initialled and dated by you or the workplace supervisor you have nominated. It is also the student's responsibility to make sure that the completed Logbook or other document is provided to the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Co-ordinator as soon as possible after the completion of the placement.

This process is generally undertaken on the last day of the placement. However, if you are too busy on the student's last day, organise with the student to discuss the placement and for them to collect the Logbook/other document as soon as possible after their last day of placement.

**Who do I contact if I need help or if something goes wrong?**

The TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator you have been in contact with is your anchor, as they are the link between TAFE SA, the student and your organisation. The Coordinator will respond to any queries you may have about the placement and ensure that the vocational placement runs as smoothly as possible. It is their role to provide support to all parties and monitor the progress of the placement and to sort out any issues that may arise.

Contact should be made as soon as possible so potential or likely solutions can be identified and initiated quickly. The contact details for the TAFE SA Vocational Placement Coordinator linked to the placement at your organisation are detailed on the Vocational Placement Agreement.