

Practical Placements – Host Employer Information

Thank you for becoming involved in our practical placement program. Your participation in this program will help participants gain valuable experience in the practical skills required in their course. You will be playing an important role in preparing participants for future work.

What is a practical placement?

A practical placement is structured workplace learning that prepares participants for the workforce. It is a component of many courses, designed to help participants better understand what they have learned by putting it into practice in the workplace. Participants on practical placement are given the opportunity to perform tasks relating to their course in an appropriate industry setting.

Why is it important that there is a signed Practical Placement Agreement?

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETRA) requires a placement to be arranged through a written agreement between the Registered Training Organisation (NIET), the participant and the host employer.

The Practical Placement Agreement is a legal agreement designed to:

- formalise the arrangements and conditions between the host employer, the participant and the Registered Training Organisation (NIET);
- define the placement so that all parties involved understand their responsibilities and rights;
- be a safeguard if a problem should occur during the placement;
- activate the Department's WorkCover insurance
- be kept in case any legal or insurance proceedings arise.

Without the Practical Placement Agreement, a participant who incurs an injury while on a placement may not be entitled to compensation under the Department's insurance policy.

What are the advantages?

As a host employer, participation in the practical placement will enable you to:

- have access, without obligation, to prospective employees who have had some formal training;
- have access to prospective part time, full time or casual employees;
- gain community goodwill for helping participants improve their skills and increase their employment opportunities; and
- improve productivity in your industry by making training programs more relevant.

Are there any costs?

On 1st January 2011, the Acting Secretary of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development made an order under section 5.4.20 of the ETRA to the effect that students of an RTO are not required to be paid for work while undertaking practical placement. Whilst students are not required to be paid, host employers are able to elect to provide payment to the student should they wish to do so.

How does practical placement work?

The student or the Student Support Coordinator (SSC) will contact you directly regarding practical placement. The SSC can be contacted at the NIET office if you have any enquiries prior or throughout the student's time with you. It is up to NIET or the student to advise you prior for any special considerations that may arise (for example – shortened hours, medical conditions etc)

The Student Placement book will describe details of the proposed placement, including:

- the type of work that the participant will need to undertake during their time with you
- A formal workplace agreement explaining in detail responsibilities of all parties, workcover information and general details
- Log book for recording placement hours, and any applicable third party observations required by their supervisor you allocate

A Police Check OR Working with Children Check may be required, pending industry and organisational policies, procedures and regulations

You may wish to interview the participant before the placement commences to make sure that the participant is appropriate for your workplace. The participant will be placed in your organisation for the duration of the agreed time to learn certain work-related skills.

Workplace Health and Safety

- All students will be required to be supervised at all times
- Any equipment or resources used onsite must be safe for use, with the employer making every effort to ensure that the working environment is a safe workspace
- Any personal protective equipment is supplied for the purposes of undertaking placement tasks

The student placement book will provide a good outline of what is required and supervision that would be suit the learner, the degree of skill development required and the level of OHS competency already acquired by the participant.

What responsibilities are involved?

EMPLOYER

1. Will discuss with the RTO the type of activities which the student will undertake on practical placement to ensure they are:
 - relevant and directly related to, and at the appropriate skill level, for the training outcomes of the unit of competency or course the student is undertaking, and
 - useful for the vocation and employment outcomes of the unit or course.
2. Will plan and carry out the student's program of activities as outline in the practical placement book providing students with opportunity to access various job tasks, equipment and resources.
3. Will consult with the Student Support Coordinator if they consider it necessary to terminate the arrangement before the agreed practical placement end date.
4. Will nominate a supervisor (or supervisors) for the student, and will be supervised at all times.
5. Will comply with relevant occupational health and safety and workplace relations legislation and standards with respect to the student.
6. Will permit the RTO's Student Support Coordinator, RTO representatives or assessors to access the workplace and contact the student at any reasonable time during the practical placement.
7. Will ensure that the practical placement arrangement is not used as a substitute for the

employment of employees or the engagement of contractors.

8. Will maintain the confidentiality of any health information that has been disclosed in relation to the student and will only disclose this information to another party if treatment is required for a known medical condition or in the case of a medical emergency.
9. Will notify the Student Support Coordinator as soon as practicable if the student is absent, injured or becomes ill in the course of undertaking the practical placement.
10. In case of an emergency, the employer will contact the student's emergency contact person and the Student Support Coordinator.
11. Inform NIET if they require notification directly from the Student Support Coordinator when a placement visit is going to occur (NOTE: Students are reminded that they must coordinate this with their supervisor prior to setting a time for a visit).

NIET

1. Ensuring there is a written practical placement agreement between the RTO and the host employer (this agreement).
2. Ensuring that the work experience undertaken by the student on practical placement is:
 - directly related to, and is at the appropriate skill level, for the training outcomes of the unit of competency or course it is providing, and
 - useful for vocation and employment outcomes of the course it is providing.
3. Ensuring that the minimum duration of its student's practical placement meets minimum hours required, and a maximum of 38 hours to be worked in any one week. If more than the minimum amount of hours of practical placement OR 38 hours per week is required, the RTO is responsible for justifying that additional hours are required to meet the course outcomes for the particular student concerned, having regard to the welfare of the student concerned. This may also be considered based on employer/trainer feedback.
4. Keeping records detailing the reason for any decision to require its student to undertake more than a total of 180 hours or 38 hours per week, for the practical placement component of the course or unit of competency the student is undertaking.
5. Securely filing the signed original of this agreement and giving a copy to both the employer and the student (kept on file for student reference).
6. Will support the student in finding a host for their practical placement. NOTE: Students are also permitted to organise this on their own, however will be required to inform the Student Support Coordinator for the purposes of record keeping and making contact with the employer.
7. Trainer/Assessor will visit onsite for the purposes of assessment, and will directly coordinate this with their student.
8. Ensuring that the training the student has received in a classroom based environment OR simulated environment has been used to develop the skills and knowledge required prior OR during placement.
9. Ensure that the Student Support Coordinator is available to answer any further enquiries. If the Student Support Coordinator is unavailable, the Operations Coordinator OR Learning and Development Manager may be contacted in their absence.

Student

- Agree to take part in this practical placement arrangement as part of their vocational training, and agree this does not constitute an employment relationship between the student and the employer.
- Will carry out all reasonable and lawful directions of the employer and perform their work to the best of their ability.
- Will comply with all reasonable workplace rules and requirements governing safety and behaviour.
- Will attend the workplace on each day at the agreed time.
- Will inform both the employer and the practical placement coordinator as soon as practicable if

they are unable to attend work.

- Will promptly inform the employer and the practical placement coordinator of any accident, injury or incident that may occur.
- Will dress in accordance with workplace guidelines.
- Will inform the Student Support Coordinator and employer of any necessary health information, including details of any known medical condition which may affect them and any medication or treatment which may be necessary.
- Will be responsible for their transport to and from the workplace.

Work Cover Arrangements

The Department of Education and Training has a WorkCover insurance policy with CGU Workers Compensation Victoria. The insurance is designed to cover the host employers providing work placements in the event of a student sustaining an injury while on practical placement. The Department meets premium costs, including any increase in premiums as a result of claims.

In order to activate the insurance, a written Practical Placement Agreement is mandatory. It is the responsibility of NIET to ensure that the Practical Placement Agreement has been correctly completed to activate this insurance. The absence of this agreement may result in a participant injured during a placement not receiving compensation under the Department's insurance policy.

WorkCover does not cover any employee, including practical placement participants, traveling to or from work.

The Victorian WorkCover Authority has advised the Department on how the *return to work* and *occupational rehabilitation* provisions in the Accident Compensation Act 1985 apply to participants on practical placement.

Return to placement

If a student is injured during a placement and is later able to return to the placement, the host employer should provide placement in the same or an equivalent position for the remaining portion of the original agreement. The host employer has no employment obligation to a student on practical placement.

Before a student returns to complete a placement, NIET must satisfy itself that the workplace is safe and the student will not be at further risk. If NIET is not satisfied about the safety of the host employer, then an alternative placement will be organised.

How is a WorkCover claim lodged?

If a student is injured during a placement, the procedure below should be followed for lodging a WorkCover claim:

- the **student** completes and signs a **Worker's Claim for Compensation** form with the assistance of the host employer and/or NIET (if required);
- NIET completes and signs the Employer section of the Worker's Injury Claim form and an Employer Injury Claim Report form, in consultation with the host employer if necessary
- NIET clearly marks on both forms 'practical placement claim'.

NIET will then forward the original copy of both claim forms, any medical certificates and accounts and a certified copy of the Practical Placement Agreement to:

**Claims Manager
CGU Workers Compensation Victoria
Phone: 13 24 81**

Despite these procedures, nothing prevents any of the parties in law from lodging claims directly with CGU.

NIET must forward these forms to CGU **within 10 days** of receiving the forms from the host employer. Copies of all forms and records should be permanently filed in case legal or insurance proceedings arise.

The Worker's Claim for Compensation and the Employer Claim Report forms are available from any post office. Host employers are also encouraged to keep copies that are readily available. Note: The above is necessary to establish any entitlement to compensation that an injured participant may have under the Department's insurance policy.