## Work Placement in Human Services

<table>
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Work Placement in Human Services

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Work Placement in Human Services

Work placement is a mandatory HSC requirement within the Human Services Curriculum Framework and appropriate hours have been assigned to each HSC VET course within the Framework according to the qualification being undertaken.

Learning in the workplace will enable students to:
• progress towards the achievement of industry competencies
• develop appropriate attitudes towards work
• learn a range of behaviours appropriate to the industry
• practise and apply skills acquired in the classroom or workshop
• develop additional skills and knowledge, including the employability skills (refer to the Employability Skills in Human Services document).

Work placement requirements

Students must complete the following work placement for Human Services Curriculum Framework courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification entered</th>
<th>360-hour course</th>
<th>240-hour course</th>
<th>60-hour specialisation study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Aged Care</td>
<td>105 hours</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
<td>no additional hours required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance</td>
<td>105 hours</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Health Services Assistance assisting in nursing work in acute care</td>
<td>105 hours including 20 hours in an acute care setting</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Health Services Assistance generic – all other work functions</td>
<td>105 hours</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate III in Health Services Assistance operating theatre technician work</td>
<td>105 hours including 20 hours in an acute care setting</td>
<td>70 hours</td>
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</table>
Work placement is to be undertaken in an appropriate community service/health work environment.

Students should be at least 16 years old to undertake the work placement for this Framework as they will be in a work environment with vulnerable people and duty of care requires a substantial level of maturity. Any variation of this requirement must be with the explicit approval of the school or college, registered training organisation (RTO) and host employer.

Non-completion of work placement is grounds for withholding the course. Schools and colleges are advised to follow the issuing of ‘N’ determinations as outlined in the Board of Studies Assessment, Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual.

**Work placement in community services/health industries**

Students undertaking courses within Human Services may be required to:

- undergo occupational screening
- undertake a criminal record check (see [www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au)).

**Provision for simulation**

It is permissible for up to 35 hours of work placement to be undertaken in a simulated work environment.

This provision for simulation does not include the minimum work placement requirement in an acute care setting for Certificate III in Health Services Assistance assisting in nursing work in acute care or operating theatre technician work.

**Guidelines for work placement in a simulated work environment**

A simulated work environment should be authentic and as far as possible reproduce and replicate a community services/health workplace. Tasks, activities and conditions need to be as close as possible to real-life situations.

RTOs should consider forming a partnership with local community services/health enterprises and/or tertiary providers. This may provide access to equipment, other resources and workplace documentation, as well as advice on how to create a realistic simulated environment and feedback on the authenticity of assessment activities. It may also provide a venue for workplace visits or future work placement for students.

When planning for work placement in a simulated work environment:

- where practical, use a space that is not the usual training environment (or alter the training environment so that it reflects a real workplace setting)
- apply operational procedures and occupational health and safety requirements as they would be in a real work setting
- provide a code of conduct for the students promoting safe and ethical behaviour – students need to be made fully aware of, and act in accordance with:
  - their responsibilities in terms of standards of behaviour,
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- occupational health and safety requirements, and
- the range of duties they are authorised to perform (according to their skills and knowledge)

- use facilities, equipment, technology and other resources that meet current industry standards:
  - consult with industry experts on what is normally used in the workplace and should be included
  - check real workplaces to get ideas about ways of setting up work spaces and equipment

- incorporate relevant industry and workplace guidelines, policy, protocols and procedures:
  - consult with industry experts on current practice

- provide opportunities for students to:
  - experience a range of workplace settings/contexts, job roles and job activities
  - experience application of care and/or service standards involving a range of clients and colleagues (including diverse types of clients and colleagues and difficult clients and colleagues)
  - work individually, with a partner and in teams
  - use typical workplace/industry documentation
  - develop generic competencies and/or employability skills such as occupational health and safety, communication, using technology, teamwork, problem solving and initiative

- provide opportunities for integrated work performance:
  - task skills – performing the task
  - task management skills – managing a number of tasks and prioritising competing tasks (for example, sufficient client ‘traffic’ that accurately reflects the complexity of a role and allows learners to deal with multiple tasks simultaneously)
  - contingency management skills – dealing with workplace irregularities (such as unexpected problems, breakdowns and changes in routine)
  - job/role environment skills – fulfilling responsibilities and dealing with expectations and pressures of a job and workplace
  - transferring competencies to new contexts
  - performance over time

- ensure realistic allocation of time to tasks and deadlines (time frames that reflect accepted industry service times)
- operate within workplace/industry-realistic budgetary constraints
- use case studies and scenarios based on ‘real’ workplace functions/activities
- develop projects aligned to workplace functions (outcomes/products/processes may be used in collection of evidence for assessment purposes).

Assessment in a simulated work environment

Simulation is a form of evidence gathering that involves the student completing or dealing with a task, activity or problem in an off-the-job situation that replicates a workplace context.

Many qualifications and units of competency in the Community Services (CHC08) and Health (HLT07) Training Packages have specific requirements relating to assessment involving observation in the workplace and acceptable simulation. Refer to the CHC08 and HLT07 Training Package’s Assessment Guidelines, as well as the Evidence Guide of each unit of competency. The Training Packages are available at www.ntis.gov.au.
Where evidence collected/completed in a simulated work environment is to be used to assess performance against unit(s) of competency, it is expected that:

- the standards and integrity of the Training Package(s) are maintained
- simulation will be conducted as detailed in each individual unit of competency
- assessment tasks/events support holistic assessment practices
- a variety of assessment methods/tools are used (taking into account the needs of the student while maintaining the integrity of the unit of competency or cluster of units)
- assessments in simulated workplaces are:
  - valid (assesses what it says it does)
  - reliable (other assessors would make the same judgement if they reviewed the same evidence)
  - flexible (the needs of the student are taken into account in terms of the methods, the time and the place)
  - fair (the assessment allows all students to demonstrate their competence) and
  - current
- prior to the assessment event students are adequately prepared and have an opportunity for briefing and self-assessment, as well as participating in debrief after the event
- variables in the range statement of unit(s) of competency are incorporated (as appropriate)
- resources required to demonstrate competence as detailed in the evidence guide of unit(s) of competency are utilised
- questions will be developed based on the essential knowledge contained in unit(s) of competency to be assessed
- scenarios will be developed based on essential skills contained within unit(s) of competency to be assessed
- reliable evidence of workplace performance of related tasks/activities will be collected over a period of time
- comprehensive assessment checklists are used to identify critical performance criteria and inform holistic judgements
- validity and reliability testing of the simulation event will occur (validate methods, context and concepts with industry/workplace representatives to ensure the accuracy of the assessment approach).

**Work placement and part-time work**

Under some circumstances, students’ part-time work in an appropriate workplace may be used to fulfil work placement requirements. For further details, teachers and principals should consult the Assessment, Certification and Examination (ACE) Manual or relevant Board of Studies Official Notices.

**Work placement implementation**

The scheduling of work placement should reflect student readiness and complement off-the-job learning programs.

Teachers should use their professional judgement in the selection of relevant work placements in related industry areas and the mix of community services/health-specific and more general workplace experience undertaken by each student.
Work placement should occur in appropriate workplaces within the community services/health industry. For example:

- public and private hospitals
- aged care facility (residential and community)
- rehabilitation centre/facility
- allied health practices (such as physiotherapy, podiatry, occupational therapy and speech therapy)
- rural health facility (such as multi-purpose service or shelter)
- medical centre
- GP super clinic
- Aboriginal medical centre
- disability service
- community health centre.

For units of competency that must be assessed in a community services or health work environment, work placement provides an opportunity to collect evidence required for a student to be deemed competent.

The mandatory work placement requirements for courses in this Framework are not intended to indicate the time required for the achievement of units of competency. The amount of learning in the workplace that is needed to achieve a unit of competency will vary.

It is the responsibility of the school or college and/or RTO to determine how course outcomes are best achieved and to structure delivery accordingly. If additional work placement or classroom time is required to enable individual students or class groups to achieve the competencies, this will be determined by the deliverer, but it does not affect the indicative HSC hours.

Further information and advice on the implementation of work placement are contained in policy statements or guidelines available from the relevant school system or the RTO.

**Work placement coordination**

It will be essential that Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), schools or colleges and work placement brokers work collaboratively to maximise work placement opportunities to support students’ access to particular assessment environments, learning experiences and opportunities for the gathering of evidence for assessment.

**Principles underpinning work placement in the Higher School Certificate**

The Board of Studies has formally endorsed the following principles relating to work placement in Higher School Certificate (HSC) VET courses.

**Preamble**

Industry curriculum frameworks have been developed to provide students with the opportunity to gain credit towards the NSW HSC and credit towards national vocational qualifications under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
Industry curriculum frameworks are derived from national Training Packages. Courses within the frameworks specify the range of industry-developed units of competency from the relevant Training Packages that have been identified as suitable for the purposes of the HSC. VET courses in industry curriculum frameworks are aligned to national vocational qualifications.

Although not all Training Packages mandate work placement it is a mandatory HSC requirement of each course within the frameworks. Indicative hours have been assigned to the work placement requirement for each course.

The following principles should be read in conjunction with any school system’s documentation relating to work placement, for example the Industry Curriculum Implementation Guidelines (ICIG) [formerly the Industry Curriculum Framework Information Package (ICFIP)].

**Principle 1**
Work placement must have a clearly articulated and documented purpose. The structure of the work-based learning experience needs to be planned and developmental.

A range and number of purposes are possible including, for example:
- learning about a particular industry, workplace culture and career opportunities
- practising skills learnt off the job
- developing new skills
- improving work-related skills
- developing skills including employability skills such as teamwork, using technology and problem-solving
- achieving entry-level competencies
- achieving workplace performance of particular competency standards
- assessing in a realistic environment or allowing for holistic assessment
- providing opportunities to build skills in a developmental manner from the simple to the complex
- providing opportunities for the learner to reflect on the workplace learning experience in the context of individual current knowledge and understanding
- encouraging students to undertake further education and training.

**Principle 2**
The scheduling of the work placement should reflect student readiness and should complement off-the-job learning programs.

The scheduling of the work placement should take account of:
- whether or not students are workplace-ready in terms of the competencies they will need to develop and demonstrate in the workplace
- how the timing of the work placement links to overall course planning
- the degree of flexibility available at both the workplace and the school
- how the alignment of both on- and off-the-job competencies can be best achieved.
An individual work placement program focusing on a developmental approach should be negotiated with the workplace supervisor/employer. This approach should focus on students moving from simple to more complex tasks. Dependence on supervision should reduce over time as students move towards greater independence in the workplace. The ultimate goal of a work placement should be competence and autonomy in the range of tasks required for the job being undertaken.

**Principle 3**

Work placement should be relevant to the VET courses being undertaken.

The ‘real’ tasks being undertaken in the workplace should complement the tasks and learning being undertaken by the students in their VET courses at school. Work placement may also provide students with the opportunity of having learning outcomes/units of competency assessed in the workplace by accredited trainers and assessors.

**Principle 4**

Work placement can provide opportunities for work-based assessment.

Not all industry curriculum frameworks specify that it is mandatory for competencies to be assessed in the workplace. Assessment events should relate to overall course planning and the purpose of the work placement. In a competency-based course, assessment of competencies is criterion-referenced. This means that a participant’s performance is judged against a prescribed standard – not against the performance of other participants.

The purpose of assessment is to judge competence on the basis of performance against the performance criteria set out under each element of competency. A participant is judged either competent or not yet competent.

Competency-based assessment is based on the requirements of the workplace. Competence incorporates all aspects of work performance, including problem-solving and the capacity to apply skills and knowledge in both familiar and new situations. Assessment of competence involves the assessment of skills and knowledge combined.

Assessors should adopt an integrated or holistic approach to assessment. This means that a number of elements of competency or even several units of competency are assessed together. This method of assessment is encouraged in line with the concept of competence as the integration of a wide range of skills, knowledge and attitudes.