

# VETDSS vocational work placement – insurance - guidelines

Industry Training and Programs

<b>Document title</b>	VETDSS vocational work placement – insurance - guidelines
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<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Director, Early Years and Education Services
<b>Date approved</b>	21 February 2022
<b>Document review</b>	February 2025
<b>TRM number</b>	50:D22:7105

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
5.1	February 2022	Industry Training and Programs	Updates to template
5	January 2019	Industry Training and Programs	Review to ensure compliance with insurance requirements, updates to template and terminology

Acronyms	Full form
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
IEO	Industry Engagement Officers
NT	Northern Territory
RTO	Registered training organisations
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETDSS	Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students
VWP	Vocational Work Placement

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## 1. Introduction

These guidelines support stakeholders with the range of matters that require consideration in relation to Vocational Work Placement (VWP) insurance.

## 2. Definitions

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian Education and Training system. It incorporates the qualifications for each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met.

General Construction Induction Training is the White Card that is delivered by an approved Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to obtain a valid white card.

Industry Engagement Officers (IEOS) are employed by the department to liaise with industry, schools and RTOs to coordinate on the job training through VWP to the student's Vocational Education and Training Delivered to Secondary Students (VETDSS) qualification.

RTOs are authorised through ASQA to deliver training or conduct assessments and issue nationally recognised qualifications.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) enables students to acquire workplace skills through nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course. A VETDSS qualification is issued by an RTO. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace.

VETDSS is the same as all other VET but refers only to students in year 9 and above, and the same quality standards apply.

VET Quality Framework is aimed at achieving greater national consistency in the way providers are registered and monitored, and in how standards in the VET sector are enforced.

VWP is the on-the-job training that is delivered through a VET course ensuring students have industry skills and knowledge to transition into further education, training and/or employment.

Working at Heights is a Working Safely at Heights unit that must be completed for any students who are working above floor level or where there is a risk of a fall. A risk of a fall means a circumstance that exposes a worker, while at work, to a fall that is reasonably likely to cause injury to the worker or other person. Once a Working Safely at Heights unit has been completed a student is able to work up to a height of 11 metres.

Working with Children Clearance Notice is required for any person over the age of 15 years who works or volunteers in child-related employment for more than 14 (consecutive or non-consecutive) days in a 12-month period unless an exemption applies under section 186 or 187 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*.

## 3. Guidelines

Government school students participating in authorised VWP as part of VETDSS, are covered by NT Government self-insurance.

Non-government schools are required to make their own arrangements to cover their students on VWP.

Students participating in VWP do so without direct teacher or trainer supervision.

All activities performed in the workplace must comply with age and legislation requirements. Where legislation provides age restrictions, these must be adhered to.

Industry Training Programs will assist workplaces to minimise the risk to students undertaking VWP.

### 3.1. Activities requiring risk management strategies

Students may be placed in VWP that is associated with employment that attracts higher risk as part of VET training. Risk management strategies for these placements must be clearly articulated on the VWP form.

Risk management strategies may take the form of a written risk assessment, increased level of physical safety, additional accreditation, standard or up skilling the student. The type of risk assessment will be dependent on the task.

All activities requiring risk management strategies must be approved and signed by the principal.

VWP activities requiring a risk management strategy include:

- above ground mining
- oil or gas fields and refineries
- driving or a passenger in watercraft
- underwater diving using snorkeling or scuba equipment
- use of motor bikes and quad bikes related to rural operations
- operating farm vehicles related to rural operations
- working with animals
- working at heights or in excavations, near utilities, or in traffic areas
- abattoirs.

Students must wear appropriate personal protective equipment for all activities.

### 3.2. Prohibited activities

Students can lack the experience, knowledge, confidence and skills to identify and deal with potential risks. Inexperience and a lack of awareness can increase the likelihood of a student being injured.

There are some activities that are not suitable for students participating in VET and there are others where special consideration requires specific approval from both the principal and the Director Training and Careers.

The following activities are prohibited for secondary students during VWP.

### 3.2.1. Maritime

- travel in a vessel not in survey
- travel outside the nautical mile limit according to the vessel survey
- working on a vessel overnight.

### 3.2.2. Construction

- underground mining
- any excavation work at a depth greater than one metre, or near utilities
- work on permanent or temporary structures used to enable construction work in maritime environments
- working in a roof cavity
- any activities involving, or adjacent to, the repair, removal or demolition of any construction work containing asbestos, or in the clean-up process following the activity
- attendance at a site while buildings are being demolished.

### 3.2.3. Agriculture and Conservation Land Management Activities

- use machinery or equipment which may be dangerous for new or young students, unless each of the following occurs:
  - the student is given appropriate information, instruction and training, and a checklist for the safe operation and handling of the equipment
  - the equipment is in safe working order, complete with required safety devices or guards, and student PPE is always worn
  - a suitable qualified or experienced person in the workplace who has good communication skills and the ability to give clear instructions provides on-going close supervision.

### 3.2.4. General

- the service of alcohol where the student is under 18
- any work of a sexual or explicit nature
- travel by helicopter or aircraft that is not a commercial flight
- working sites that require the use of explosives
- working where asbestos is present
- driving any unregistered vehicles.

### 3.3. Risk management activities

The following activities are condoned only if the risk management strategies are followed:

#### 3.3.1. Maritime

- vessel must be in survey
- stay within the nautical mile limit according to the vessel survey
- stay within Australian waters
- student must have obtained Elements of Shipboard Safety
- student must have obtained swim and survive certificate.

#### 3.3.2. Aged care and childcare

- a Working with Children Clearance Notice is required for any person over the age of 15 years who works or volunteers in 'child-related employment' for more than 14 days in a 12-month period, unless an exemption applies under section 186 or 187 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*
- students being placed in aged care facilities need to obtain a police clearance.

#### 3.3.3. Construction and Electrotechnology

- student must have a Construction White Card or a current statement of attainment
- student must have completed a Working Safely at Heights unit of competency
- any excavation work at a depth under one metre the student must be under direct supervision by a competent person.

#### 3.3.4. Engineering

- student must have completed a Working Safely at Heights unit of competency.

#### 3.3.5. Hospitality

- if the student is over 18 years, the activity must be essential to the placement and have been agreed to by the school or RTO
- the student must have completed the Responsible Service of Alcohol Training Course
- students under 18 must obtain parent permission to work in an environment where there will be alcohol present.

#### 3.3.6. Plumbing

- student must have a Construction White Card or a current statement of attainment
- student must have completed a Working Safely at Heights unit of competency
- student must have completed a Confined Space unit of competency.

### 3.3.7. Vehicle Use

Any activity requiring a licence, permit, or certificate of competence is prohibited unless:

- the student already has the relevant current licence, permit or certificate
- the activity is directly related to the learning outcomes of the placement
- the activity is included in the student placement record prior to approval

Placements involving the student operation of golf carts, quad bikes, tractors or other farm vehicles require approval from the principal. For these activities to be approved, the student must be at least 16 years of age, the vehicle must be safe for a student to operate and appropriate PPE equipment must be provided and worn.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1. Employers

- must have current public liability and workers compensation insurance
- must supply adequate supervision
- must conduct a student workplace induction.

### 4.2. IEOs

- are responsible for keeping records of all VWP
- ensure all stakeholders have signed the VWP Forms to acknowledge their roles and responsibilities during the VWP
- confirm or complete a workplace observation, or arrange for a risk assessment, or ensure that risk management strategies are in place prior to the commencement of VWP
- provide both the student and the host workplace with an information booklet. The host booklet must contain emergency contact details.

### 4.3. Non-government schools

- make their own insurance arrangements to cover students on VWP
- must provide insurance Certificates of Currency to the IEO before their students can be placed.

### 4.4. NT Government

- self-insures government school students in the workplace for VWP.

### 4.5. Principals

- approve or decline the student application to participate in VWP
- must sign forms for placements that require a risk management strategy
- must sign VWP forms for students aged under 15 years
- can delegate his/her signature to another officer for other VWPs.



## 4.6. VET Coordinators

- ensure that students are prepared for the workplace
- ensure that a debrief of students has occurred after the VWP
- are the initial point of contact about student issues and concerns.

## 4.7. Students

- must comply with Workplace Health and Safety workplace requirements
- must take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- must ensure that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons.

## 4.8. RTOs

- trainers must ensure that the student has attained a level of skills or knowledge that makes them competent to participate in VWP
- ensure that students have participated in the mandatory Work Health and Safety units of competency prior to engaging in VWP.

# 5. Ensuring a safe workplace

## 5.1. Workplace checklist

IEOs and other nominated Industry Training Programs staff must complete at least the Ensure a Safe Workplace competency to be able to complete an observation on a workplace and indicate that they are suitable for VWP activities. Observations on workplaces must be against the approved checklist.

Where the employer has appropriate existing risk management strategies, these can be used as evidence of WHS compliance.

Where there are no appropriate pre-existing risk management strategies, an IEO or other authorised person with an appropriate qualification will complete a risk assessment workplace by workplace.

## 5.2. Student induction prior to VWP

The principal has a responsibility to ensure, in so far as reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of students participating in VWP is not put at risk by their participation or attendance at the workplace.

Schools should ensure that students are aware of:

- dealing with workplace bullying, harassment and sexual harassment
- their rights and responsibilities in the workplace
- accident and emergency procedures.

The following may also be included where applicable:

- safe travel to and from workplace
- business confidentiality

- interpersonal skills
- personal grooming and hygiene
- dress codes for the workplace
- following reasonable requests
- required or random drug and alcohol testing
- video surveillance
- observe employer requirements for mobile phones, iPods, etc.
- protocols for internet use.

### 5.3. Debrief after VWP

The VET Coordinator must confirm that students have discussed and reflected on their VWP.

## 6. Related policy, legislation and documents

### 6.1. Northern Territory

Education Act 2015

Information Act 2002

Care and Protection of Children Act 2007

Anti-Discrimination Act 1992

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011

Training and Skills Development Act 2016

### 6.2. National

Preparing Secondary Students for Work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015

The VET Quality Framework comprises the following legislation:

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- Fit and Proper Person Requirements Act 2011
- Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements 2011
- Data Provision Requirements 2012
- National Vocation Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
- Australian Qualifications Framework (second edition 2013).