



Work Experience Placement programme

The Work Experience Placement (WEP) programme is a new initiative announced as part of the Australian Government's Welfare to Work reforms to help more Australians into work. This programme is available for Job Network and Disability Employment Network from 1 January 2007, and will be available for Vocational Rehabilitation Services from 1 July 2007.

The programme allows eligible job seekers to take part in work experience in most organisations, so they can gain skills and experience, and sustainable ongoing employment.

The Australian Government will provide personal accident and combined public and products liability insurance for job seekers participating in WEP.

Period of WEP placements

Work experience placements can be from five days to eight weeks long. Attendance will be a minimum of 8 hours per week, and up to a maximum of 50 hours per fortnight.

Benefits for host organisations

WEP will provide host organisations with the opportunity to assess how well a participant picks up skills and operates in their work environment, at no cost to the host.

Host organisations have the chance to try somebody out before hiring them, and participants have an opportunity to gain experience, learn new skills and show how they can be a valuable potential employee for hosts.

Organisations that can host WEP

Most organisations are eligible to be a host in WEP. For each placement, there must be a reasonable prospect of employment at the end of the WEP placement.

The following types of organisations are **not acceptable** as host organisations for WEP:

- organisations offering only volunteer positions
- organisations offering only non-ongoing or temporary positions
- organisations that promote or condone any form of unlawful discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, marital status, sexual preference, disability, religious or political beliefs or affiliations
- organisations involved in the sex industry or activities involving nudity
- any organisations involved in illegal activity, or
- any other organisation that the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations may notify, from time to time, as not being suitable for this programme.



Placements that will NOT be approved

Placements that are not allowed are those that:

- involve welding/cutting work unless it complies fully with the Australian Standard 1674 'Safety in Welding and Allied Process'
- involve work on any product which is incorporated into an aircraft, aerial device, watercraft or hovercraft
- involve contact with asbestos
- involve any erection, demolition, alteration, or extension to buildings by the Participant where the contract for the work exceeds \$500,000
- already receive funding under a Commonwealth, State, Territory or local Government programme
- fulfil a function that would normally be undertaken by the PAGES, or any other contract or arrangement between the PAGES and DEWR
- result in displacing a paid worker
- may bring the Commonwealth or PAGES into disrepute
- are with any other organisation that DEWR may notify, from time to time, as not being suitable for this programme
- are where the participant and the host organisation intend to create legal relations, or
- are where the participant would be deemed by law to be an 'employee', and otherwise entitled to be paid.

Does the host pay the WEP participant?

No. Participants are not entering into an employer/employee relationship and will therefore not be paid by the host organisation. Nor will participants be eligible for superannuation or leave entitlements. Participants will continue to receive their Income Support Payments while participating in work experience.

However, work experience is not free labour. Host organisations will be required to train the person doing work experience and provide a safe work environment.

Who is eligible?

The Work Experience Placement programme will be open to disadvantaged job seekers, including those who have been unemployed for more than 12 months, Indigenous Australians, job seekers with disability and some parenting payment recipients.

Please refer to your nearest Providers of Australian Government Employment Services (PAGES) for further information regarding eligibility. Your local PAGES can be found at www.jobsearch.gov.au.

What insurance cover is provided?

The Australian Government has purchased personal accident and combined public and products liability insurance coverage for all WEP participants.

This insurance includes:

Combined Public and Products Liability—

Participant liability arising out of negligent acts that cause personal injury to third parties or damage to third parties' property; and

Personal Accident—protection for accidental bodily injury or accidental death sustained while participating in a WEP activity including travel to and from WEP activities.

Please refer to your nearest PAGES for further information regarding insurance coverage.

What happens if the host organisation wants to hire the participant?

Great! As soon as the host decides to employ the participant, the work experience placement automatically ends. Host organisations should contact their PAGES before they employ a job seeker in WEP.

Workers' Compensation Arrangements

As Job Seekers participating in the Work Experience Placement programme are not engaged under a contract of employment, they will generally not be covered by the various state and territory workers' compensation schemes except in very specific situations.

It is the responsibility of the host organisation to ensure that it complies with any workers' compensation obligations it may have in relation to a particular participant undertaking work experience.

Where can potential host organisations get more information?

Potential host organisations should speak to their local PAGES, who will be able to tell them more about WEP. Alternatively call the Employer Hotline on **13 17 15**.