

The Value of Workplace Learning

The workplace is evolving at a fast pace and students need a stronger understanding of the work environment to make informed decisions on career or educational pathways. It is essential that young people embrace the opportunity to engage in workplace learning to better understand what is involved in a career and the skills and attributes they need to be successful in their chosen career pathway.

Workplace learning provides many opportunities for students, including spending time with an employer in a real workplace. There are many more reasons for participating in workplace learning:

- build confidence and knowledge to enable you to make informed decisions regarding your career and transition planning
- exploring different careers and experience an authentic working environment
- gain a better understanding of what education or further training you need to enter a profession or industry
- develop connections and networks
- establish if this is a career pathway you want to follow
- develop and practice a range of new skills
- relate what you are doing in school to the workplace or having the opportunity to apply what you have learnt in a real-life setting
- start developing your resume.

“Work experience is key – until students do hands-on work, they don’t realise what it will be like in the workplace.” Review of Secondary Education

Students from 14 years of age have the opportunity to engage in workplace learning while at school. They are supported by the school’s career adviser, departmental policy, resources and insurances. Work experience should be tailored to suit a student’s needs, it can be one day per week, a block of five days or with different host employer.

“There is no better preparation for work than other work.” Australian Chamber of Commerce

Employers want people who have completed work experience as it shows they are motivated to enter into a chosen career and have a passion and interest in the industry or business. Recent surveys have revealed that up to 75% of employers look to employ candidates with experience in the workplace.

Learn Employment Related Skills while in the workplace-

The University of Sydney states that ‘Employers favour candidates with a wide range of employability skills to complement their job-specific skills and study.

Employability skills (sometimes called ‘soft’ skills or General Capabilities) refer to a set of transferable skills and key personal attributes which are highly valued by employers and essential for effective performance in the workplace’.

“Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.” UK Career strategy

Teacher surveys report a strong relationship between student participation in different types of employer engagement activities and forming more positive attitudes towards schooling. An international survey of 824 secondary school teachers found nine out of ten teachers said that work experience and employer related activities have helped students to do better in exams.

Students under taking a Vocational Education and Training (VET) course complete **Work Placement**. This is a mandatory requirement of many VET courses and enables students to strengthen industry specific competencies and employability skills in a work environment. Students will have the opportunity to apply skills learnt in the classroom or workshop and demonstrate a consistent application of knowledge and skill to industry standards when in the workplace.

The message is clear, students should get out and organise a workplace learning activity now!

***Not in Education, Employment or Training**

students were 25% less likely to be NEET* if they did 4+ employer related activities!

