

# Guidelines for Registered Training Organisations and Employers in relation to Post-Secondary Students undertaking Practical Placements

(Practical Placement Guidelines) as at 2 December 2024

## Introduction

These guidelines may be referred to as the **Practical Placement Guidelines** made on 2 December 2024.

The Practical Placement Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the relevant provisions of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and replace the Guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Training Victoria for Registered Training Organisations and Employers in relation to Post-Secondary Students undertaking Practical Placements (Updated Practical Placement Guidelines) made on 7 October 2022.

The Practical Placement Guidelines do not apply to the work experience or training placement of international students undertaking a post-secondary education course.

## 1. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of these guidelines:

‘ASQA’ means the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

‘Department’ means the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions.

‘Employer’ means a person or organisation hosting a post-secondary student on a practical placement.

‘Employ’ and ‘Employment’ refer to the engagement of a post-secondary student to undertake a Practical Placement. There is no requirement that a contract of employment be in place with the post-secondary student for the purposes of employment laws at common law or under statute.

‘ETRA’ means the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

‘Practical placement’ refers to the placement of a student of an RTO with an employer pursuant to a practical placement agreement under section 5.4.14 of the ETRA.

‘Practical placement payment order’ refers to an order of the Secretary of the Department under section 5.4.20 of the ETRA that post-secondary students undertaking a practical placement are not required to be paid for their work on that placement. A copy of the practical placement order is at **Attachment A**.

‘Post-secondary student’ means a student enrolled in a post-secondary education course of an RTO including a person who is not beyond the age of compulsory school attendance.

'RTO' means a vocational education and training organisation or further education organisation registered by the VRQA as a training organisation under section 4.3.16 of the ETRA or a training organisation treated as being registered on the National Register under section 4.3.14 of the ETRA.<sup>1</sup>

'VRQA' means the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

## 2. Application

The Practical Placement Guidelines apply to:

- RTOs registered with the VRQA and ASQA, and
- employers

in relation to their obligations in arranging practical placements.

The Practical Placement Guidelines do not apply to the work experience or training placement of international students undertaking a post-secondary education course.

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of the Practical Placement Guidelines is to assist RTOs and Employers to meet their obligations with respect to arranging practical placements, including clarifying their responsibilities.

## 4. Practical placement agreements

In order for a post-secondary student's work experience or training with an employer to be considered a Practical Placement for the purposes of the ETRA, **there must be an agreement in writing between the RTO and the employer** about the placement of the post-secondary student.


If a post-secondary student is placed for work experience or training **with a written practical placement agreement** between a VRQA regulated RTO and the Employer or between an ASQA regulated RTO and the Employer, that arrangement will be considered a practical placement for the purposes of the ETRA and **the post-secondary student will be eligible to make a claim under the Department's workers' compensation insurance policy** if they are injured in the course of the work experience or training.

In addition to the relevant details of the RTO, employer and post-secondary student, a written practical placement agreement should also include:

- the course of study with the RTO and the relevant skills required as part of that course to be developed, reinforced and/or assessed during the practical placement;
- the start and finish dates and the total length of the practical placement expressed as hours, and the maximum hours per week;
- clarification that the post-secondary student is not required to be paid for the practical placement (see practical placement payment order);
- if applicable, that the student is undertaking one part of the qualification for no more than 6 months in another Australian state or territory;
- the signatures of the employer and the RTO as parties to the practical placement agreement; and
- the signature of the post-secondary student as acknowledgement of their agreement to participate in the practical placement.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 4.3.14 is relevant in respect of training organisations registered with the Training Accreditation Council of Western Australia with a post-secondary student undertaking a Practical Placement in Victoria.



A voluntary best practice model practical placement agreement is at **Attachment B**. All RTOs and employers are encouraged to use this model agreement as a starting point for their practical placement agreements.

The original signed agreement should be securely filed by the RTO and a copy given to both the employer and the post-secondary student.

The VRQA, ASQA or the Department may request a copy of the agreement.

## 5. Responsibilities of RTOs

The RTO is responsible for ensuring that the Practical Placement is a meaningful experience for the post-secondary student undertaking it.

The RTO is responsible for ensuring that the work experience undertaken by its post-secondary 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
- useful for the vocational and employment outcomes of the course in which the student is enrolled.

It is recommended that the RTO ensures that the practical placement agreement with the employer reflects these requirements.

## 6. Duration of Practical Placement

The recommended **maximum** duration for a practical placement is 240 hours in total, with a maximum of 38 hours to be worked in any one week.

If, consistent with the relevant nationally accredited training package requirements, more than a total of 240 hours or 38 hours per week are required for any reason (e.g. by professional bodies or regulators), it is the responsibility of the RTO to justify that additional hours are required to meet the course outcomes for the post-secondary students(s). The RTO should have regard to the welfare of the post-secondary student.

RTOs should keep records detailing the reason for any decision to require the post-secondary student to undertake more than a total of 240 hours, or more than 38 hours per week, for the practical placement component of the course or unit of competency.

## 7. Rate of pay

By Order of the Secretary of the Department (practical placement payment order), post-secondary students undertaking a practical placement **are not required to be paid for the work on that placement**. This practical placement payment order came into effect on 21 October 2024.

While post-secondary students are not required to be paid for a practical placement, there is no prohibition on payment being made. However, before offering to make any payments, the relevant RTO and employer should seek professional advice on any implications that doing so might have under employment or industrial laws.

## 8. Insurance cover

The *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* deems a post-secondary student undertaking a practical placement to be a 'worker' for workers' compensation purposes. The

Department is deemed to be the employer of that post-secondary student of VRQA and ASQA registered RTOs in respect of the Employment under the Practical Placement agreement.

Accordingly, post-secondary students of VRQA-regulated or ASQA regulated RTOs who are injured while undertaking a practical placement may be eligible to make a claim under the workers' compensation insurance policy held by the Department.

This includes a student enrolled with an RTO in Victoria, completing their studies in Victoria and undertaking one part of the qualification for no more than 6 months in another Australian state or territory.

The quantum of any payment is limited to statutory benefits provided under the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2013*.

### **How to make an insurance claim**

Enquiries relating to practical placement insurance eligibility matters should be directed to [safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au) or by phone to the Senior Injury Management Advisor on 0427 392 503.

If a post-secondary student is injured while undertaking a practical placement and wishes to make a claim for compensation, the following process should occur:

- The post-secondary student should complete and sign a [Worker's Injury Claim Form](#), with the assistance of the employer and/or RTO, if necessary.
- The RTO should complete and sign the employer section of the Worker's Injury Claim Form and an [Employer Injury Claim Report Form](#) (both forms), in consultation with the employer if necessary.
- The RTO should clearly mark on both forms 'VRQA practical placement claim' or 'ASQA practical placement claim' as appropriate.
- The employer scheme registration number of 15486790 and the employer's reference number of 32070639 should be entered on both forms.
- The RTO should scan and email the Employer Injury Claim Report and Worker Injury Claim forms, any certificates of capacity, completed incident notification form, medical accounts and a certified copy of the practical placement agreement to: [safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

All original documents to be forwarded to:

DXC Claims Management Services  
GPO Box 751, Melbourne Vic 3001  
Melbourne 3001

All ongoing documentation (following the submission of a new claim) relating to the claim should be emailed to: [safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

The RTO should retain duplicates of all documents and create a secure workers' compensation file.

### **9. Enquiries**

Enquiries about these Guidelines can be directed to the TAFE and Training Line on 131 823, or emailed to [tafe.courseline@djsir.vic.gov.au](mailto:tafe.courseline@djsir.vic.gov.au)

Enquiries related to workers' compensation insurance claims for post-secondary students on practical placements arranged by VRQA-regulated and ASQA-regulated RTOs should be directed to the:

Senior Injury Management Advisor, DJSIR  
Ph: 0427 392 503  
email: [safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:safeandwell@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## ***Education and Training Reform Act 2006***

### **Order in relation to non-payment for work**

I, Tim Ada, Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, under s 5.4.20 of the **Education and Training Reform Act 2006**, being satisfied that the class of students set out below is:

- undertaking a post-secondary education course, and
- required to work during those studies for the purpose of gaining knowledge and skill which relates to those studies or to satisfy the practical training and experience requirements of the course;

make the following Order—

#### **1. Objective**

The objective of this Order is to—

- (a) provide that post-secondary students of a TAFE provider who have entered into a practical placement agreement are not required to be paid the minimum fixed by the Governor in Council for their work during the practical placement;
- (b) provide that where a person opts to pay such a student for their work during the practical placement, the person must make that payment in accordance with the minimum fixed by the Governor in Council; and
- (c) revoke the previous Order regarding non-payment for work for post-secondary students on practical placements.

#### **2. Authorising provisions**

This Order is made under—

- (a) section 5.4.20 of the **Education and Training Reform Act 2006**; and
- (b) section 41A of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984**.

#### **3. Definitions**

In this Order—

**ETRA** means the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

**post-secondary student** has the same meaning as in s 5.4.13 of ETRA.

**practical placement agreement** has the same meaning as in s 5.4.13 of ETRA.

**Practical Placements Order** means the Order made by the Governor in Council under s 5.4.16 of ETRA on 5 May 2009 and published in the Victoria Government Gazette G19 on 7

May 2009, which fixed the minimum rate of payment for students employed under a practical placement agreement.

**TAFE provider** has the same meaning as in s 5.4.13 of ETRA.

#### **4. Commencement**

This Order comes into effect on 21 October 2024.

#### **5. Revocation**

The Order made by the Acting Secretary of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development under s 5.4.20 and published in the Victoria Government Gazette G2 on 13 January 2011, is revoked.

#### **6. Non-payment of students**

- (1) A person is not required to pay the minimum amount fixed by the Practical Placements Order to post-secondary students of TAFE providers who have entered into a practical placement agreement for their work during the practical placement.
- (2) Despite clause 6(1) above—
  - (a) a person may pay a post-secondary student of TAFE providers who have entered into a practical placement agreement for their work during the practical placement; and
  - (b) any such payments must be made in accordance with the minimum amount fixed by the Practical Placements Order.

Dated: 21 October 2024

**Tim Ada**

**Secretary**

**Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions**

## Model Practical Placement Agreement between RTO and Employer

A voluntary best practice form documenting a practical placement agreement between and RTO and host employer

### RTO & PRACTICAL PLACEMENT DETAILS

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) name: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Organisation ID/ RTO Code: \_\_\_\_\_ RTO ACN or ABN: \_\_\_\_\_

RTO ACN or ABN: \_\_\_\_\_

Business address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's unit of competency name: \_\_\_\_\_

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's qualification name: \_\_\_\_\_

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Practical placement to be undertaken in another Australian state or territory for no more than 6 months (Y / N/A): \_\_\_\_\_

Practical placement coordinator name: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills relevant to unit or qualification to be developed/reinforced/assessed on practical placement:

**EMPLOYER DETAILS**

Employer (business) name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for practical placement: \_\_\_\_\_

Business address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities the student will undertake


From (commencement date): \_\_\_\_\_ To (completion date): \_\_\_\_\_

Total Hours: \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment rate \$ 0 (default) per day (For further information, please refer to the Practical Placement Guidelines and Order about non-payment for work at <https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts>)



## RTO RESPONSIBILITIES

The RTO is responsible for:

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 maximum duration of its student's practical placement is 240 hours in total, and a maximum of 38 hours to be worked in any one week. If more than a total of 240 hours, 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.
4. Keeping records detailing the reason for any decision to require its student to undertake more than a total of 240 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.
6. Ensuring that the student is undertaking one part of the qualification in the form of a practical placement for no more than 6 months in another Australian state or territory.
7. Reading and understanding the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions Practical Placement Guidelines <https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts>

## EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The 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.
8. Will plan and carry out the student's program of activities in accordance with the considerations set out in paragraph 1.
2. Has read and understood the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions Practical Placement Guidelines <https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts>
9. Will consult with the practical placement coordinator if they consider it necessary to terminate the arrangement before the agreed practical placement end date.
10. Will nominate a supervisor (or supervisors) for the student.
11. Will comply with relevant occupational health and safety and workplace relations legislation and standards with respect to the student.
12. Will permit the RTO's practical placement coordinator or assessors to access the workplace and contact the student at any reasonable time during the practical placement.
13. Will ensure that the practical placement arrangement is not used as a substitute for the employment of employees or the engagement of contractors.
14. 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.
15. Will notify the practical placement coordinator as soon as practicable if the student is absent, injured or becomes ill in the course of undertaking the practical placement.
16. In case of an emergency, the employer will contact the student's emergency contact person and the practical placement coordinator.

## INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Where there is a written practical placement agreement between a VRQA-regulated RTO and host employer or between an ASQA-regulated RTO and host employer under the ETRA (this agreement), a post-secondary student injured while undertaking a practical placement may be eligible to make a claim under the workers' compensation insurance policy held by the Department. See the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions Practical Placement Guidelines at <https://www.vic.gov.au/vet-funding-contracts>

This includes a student completing their studies in Victoria and undertaking one part of the qualification for no more than 6 months in another Australian state or territory.

If the student is placed for work experience or training without a written practical placement agreement between the RTO and the employer, that arrangement will not be a valid practical placement under the ETRA, and the post-secondary student will not be eligible to make a claim under the Department's workers' compensation insurance policy if injured in the course of the work experience or training.

Public liability insurance covering this practical placement arrangement will be taken out by the

\_\_\_\_\_ {insert RTO or the Employer}.

## STUDENT DETAILS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (name and phone):

\_\_\_\_\_

:

**PRIVACY INFORMATION: The student information provided in this agreement is for the administration of practical placement arrangements only and is not to be used for any other purpose unless required by law**

## SIGNATURES OF PARTIES TO THIS AGREEMENT

<b>RTO Representative:</b> _____  <b>Position/title</b> _____  I _____ agree to take part in this practical placement agreement and understand and accept the RTO responsibilities outlined in this agreement	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b>
<b>Employer Representative:</b> _____  <b>Position/title</b> _____  I _____ agree to take part in this practical placement agreement and understand and accept the employer responsibilities outlined in this agreement	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b>

## STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The student acknowledges that they:

- 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 practical placement 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.

<b>Student Name:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian (only required where student is under 18 years of age)</b>  I _____ agree to my child taking part in this practical placement arrangement	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b>