

Student Placement, Work Experience Policy

Policy Statement

MTC requires that participants enrolled in community services training programs complete a placement or work experience in the industry as determined by the training package. This ensures that the participant is fully aware of the reality of employment in relevant industries.

The fieldwork placement and work experience offers students or workers opportunities to learn, and demonstrate competency and the ability to use the knowledge, theories, and skills acquired, in the placement setting.

Policy Purpose

This policy provides guidance relating to student placements and work experience.

Application of Policy

All placements and work experience will be conducted in accordance with the documented processes.

To ensure placement and work experience will achieve positive outcomes for students and employers and their clients:

- The roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the placement or work experience will be clearly documented and discussed prior to commencement.
- The participants are to have a clear appreciation of the learning outcomes that can be achieved in a placement or work experience.
- All participants will be provided with a record that provides key information and guidance to the participant for the duration of the placement or work experience.
- MTC will provide support to the participant during the placement or work experience.
- The participants will be required to reflect and report on their experience during placement or work experience.
- The placement of members (students/volunteers/workers) where they may be working directly with their child/ren is dealt with in detail in the Guidelines for Supervisors. Meerilinga is committed to a supportive work environment for its members. In light of this members are permitted to complete practicum hours or enroll (subject to vacancy/regulatory/policy conditions) their own children or a close relative to attend a service in which they may work. However prior to final approval by the CEO/ RTO Manager the guidelines must be provided to the member and agreed to by all parties (Service/Member/RTO). Meerilinga reserves the right to refuse the placement/enrolment. This placement does not apply to any other party or service in which Meerilinga has no control.

Policy Review

At least annually or from time to time the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation and customer service.

Scope

This policy applies to the all students at MTC.

ADDENDUM: Effective 17 September 2019

Guidelines for Supervisors

Vocational placements provide students with the opportunity to apply the theory and skills they learned while studying in a professional workplace.

Under these arrangements students can gain the skills they need to transition successfully from study to work, while giving industry the opportunity to enrich student learning experiences and increase the number of work-ready graduates.

Vocational placements that meet the definition under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (the FW Act) are lawfully unpaid. Students completing vocational placements are not considered to be employees and therefore are not entitled to the minimum wage nor other entitlements provided under the FW Act.

What is a vocational placement?

Under the FW Act, a vocational placement is lawfully unpaid if it meets **all** the following criteria:

1. **There must be a placement.** This can be arranged by the educational or training institution, or a student may initiate the placement with an individual business directly, in line with the requirements of their course.
2. **There must be no entitlement to pay for the work the student undertakes.** Where a student's contract with the host business or organisation entitles them to receive money for the work they perform, the vocational placement will likely have turned into an employment relationship. Similarly, work arrangements covered by industrial awards or agreements are not vocational placements.
3. **The placement must be done as a requirement of an education or training course.** The placement must be a required component of the course as a whole, or of an individual subject or module of the course. It doesn't matter whether that subject is compulsory or an elective chosen by the student.
4. **The placement must be one that is approved.** The institution delivering the course which provides for the placement must be authorised under an Australian, state or territory law or an administrative arrangement of the Commonwealth or a state or territory to do so. Courses offered at universities, TAFE colleges and schools (whether public or private) will all satisfy this requirement, as will bodies authorised to offer training courses under state or territory legislation.

When all of the above criteria are satisfied, hosts are not required to pay students entitlements under the FW Act.

Important

While the FW Act does not provide entitlements to students doing vocational placements, there may still be obligations in other legislation, such as those about work health and safety or discrimination that apply to them.

Students on Placement working directly with their Child

Meerilinga is committed to a supportive work environment for its members. In light of this members are permitted to enroll their own children or a close relative to attend a Meerilinga service in which they may work.

However, this arrangement is subject to the following terms and conditions.

Members are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism while working. This policy has been designed to allow members to be able to focus on the demands of their own role throughout their working day. It is important that enrolling member's children or close family members does not have a negative impact on the standards of work members provide and does not make other members feel that members children need special treatment or be fearful of caring for a child of one of their colleagues. It is for this reason that before such an enrolment can take place members must ensure they fully understand this policy and the role that they play as a member and in accepting the enrolment/placement are deemed to have agreed to all terms and conditions including those outlined below.

Before agreeing to enroll a child or close family member of a member or placing a member on work practicum, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the needs of the child, the wishes of the parent/member and the expectations of the employer. If all parties are to be satisfied at this meeting that the terms and conditions can be met. If at any point the management feel that the terms and conditions are being breached, then this agreement will be subject to change and review as appropriate.

We believe our members should remain neutral and treat all children with the same regard. It is generally not optimal for members to care for their own children or close relative whilst working at Meerilinga. However, we recognise that this may not always be possible. We will also try to accommodate the wishes of any members with a child or close relative and come to an agreement which suits us all.

This agreement is based on the following principles:

Where members work in the same room as their child or close relation, there is an agreed set of guidelines between the team and the member setting out the expectations of working with their child/close relation. These include a clear statement that during their time at Meerilinga the child is in the care of the service and it is the service that retains responsibility for the child and their care

Where this agreement is not working or is impacting on the care of the child or other children in the room, the Director/RTO Manager and member will reassess the situation

Members caring for another member's child will treat them as they would any other parent/child. No special treatment will be offered to any child or parent who has connections with Meerilinga.

Where the Director/RTO Manager assesses that the agreement is not working and/or there is an impact on the care of the children in the room because of the members relationship with their child or close relation:

The RTO Manager will move the member and not the child. This will enable the child to be in the appropriate and stable environment and to continue to forge consistent relationships with other children in this group

Where the member is in another room, there will be an agreement between the member and Director about contact with the child during the day.

Although we do not want to restrict a parent seeing their child, we must consider the room routine and the upset a visit may cause the child when their parent leaves the room again

Where a member's infant requires breastfeeding, the service will adapt the above guidelines to suit both the infant and mother's needs. Staff ratios will be maintained during this time.

Professional Conduct

The agreement will consist of the members agreeing to the following conditions of enrolment of their own child or a close relative and all Meerilinga policies:

Member's children or close relative should receive the same service experience as any of the other children attending the setting.

Members should give feedback to their child's key worker at the beginning of the day and no further discussion should take place until the member has finished work and is receiving an end of day handover (unless in the case of an emergency when you will be consulted in the same way that a parent of any other child would receive a telephone call).

If a member's child becomes unwell or injured at nursery and needs to go home, the member must be conscious of the staffing ratios and wait until appropriate cover can be found.

Members must still be flexible with their working shift as long as appropriate notice is given as per the standard contract of employment/ practicum arrangement.

Members must at all times fulfil the needs of their own role and adhere to their job description. Unless it is an emergency, members should have minimal contact with their own child or close relative during the working day (including designated break times).

Members should disclose any conflict of interest situations in the workplace that impacts on their professional conduct.

Members must not make comments about the quality of care their child is receiving in the room, if they have any concerns the appropriate policy should be followed by speaking to the Director / RTO first as is the case for all parents of children attending.

Policy and Procedure Guidelines

All contract terms, policies and permissions applicable for children enrolled at Meerilinga will be applied equally to the child or close relative of any member. These will be available and complied with in the same way as all parents.

Members Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

In the event of challenges regarding members being able to maintain high standards of professional conduct at the workplace the appropriate disciplinary and grievance actions will be followed in accordance with the procedures outlined in these policies.