These guidelines have been developed to support the provision of structured workplace learning (SWL) for eligible students in NSW undertaking mandatory work placement as part of a NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) Industry Curriculum Framework (ICF) vocational education and training (VET) course in 2011 and in following years. Guidelines will be reviewed annually.

**Structured Workplace Learning in NSW Schools**

Work placement is a mandatory Board of Studies requirement for students enrolled in a range of NSW HSC VET courses, mainly ICFs, drawn from relevant national industry training packages. Managing structured work placements is a process of working with schools and employers to provide appropriate placement opportunities for identified students.

The mandatory requirement is generally 35 hours for each 120 hours of course undertaken, so this placement is typically a 35 hour (1 week) placement in a school year as described by the NSW Board of Studies (BOS) in each VET syllabus available at: [http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed/industry-curriculum-frameworks.html](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed/industry-curriculum-frameworks.html)

Work placement is a mandatory HSC requirement for a range of HSC VET courses including the 12 ICF courses which will be available from 2011: Automotive, Business Services, Construction, Electro-technology, Entertainment Industry, Hospitality, Information Technology, Metal and Engineering, Primary Industries, Retail Services, Tourism and Events and Human Services. The ICF VET courses are available to students in years 11 and 12 and also to students in years 9 and 10 in appropriate circumstances through the early commencement pathway for Stage 5 VET courses. Guidelines for access to VET courses by students in Years 9 and 10 are available at: [http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed/stage-5.html](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/voc_ed/stage-5.html)

Human Services is a new ICF being implemented from 2011. There are particular issues relating to work placements in the aged care and health sectors and strong existing relationships between RTOs and workplaces.

The NSW BOS has identified the following principles relating to SWL:

Principle 1 - **Work placement must have a clearly articulated and documented purpose. The structure of the work-based learning experience needs to be planned and developmental.**

A range and number of purposes are possible including, for example:

- learning about a particular industry, workplace culture and career opportunities
- practising skills learnt off the job
- developing new skills
- improving work-related skills
- developing skills including employability skills such as teamwork, using technology and problem-solving
- achieving entry-level competencies
- achieving workplace performance of particular competency standards
- assessing in a realistic environment or allowing for holistic assessment
- providing opportunities to build skills in a developmental manner from the simple to the complex
- providing opportunities for the learner to reflect upon the workplace learning experience in the context of individual current knowledge and understanding
- encouraging students to undertake further education and training.

Principle 2 - **The scheduling of the work placement should reflect student readiness and should complement off-the-job learning programs.** The scheduling of the work placement should take account of:

- whether or not students are workplace-ready in terms of the competencies they will need to develop and demonstrate in the workplace
- how the timing of the work placement links to overall course planning
- the degree of flexibility available at both the workplace and the school
- how the alignment of both on- and off-the-job competencies can be best achieved.

An individual work placement program focusing on a developmental approach should be negotiated with the workplace supervisor/employer. This approach should focus on students moving from simple to more complex tasks. Dependence on supervision should reduce over time as students move towards greater independence in the workplace. The ultimate goal of a work placement should be competence and autonomy in the range of tasks required for the job being undertaken.

Principle 3 - **Work placement should be relevant to the VET courses being undertaken.**

The ‘real’ tasks being undertaken in the workplace should complement the tasks and learning being undertaken by the students in their VET courses at school. Work placement may also provide students with the opportunity of having learning outcomes/units of competency assessed in the workplace by accredited trainers and assessors.
Principle 4 - **Work placement can provide opportunities for work-based assessment.**

Not all industry curriculum frameworks specify that it is mandatory for competencies to be assessed in the workplace. Assessment events should relate to overall course planning and the purpose of the work placement. In a competency-based course, assessment of competencies is criterion-referenced. This means that a participant’s performance is judged against a prescribed standard – not against the performance of other participants.

In NSW, work placement has been, for some time, coordinated by non-Government Organisations known as Local Community Partnerships (LCPs). Each year LCPs coordinate around 57,000 mandatory HSC VET work placements required by students from across the three education sectors.

From 2011 through to 2013 it is planned that Work Placement Service Providers (WPSPs) (defined in more detail below) will tender to carry out this role across 30 service regions identified in NSW. In 2011 DET will determine the coordination of SWL across the 30 NSW regions via a Request for Tender (RFT) process to SWL service providers. The RFT is available at: [https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.home](https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.home)

**NSW State Advisory Committee for Work Placement Coordination**

The SWL coordination program is advised by the NSW State Advisory Committee for Work Placement Coordination. Membership of this group includes the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), the Catholic Education Commission NSW, the Association of Independent Schools NSW and major stakeholder groups such as the Australian Industry Group and Australian Business Limited. The State Advisory Committee is chaired by Mr Kevin Power, a member of the Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET).

**NSW DET**

The SWL coordination program is managed state-wide by the Vocational Education in Schools Directorate of DET (Directorate) on behalf of DET, the Catholic Education Commission NSW, and the Association of Independent Schools NSW. The Directorate also administers the Sydney Access program ([http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au/sydneyaccess/index.php](http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au/sydneyaccess/index.php)).

Sydney Access provides opportunities for HSC VET students from across NSW to experience high quality work placements in the Sydney Central Business District and Parramatta areas.

The Directorate will administer the agreements for all service regions in NSW.

The Directorate will, on behalf of the Catholic Education Commission NSW, and the Association of Independent Schools NSW, undertake liaison with WPSPs and maintain information about the program, and resources for WPSPs on the work placement website [www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au](http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au).

**Professional Development**
It is expected that WPSPs will undertake professional development for their staff who are engaged to work on the SWL coordination program. Organisations will also participate in regular WPSP network meetings across neighbouring service regions and with education sector representatives.

The funding agreements for each service region will identify an indicative funding level to be allocated for professional development activities.

The Directorate will also provide support to the state network of WPSPs including an annual training day for providers to be held in Sydney during the first school term and supported by the three education sectors.

**Duty of Care**
School sectors and TAFE NSW must, through their delegated officers, take reasonable care to keep students undertaking workplace learning free from harm. Duty of care rests with the school or where relevant, also with the TAFE NSW institute and private or community RTO.

**Payment and Insurance Requirements and Related Matters**
Students in NSW undertaking SWL are not paid employees and therefore host employers are not required to make any payment to them under the Federal or State award covering the particular industry, the NSW Annual Holidays Act or the Workers Compensation Act. Each of the education sectors have insurance and indemnity arrangements in place to cover injury to students, loss or damage occasioned by students and indemnity arrangements for host employers. Conditions apply. As long as host employers follow the requirements in the guides for employers, they do not have to change insurance or WorkCover NSW arrangements when hosting a student for SWL. Employers are expected to have current public liability coverage as is standard business practice.

**Work Readiness**
Suitable pre-placement activities must be provided by the school or where relevant, by the TAFE NSW institute or RTO to prepare all students for workplace learning and to optimise the planned workplace learning experience.

School sectors and TAFE NSW must ensure that students with special needs are provided with opportunities on the same basis as other students. This includes identifying and liaising with the workplace around adjustments and accommodations that students with disabilities may require.

**Definition of Work Placement Service Provider (WPSP)**
A WPSP is an organisation contracted to support and coordinate mandatory work placements for students undertaking HSC ICF VET courses within a specified service region.

WPSP will work with local schools with secondary enrolments, TAFE NSW colleges and campuses, and employers to coordinate HSC ICF VET work placements for all eligible students within the service region.
Role of WPSP
WPSP are required to undertake a range of activities within their service region to support work placement. These include (but are not limited to):

- coordination of work placement opportunities that encourage the practice, development and refinement of HSC ICF VET competencies at industry standard on behalf of schools and TAFE colleges,
- recruitment and retention of employers to host work placements including supervision by competent and experienced persons from the host employer, briefed for the task,
- liaison and assistance to schools, and participating in relevant local community networks,
- maintenance of regular and effective communication between the relevant parties including the WPSP and schools, TAFE NSW Institutes and host employers, and as relevant, with students and parents/carers,
- ensuring compliance with the current Workplace Learning Policy for Secondary Students in Government Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes Policy (reference number PD/2005/0016/V02) and related mandatory documents. Non government schools will also have policy documents relating to this work
- ensuring that any special needs of students, particularly those students with a disability, are appropriately supported in the workplace, in consultation with school, and where relevant, TAFE personnel and parents/carers.

WPSP have an obligation to take reasonable steps to minimise risk to students.

Service Regions
There are 30 service regions in NSW. Each region will be serviced according to a separate funding agreement for each WPSP but an organisation may hold agreements for multiple service regions. These service regions are the same regions identified in the Commonwealth initiative detailing Partnership Brokers and Youth Connection Providers.

The boundaries of these regions are shown in the maps provided in the Appendix B of Part F of the RFT, and the schools within the boundaries of each service region are listed in Appendix C. Please refer to the website link for a detailed copy of a map of the service region:
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Pages/NewRegionNSW.aspx (Note: the schools list on this website may not be up to date. You should refer to the schools list in the relevant service region in Appendix C of the RFT.)

A funding amount is calculated annually. This is based on the most recent level of historical work placement activity in each service region as well as any loadings that reflect local issues in each service region.

This student activity level reflects all home school activity and is indicative of the number of students likely to require placement for the year of the contract but should not be seen as an absolute level of activity. More students may require placement and some students may require additional placement.
**Agreement**
The funding applicable to each service region is calculated annually and is fixed. Acceptance of the successful tenders will be subject to the execution of an agreement between DET and the successful tenderer. The value of the funding is calculated utilising a funding weighting across a number of factors. These include geographical remoteness, (based on Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) mapping) and historical student demand for SWL. Student demand is used to provide an indicative demand for the current school year but cannot be seen to an absolute target.

**Reporting Requirements**
WPSP are accountable for their service delivery and are required to adhere to reporting requirements which form part of the agreement. WPSPs will be required to complete online progress reports and an annual report. Information from students, schools and employers about the quality of the work placement will also be collected on the work placement website [http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au/feedback.php](http://www.workplacement.nsw.edu.au/feedback.php)

**Protection of Children**
WPSP must comply with the provisions of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 and all related legislation from time to time (Child Protection Legislation) including without limitation:

• ensuring that personnel, and volunteers performing work or persons undertaking practical training who are or will be assigned to work on the program comply with the Child Protection Legislation;
• carrying out employment screening of each worker who is or will be assigned to work on the program, provided that any worker who declines being screened does not work on the program
• notifying DET of any relevant disciplinary proceedings in relation to the Child Protection Legislation against any worker who is or will be assigned to work on the program or of any applicant in relation to the program is rejected for child-related employment
• not assign, or continue the assignment of, a prohibited person in relation to the program or allow such prohibited person to undertake work in relation to the program.

**WPSP Selection Criteria**
WPSP’s are selected according to the following criteria:

• Demonstrated experience of the WPSP
  
  ➢ knowledge and understanding of the nature and principles supporting work placement within the context of the ICF syllabuses
  ➢ knowledge and understanding of various models for work placement that address school and TAFE NSW needs
  ➢ understanding of key issues in ensuring the successful implementation of a work placement coordination program
• capacity to communicate the work placement agenda to business and industry in the service region so that the number and range of quality placements needed by students is obtained

• Capacity of the WPSP to work with secondary schools from the three education sectors and TAFE NSW demonstrating

  ➢ experience in a service delivery program with schools, highlighting the planned outcomes for students, the successes, challenges and opportunities of the program
  ➢ proven ability to work collaboratively with schools and business/industry/community to deliver relevant and planned outcomes for students in a designated timeframe

• Knowledge of the Service Region by the WPSP.

  ➢ how the WPSP will work with businesses and industries in the Service Region to support work placement; and
  ➢ how the WPSP will develop business intelligence in the nominated Service Region and its application to achieving student outcomes.

• Organisational structure and service delivery capacity of the WPSP.

  ➢ how the management and governance structure of their organisation will support work placement service delivery in the Service Region
  ➢ their ability to support staff to be engaged in work placement service delivery including a proposed staffing plan which outlines the roles, skills and experience they will provide
  ➢ how they will establish a local advisory group comprising key stakeholders to advise the organisation on how best to implement service delivery in the region
  ➢ any other strategies/programs that would add value and/or complement the work placement delivery within the designated Service Region
  ➢ their OHS procedures, environmental record and overall capability.