



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Vocational placement policy

Version

Date	Version	Description / Changes	Approved by
October 2021	V1.0	Policy arrangements for work experience and internship placements at the Legislative Assembly	Speaker, Clerk
June 2023	V1.1	Introduction of Australian citizenship requirement for internships in line with the Commonwealth Parliament Reference to HROnboard	Speaker, Clerk [pending]

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1. Commitment

- 1.1 The vocational placements policy is endorsed by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Joy Burch MLA
Speaker
June 2023

Tom Duncan
Clerk
June 2023

2. Purpose and application

- 2.1 This document sets out the applicable policy in relation to vocational placements undertaken by students ('participants') with either a Member of the Legislative Assembly or the Office of the Legislative Assembly ('hosts') as part of:
- an approved work experience; or
 - an approved internship program.
- 2.2 The policy applies to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), their staff, staff of the Office of the Legislative Assembly (the Office), participants and others performing a role or function in relation to vocational placements that are conducted at the Assembly.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 Only students enrolled at a recognised educational institution in an approved program of study are eligible to participate in the Assembly's vocational placements program.

Australian citizenship

- 3.2 Only Australian citizens are eligible to participate in the Assembly's internship program.

4. Objectives of the vocational program

- 4.1 The work experience component of the Assembly's vocational placement program is directed towards giving students the opportunity to:
- develop a general understanding of the work environment and the expectations of employers;
 - develop a knowledge of, and experience in, the work undertaken by the Legislative Assembly, its committees, its members and/or the Office; and

- explore career options within the parliamentary context and/or business specialist context.
- 4.2 The internship component of the program aims to provide opportunities for tertiary students to:
- undertake a significant work of academic scholarship or research project;
 - apply theoretical knowledge gained through tertiary studies in a parliamentary environment or business specialist field; and
 - learn new skills and gain additional experience by undertaking a range of professionally oriented activities in a parliamentary environment.
- 4.3 The Assembly's vocational program also aims to work towards the achievement of the Office's statutory function to provide public education about the roles and functions of the Assembly and its committees pursuant to s 6(2) of the [Legislative Assembly \(Office of the Legislative Assembly\) Act 2012](#).

5. Health and safety

- 5.1 Health and safety must be the first priority of Assembly hosts and students participating in the vocational placements program.
- 5.2 All participants undertaking a placement with an Assembly host (i.e. an MLA or the Office) are considered to be 'workers' for the purposes of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#). Hosts have a primary duty of care to take measures in order to ensure the health and safety of participants/workers. To meet this duty, the hosts must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable:
- the provision and maintenance of a work environment without risks to health and safety;
 - the provision and maintenance of safe systems of work;
 - the safe use, handling, storage and transport of plant, structures, and substances;
 - the provision of adequate facilities for the welfare at work of workers in carrying out work;
 - the provision of any information, training, instruction, or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety arising from work carried out; and
 - that the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace are monitored for the purpose of preventing illness or injury of workers arising from work.
- 5.3 While at work (participating in the Assembly vocational placement program), participants have a duty to:
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety;
 - take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons;

- comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the host to allow the person to comply with the WHS Act; and
 - cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the host relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to participants.
- 5.4 Participants and hosts are provided with a range of background information prior to the commencement of a placement outlining a range of health and safety related requirements and guidance, including in relation to:
- emergency evacuation arrangements;
 - accident and injury reporting;
 - COVID-19;
 - workstation assessments; and
 - workplace injury prevention.
- 5.5 The Assembly’s Health and Safety Committee oversees the array of health and safety risks (including through the formal consideration of a comprehensive WHS risk register) within the Assembly working environment and appropriate strategies for ensuring a healthy and safe workplace.

Commitment to children’s health and safety

- 5.6 The Assembly—its members, their staff, and staff of the Office—acknowledge that students under the age of 18 years are a particularly vulnerable group within the community.
- 5.7 The Assembly is strongly committed to ensuring that children participating in the Assembly’s parliamentary education programs, including the vocational placements program, are safe.
- 5.8 The Assembly will ensure that it properly identifies and assesses risks that may be posed to child safety and develops strategies to reduce the likelihood and consequences of such risks in a conscientious and considered way.¹
- 5.9 All staff of the Office involved in the delivery of the Assembly’s education and engagement function, including casual staff, have undergone working with vulnerable people background checks and are registered pursuant to relevant requirements of the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011*.²

¹ The Office has assessed risks at the enterprise level, WHS risks (in conjunction with the Assembly’s Health and Safety Committee), and risks associated with schools visits as part of the education program. The Office’s risk management arrangements include assessments of the likelihood and consequence of particular risks, the internal controls in place to reduce the effects of risk, and the additional controls that might be needed to bring risks within acceptable levels of tolerance.

² By reason of s 12(2)(h) of the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act, MLAs, their staff or Office staff supervising work experience students are not required to be registered on account of the work experience placement.

Bullying and harassment

- 5.10 The Assembly, through the *Assembly's Respect in the Workplace—Bullying and Harassment* policy ([available on the Assembly intranet](#)), sets out to meet its duties and obligations by:
- making it clear that respect in the workplace is essential to a safe working environment and bullying and harassing behaviour will not be tolerated;
 - making it clear that all individuals in the Assembly workplace have a responsibility to behave respectfully at all times and report any bullying and harassing behaviour;
 - providing information and options for reporting bullying and harassing behaviour; and
 - making it clear that, should bullying and harassing behaviour occur, it must be effectively managed – which includes ensuring there is appropriate support, confidentiality, and procedural fairness.
- 5.11 The Assembly's policy is signed and endorsed by the Speaker, Chief Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the ACT Greens, and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

6. Hours of work

- 6.1 For internships, hosts must ensure that the minimum conditions and entitlements that apply in the ACT public sector are met in terms of standard hours and meal breaks. Standard hours are 8.30am-12.30pm and 1.30pm-4.51pm, Monday to Friday. At least one 30-minute break must be provided each day where the student has worked continuously for a period of five hours.
- 6.2 For work experience students, standard hours are from 9.00am until 4pm, with a one-hour lunch break, Monday to Friday.

7. Placements are confined to the Assembly precincts

- 7.1 Hosts are not permitted to take students under the age of 18 offsite (i.e. outside of the Assembly precincts).

8. Participants' privacy

- 8.1 The ACT's privacy laws protect the personal and health information of students participants in the vocational placement program.³
- 8.2 Information provided by students, parents/guardians and employers is obtained for the purposes of coordinating a placement. It will be kept confidential and must not be used for

³ [Workplace Privacy Act 2011](#) and the [Health Records \(Privacy and Access\) Act 1997](#).

any other purposes. Such information is stored in the Office's records management system with the access control designation set to official-sensitive-personal privacy.

- 8.3 If a participant or their sponsoring educational institution discloses information to the host, the host will maintain the confidentiality of that health information and only disclose it to another party if the student requires treatment for a known medical condition or in the case of a medical emergency.

9. Duration of placements

- 9.1 The duration of work experience and internship placements should generally be:
- a maximum of one week for secondary school students;
 - a maximum of 14 weeks for tertiary students.
- 9.2 Placements are typically conducted in a single block, however, single, or half-days over a period of time may be approved at the sole discretion of the Manager, Education and Engagement, where circumstances warrant this.

10. Payment for vocational placements

- 10.1 Neither the Office of the Legislative Assembly nor MLAs are permitted to pay participants for their participation in a vocational placement.

11. Responsibilities of hosts

Office of the Legislative Assembly

- 11.1 The Office of the Clerk is responsible for the overall administration of the Assembly's vocational program. The Manager, Education and Engagement, within the Office of the Clerk, is responsible for:
- the day-to-day coordination of the program including receiving and responding to requests from applicants, educational institutions and members in relation to program placements;
 - acting as the liaison point between participants, educational institutions and members and their offices;
 - ensuring that, for each placement, requirements have been met in accordance with this policy prior to the commencement of a placement;
 - making available a nominated supervisor or other suitably qualified and experienced personnel to supervise the participant while undertaking the vocational placement;
 - providing a completion certification or reports as might be required as part of the program;

- providing members that are hosting a vocational placement with *Guide for Members hosting vocational placements*; and
- making arrangements for participants to receive appropriate induction in relation to evacuation, building security and ICT security and associated policies, including through the provision of *Vocational placement—Students’ guide*.

11.2 Where the Office is hosting a participant, the Office of the Clerk must nominate a supervisor. The nominated supervisor must:

- read and understand this policy;
- ensure that the tasks and working environment associated with a placement do not pose workplace health and safety risks;
- determine the amount of work experience that can be reasonably provided;
- provide details of the tasks that are to be performed by the participant as part of the program;
- ensure that, in the case of participants, who are under the age of 18, work activities are confined to tasks that are performed within the Assembly precincts;
- provide necessary training and familiarisation to enable the participant to perform the agreed duties effectively;
- provide appropriate supervision at all times;
- maintain records of participant’s attendance;
- notify the Manager, Education and Engagement of any concerns associated with the participant, including in relation to behaviour, workplace safety, breaches of confidentiality; and
- where the Office agrees to host a placement, complete and sign the [Work Experience / Internship Agreement](#) prior to the commencement of the placement.

MLAs and nominated supervisors

11.3 Where an MLA is hosting a participant, that MLA must nominate either:

- themselves; or
- a member of their staff to supervise the participant.

11.4 MLAs and nominated supervisors must:

- read and understand this policy;
- ensure that the tasks and working environment associated with a placement do not pose workplace health and safety risks;
- ensure that, in the case of participants, who are under the age of 18, work activities are confined to tasks that are performed within the Assembly precincts;
- only agree to host a placement where suitable activities ;
- provide details of the tasks that are to be performed by the participant as part of the program;

- provide necessary training and familiarisation to enable the participant to perform the agreed duties effectively;
- provide appropriate supervision at all times;
- maintain records of a participant's attendance;
- ensure that appropriate steps are taken to manage the security of confidential or sensitive information;
- notify the Office's Manager, Education and Engagement of any concerns associated with the participant, including in relation to behaviour, workplace safety, breaches of confidentiality; and
- where the MLA agrees to host a placement, complete and sign the [Vocational Placement Agreement](#) prior to the commencement of a placement.

12. Educational institution responsibilities

- 12.1 The educational institution attended by a participant must sponsor the participant and affirm that the placement is being conducted as part of a recognised program or course of study.
- 12.2 Prior to the commencement of a placement, the educational institution must complete and sign the [Vocational Placement Agreement](#).

Warrant that participants are enrolled

- 12.3 The educational institution sponsoring the participant must warrant that the participant is enrolled as a student with the educational institution and that the vocational placement or internship to be undertaken by the participant is being conducted as a part of the participant's course of study at the educational institution.

Insurance and indemnity

- 12.4 Through the Assembly's [Vocational Placement Agreement](#), the Assembly requires that the educational institution sponsoring a placement must maintain the following insurances in respect of the participant's participation in the vocational placement:
- public liability insurance; and
 - personal injury insurance.
- 12.5 It is a requirement that the educational Institution indemnifies the Australian Capital Territory against any claims, liability, damages or expenses arising out of any injury, loss or damage caused by the participant whilst undertaking the vocational placement.

13. Responsibilities of participants

13.1 Participants in the Assembly's vocational program must:

- read and understand this policy;
- provide the Manager, Education and Engagement, with relevant documentation to demonstrate that the placement is an approved part of a relevant program or course of study at an educational institution;
- complete and sign the [Vocational Placement Agreement](#) (**Where a participant is under the age of 18, the participant's parent or guardian must also sign the agreement**).
- during their participation, obey all lawful and reasonable directions given by the Office of the Legislative Assembly and its staff and MLAs and their staff and comply with all relevant procedures, policies, guidelines and legislation;
- advise of any health-related issues (e.g. allergies) that the hosts may need to be aware of in order to properly exercise a duty of care;
- behave responsibly, respectfully and ethically and maintain the confidentiality of information to which they might be exposed during the course of the placement;
- contact the nominated supervisor in the event that they are not able to attend a placement;
- be punctual and attend the venue on agreed days and to promptly notify the nominated supervisor if they are unable to attend;
- not to do any act which gives rise to a conflict of interest or is detrimental to the best interests of the Legislative Assembly, Assembly committees, the Office of the Legislative Assembly, or a Member of the Legislative Assembly; and
- promptly notify the Office of the Legislative Assembly supervisor and the educational institution of any injury or accident sustained by the participant.

Confidentiality

13.2 Participants must not disclose confidential information to any third party and must not use confidential Information in any way other than for the purposes of the internship or vocational placement.

13.3 If a participant wishes to include confidential information in any reports, presentations or other materials created to meet the assessment requirements of a participant's course of study, the participant must first obtain the permission of:

- the Office of the Legislative Assembly (where the vocational placement has been hosted by the Office); or
- the Member of the Legislative Assembly (where the vocational placement has been hosted by an MLA).

13.4 Confidential information may also include information, the unauthorised release of which may amount to a contempt of the Assembly.

- 13.5 Participants must not either directly or indirectly—except in the performance of their functions or duties as a vocational placement participant—make a record of, divulge or communicate to any person any information concerning the affairs or transactions of the Legislative Assembly, committees of the Legislative Assembly, the Office of the Legislative Assembly, or Members of the Legislative Assembly that are acquired in the course of a placement at the Legislative Assembly.

Discipline

- 13.6 If a participant fails to comply with their responsibilities, the Office of the Legislative Assembly may notify the educational institution and the parties will discuss a course of action for dealing with the participant.
- 13.7 If in the reasonable opinion of the Office of the Legislative Assembly, the participant has acted in a manner that places the safety, security or reputation of the Legislative Assembly, its members, the Office of the Legislative Assembly or any of its personnel or other participants at risk, the Office of the Legislative Assembly may:
- restrict the Participant's access to specified premises or facilities;
 - remove the Participant from Legislative Assembly premises; and/or
 - terminate the applicable vocational agreement with the participant immediately upon giving notice to the participant and the educational institution.

14. Documentation

- 14.1 In addition to any documentation that is required to be completed by the relevant educational institution attended by participant, **a Vocational Placement Agreement must be completed through the Office's HROnboard system before a placement is able to commence.** The system records the agreement of:
- an authorised staff member of the Office (e.g. the Manager, Education and Engagement); and
 - the host MLA or the supervisor nominated by the MLA (where the placement is in a member's office) or the Office's nominated supervisor (where the placement is within the Office of the Legislative Assembly); and
 - an authorised officer of the relevant educational institution; and
 - the participant; and
 - where the participant is under the age of 18, the participant's parent or guardian.