

Work placement guide for students

ACM20121

Certificate II in Animal Care



TAFE NSW would like to pay our respect and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Land, Rivers and Sea. We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Elders, both past and present of all Nations.

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About this guide

Workplace assessment is an important component of your course. TAFE Digital needs evidence of your practical workplace skills to ensure you fulfil all the requirements of your course.

Work placement exposes you to a range of work-related situations and provides a rich range of learning experiences. It is an opportunity to develop and demonstrate skills and knowledge in a workplace context.

This guide has been developed to provide information about the work placement process. Please read through this information so you will be prepared.

Aims of work placement

Work placement provides you with the opportunity to:

- train with skilled industry workers and industry experts
- develop your employability and job-specific skills and knowledge
- gain insight into particular job roles and responsibilities.

The aims of work placement are for you to:

- develop and practise the skills identified in the units of competency
- be assessed in a real work environment
- develop the capacity to reflect on your own work practices.

Work placement **MUST** be secured before you are able to complete your enrolment into Certificate II Animal Care with TAFE Digital.

Who uses this guide?

This guide has been written for two types of students—those of you who are currently working in the industry that you are training in and those who are not.

1. If you are currently working in an appropriate workplace, you can undertake your required workplace assessments at your workplace (subject to the workplace being approved by TAFE Digital).
2. If you are not currently employed in a relevant workplace, you will need to arrange to complete a work placement in an appropriate workplace. The work placement involves undertaking specific tasks and roles that relate to your course, under supervision.

SECTION 1: WORK PLACEMENT STEPS



Introduction

Work placement steps vary depending on whether you are being assessed in your current workplace or whether you are volunteering in a workplace in order to gain experience and be assessed.

What is an appropriate workplace?

Your host workplace needs to be able to provide you with access to the tasks, equipment and resources necessary to develop your skills and undertake your workplace assessment tasks.

Suitable facilities for the Certificate II in Animal Care may include:

- boarding kennels/catteries
- groomers/mobile dog washing services
- pet sitting services/doggy day care
- animal rescue groups/Animal Welfare League/RSPCA/local council pound
- petting zoos
- pet shops
- veterinary clinics.

Some units require you to demonstrate skills with several different types of animals. If your workplace only deals with one species or does not cover all the tasks in the unit, you will be required to do some work placement at another facility.

What is required to be an appropriate workplace supervisor?

It is important that your workplace supervisor has a level of experience and qualifications to provide you with support and guidance in the workplace.

In general, your workplace supervisor will have:

- a minimum of Certificate II in Animal Care
- a minimum of two years' experience post-graduation industry experience.

Can I do work placement where I am currently employed?

If you are currently working in an appropriate workplace under the guidance of an experienced supervisor, you can complete your workplace assessments in your current workplace.

If your workplace does not have a sufficient variety of animals or services to complete the assessment requirements for all units, you will have to do some placement at another facility.

How long is the work placement?

Ideally you should be doing regular weekly work placement throughout your course. This will allow you to develop your practical skills and complete your work based practical assessment tasks. You are required to complete a minimum of 140 hours during your course but in some cases more hours may be required to complete all your practical assessment tasks.

If you are employed in an animal care workplace

To have your workplace approved for your workplace assessments, you need to undertake the following steps:

- **Step 1: Complete the *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist* form**
Provide your workplace supervisor with the *Work placement guide for host employers and supervisors*. Ask your supervisor to complete and sign the *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist*. This provides TAFE Digital with important information about your workplace, its facilities and resources and details of your proposed workplace supervisor.
- **Step 2: Provide the signed checklist when requested to do so during enrolment**
Once you have been notified that your workplace is suitable, your enrolment will be completed.
- **Step 3: Log in and get started**

If you are undertaking voluntary work placement

To organise your work placement you need to follow these steps:

- **Step 1: Identify an appropriate workplace**
Section 3 provides advice and tips on how to identify and approach potential host workplaces.
- **Step 2: Complete the *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist form***
Provide your potential workplace supervisor with the *Work placement guide for host employers and supervisors* and the *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist form*. Ask your supervisor to complete and sign the form. This provides us with important information about your workplace, its facilities and resources and details of your proposed workplace supervisor.
- **Step 3: Provide the signed checklist when requested to do so during enrolment**
Once you have been notified that your workplace is suitable, your enrolment will be completed.
- **Step 4: Log in and get started**
- **Step 5: Familiarise yourself with your work placement requirements**
Check with your workplace supervisor on the workplace requirements. For example: dress code, start/finish times and staff facilities provided.

Summary of documents needed

Here is a list of the documents you need to action your work placement:

- Letter of introduction (optional)
- *Work placement guide for host employers and supervisors*
- *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist*—this is to be completed and submitted to complete your enrolment.

SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Introduction

A successful work placement requires the collaboration and support of the student, the workplace and the workplace supervisor. This section clarifies the roles and responsibilities of these key groups.

The TAFE Digital student needs to:

- provide the workplace supervisor with a copy of the *Work placement guide for host employers and supervisors* and other relevant supporting documentation
- work with your facilitator/teacher and workplace supervisor to develop your workplace training and assessment schedule
- commit to complete the tasks and activities outlined in your schedule and other related assessment activities
- comply with all requirements of the workplace, including student code of conduct, confidentiality, Work, Health and Safety (WHS), induction and orientation.

The workplace supervisor needs to:

- complete the required *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist*, then once you start the *Student workplace induction checklist*
- provide access and opportunity for you to experience a variety of situations in the workplace where you can develop practical work-based skills and knowledge
- provide you with appropriate orientation and induction to the work environment, including WHS and any other key workplace policies and procedures
- verify completion of your required tasks to a standard considered acceptable within that workplace
- agree to be contacted by TAFE NSW and complete documentation as outlined in this guide.

Student Code of Conduct

As a TAFE NSW student, you must conduct yourself properly in the workplace. You will be interacting not only with your workplace supervisor and other workplace staff, but also clients and members of the public.

By enrolling in Certificate II in Animal Care with TAFE NSW, you agree to comply with the following during your work placement:

- Attend the workplace on the designated days.
- Notify the workplace if you are late, unable to attend or experiencing difficulties.
- Be punctual, both on arrival and after breaks.
- Show interest in the work and have a positive attitude.
- Dress appropriately for the workplace.
- Behave appropriately at all times.
- Apply your knowledge and skills as an entry level worker.
- Follow workplace health and safety requirements.
- Take care of your employer's property.
- Follow instructions and accept suggestions.
- Ask for help as required.
- Follow the routine of the workplace.
- Keep personal problems at home.
- Keep track of your progress by completing your journal entries.
- Arrange a time to discuss your progress with your workplace supervisor.

Thank the workplace supervisor and staff at the end of your work placement.

If you do not adhere to this code of conduct, you may not be allowed to participate in workplace activities in the future, and if you commit serious breaches of the TAFE NSW Student Discipline Policy you may be excluded from this course.

Will TAFE NSW be in contact with my workplace supervisor?

Once TAFE Digital has received your signed *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist*, your Education Support Officer may contact your workplace supervisor to verify details. Your supervisor may be contacted throughout the course for updates on your progress.

Do I need insurance?

TAFE NSW covers you for your work placement if you are not a paid employee of the host workplace. The *Work placement guide for host employers and supervisors* provides information to your workplace.

If you are a paid employee you will be covered by your employer's Workers Compensation insurance policy.

What happens if I lose my work placement during the course?

If you lose your work placement during the course, you must find another work placement.

If you are in breach of the Student Code of Conduct or are facing disciplinary action under your enrolment conditions, TAFE NSW will let you know if you can proceed with the course.

SECTION 3: FINDING WORK PLACEMENT



Introduction

You are required to find your own work placement in an appropriate host workplace under the guidance of an experienced and appropriately qualified workplace supervisor before enrolling in the Certificate II Animal Care. This section provides you with tips and advice on how to find a work placement.

Steps in finding a work placement

1. Begin by thinking about where you would like to undertake your work placement. Remember, the aim is for you to gain exposure to the range of tasks and activities carried out in the workplace, in addition to gaining practical experience.
2. Having decided on the location and type of placement you are looking for, you need to find the contact details of potential host workplaces.
3. Using your personal contacts and networks (for example, friends, family, fellow students, current or former colleagues) is often the best way to find contacts with potential businesses. Alternatively, you can use Google or the phone book.
4. There are three main ways to contact a potential host workplace:
 - in person
 - by phone
 - by email/letter.

It is best to contact several potential host workplaces as you may not receive a reply from some, or others may take weeks to say 'no'. Don't get disheartened by this—it is nothing personal, they are often busy and may have many requests for placement.

There is an example letter at the end of this section you can use to introduce yourself.

Larger organisations may have someone in charge of work placement, or a specific location on their website to apply. Find out with a phone call how they would prefer to be approached, or search on their website.

- Once you have drawn up your target business list, keep a list of who you have contacted, like the example below.

Table 1 – List of workplaces you have approached for work placement

Date	Workplace	Phone/email	Contact person	Responses

- Contact the businesses you have identified. You may wish to use the example introduction letter at the end of this section. You can vary or personalise the letter.

Follow-up phone calls

- Allow several days to a week from the time you first contact a prospective host workplace, and then follow up with a phone call. Ask to speak to this person and briefly discuss your requirements. If they are located nearby, you may like to visit to discuss the likelihood of work placement.
- Next, add the response to your list and work through your contacts until you get a YES.

Pre-placement preparation

Before you start your work placement, you must complete the:

- Use of animals in learning* topic and quizzes before commencing work placement
- knowledge assessments of the first 2 units, *ACMGAS201 Work in the animal care industry* and *ACMWHS201 Participate in workplace health & safety processes*.

This provides you with an introduction to the industry and necessary WHS skills to participate safely in a work place. The skills assessment for these units are completed after starting your work placement.

Depending on individual host workplace policies, other requirements may include:

- **vaccination against zoonotic diseases**—this will depend on the nature of the workplace
- **child protection**—in NSW you are required to complete a Working with Children Check if your work placement involves direct contact with children. The site <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check> explains requirements
- **confidentiality agreements**—any matters of a confidential nature must NOT, under any circumstances, be divulged or passed on to any unauthorised person. It is possible that you may be required to sign a legally binding contract regarding confidential matters.

Pre-placement checklist

Knowing the following information about the host workplace and its initial expectations can enable you to feel more comfortable when you start.

Some of the preparation is quite simple—see the checklist below. Be sure you have the following information ready for day one:

- Where to go on your first day
- What time you need to start and your hours of work
- To whom you will report, and who your workplace supervisor is
- What to wear—is there a standard form of dress or uniform?

Example letter of introduction

My name is *[Insert Name]* and I am enrolling in Certificate II in Animal Care with TAFE Digital. I am seeking the opportunity to undertake my work placement with your business.

A key element of the course is the development of skills in a workplace environment. It is recommended that I do weekly shifts of at least 4 hours throughout my study and complete a minimum of 140 hours. I must have this organised before my enrolment can be finalised.

I will be studying the following core units as part of my course:

- ACMGAS201 Work in the animal care industry
- ACMGAS202 Participate in workplace communications
- ACMGAS203 Complete animal care hygiene routines
- ACMGAS204 Feed and water animals
- ACMGAS205 Assist in health care of animals
- ACMGAS206 Provide basic first aid for animals
- ACMSUS201 Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices
- ACMWHS201 Participate in workplace health and safety processes.

TAFE Digital is responsible for all assessment activities. Your business would be required to provide a workplace supervisor who will:

- provide guidance and support for me in the workplace
- sign off on my workplace assessment activities
- ensure access to the facilities, equipment and resources to complete the tasks.

Please note that part of the workplace evidence I am required to collect will involve photo and video evidence of me completing tasks in the workplace.

The enclosed *Work placement guide for host employers and supervisors* provides more details. As a voluntary worker I am covered by TAFE NSW insurance and details are provided in the guide. My TAFE Digital Education Support Officer is also available to provide an overview of the work placement process and practical assessment if required.

I am passionate about working with animals and hope you will give me an opportunity to enhance my skills in this important area. Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Insert your details

SECTION 4: WHAT HAPPENS DURING WORK PLACEMENT?



Introduction

When you start your work placement, your supervisor will give you an induction to the workplace. This will provide you with an introduction to the facilities, staff, workplace procedures and WHS. You should download the *Student workplace induction checklist* and take it with you on your first day. This checklist needs to be signed off by you and your supervisor, then uploaded to your online course in the work placement section. The checklist includes a confidentiality agreement and code of conduct agreement.

You will be given tasks by your supervisor to complete in your workplace, like any other employee. You should treat this as an opportunity to develop a range of work ready skills in addition to gaining broad industry skills.

Assessments in the workplace

Some units of competency have assessments which may be required to be completed in the workplace. These include:

- direct evidence portfolios
 - research and practical activities which may require access to information specific to the workplace such as animal and client information, workplace policies and procedures
 - self-reflection activities
 - task reports
 - videos or photographs of you doing various tasks
- indirect evidence sources, such as workplace logbook, supervisor reports or phone interviews.

Permission to gather evidence is part of the *Workplace supervisor and facility checklist*. Note that this permission is required prior to completing your enrolment.

Training logbook

You are required to complete the *Training logbook*. This tracks your workplace hours and provides your workplace supervisor with the opportunity to comment on your skills. Your workplace supervisor is required to verify and sign off your attendance each day. Total hours of the workplace tasks must add up to at least 140 hours.

Good luck with your studies. We hope you enjoy your course!

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