Unpaid Work Experience Placements – Fact Sheet
Disability Employment Services

Work experience
Genuine work experience is a key stepping stone to employment for many people with disability.

An Unpaid Work Experience Placement (UWEP) properly tailored and supported, may also be the best way for a person with a disability to demonstrate skills and competencies in the workplace and gain ongoing employment.

This fact sheet outlines the expectations of Disability Employment Services (DES) Providers and employer organisations to ensure genuine, unpaid work experience arrangements maximise employment outcomes for people with disability.

Advice to Providers
For DES Participants, a UWEP is part of a carefully planned, approved, managed and monitored service, which should only be arranged to maximise a prospect of sustained employment. These arrangements are covered by DEED and subject to strict conditions of delivery. They are therefore different to other forms of unpaid work experience in the labour market.

Like all DES services, a UWEP is expected to be tailored to the individual needs of a DES Participant and entered into on a voluntary basis as part of a planned employment pathway.

Some other key requirements include:
- The Host Organisation be assessed as suitable and understand their responsibilities
- The Participant be equipped and prepared for the experience
- Details of all activities of the UWEP be documented prior to commencement
- No rollover of any placement if no offer of employment
- A Participant not be required to do work that would otherwise be performed by a paid employee
- A pre placement Host and Participant signed agreement be on record
- A safe system of work be detailed for the entire UWEP activity, and
- DEEWR insurance cover to be arranged.
- In addition, a DES Provider is unable to record an employment start date (anchor date) for a UWEP as it is critical that a UWEP activity is not an employment relationship.

Other standards such as details of placement periods and the ongoing requirement to maintain and keep records of regular contact with the Participant and Host Organisation also apply.

Advice to Host Organisations
DEEWR welcomes the involvement of potential employers, known as host organisations, to support people with disability through well supervised UWEPs. Organisations can work with DES providers to build a more diverse workplace and maximise recruitment options using UWEPs.

The possibility of paid employment remains a key goal of any UWEP in DES. Hosts are not able to use a UWEP as a stop gap while doing recruitment or take on a placement if they have downsized their workforce.

An example of a best practice DES UWEP might be a short term unpaid placement for a person whose disability makes it difficult for them to demonstrate ability in a traditional job application process.

Community Awareness
DES Providers, Participants and potential Employers are encouraged to know and promote the requirements of DES UWEPs as a legitimate form of employment support for people with disability within local labour markets.

Further information
For information on Unpaid Work Experience, visit http://foi.deewr.gov.au/node/8416 or call 1800 805 260.