



Volunteering and Work Experience



Work It Out

Growing Your Knowledge Base



WIO

Work It Out

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Benefits of Volunteering and Work Experience

Volunteering or Work Experience can provide a highly effective way into the workforce, especially if you have not previously been engaged in work. Often it can be difficult to get work because of a lack experience or the ability to nominate suitable work referees, but you need work to secure these. Volunteering and work experience can benefit you, by providing some of the essential requirements to gain employment.

Volunteering versus Work Experience

Volunteering Australia defines Volunteering as time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain. It is far broader concept than Work Experience in that you can apply to volunteer on specific projects and events not just in job specific position.. Work Experience tends to be more about working in a particular industry and for a specific employer.



Many young people do work experience (Work Placement) as part of VET courses at school or as part of TAFE or University requirements (these are sometimes referred to as Internships). These work experience placements form part of the requirements for the completion of the course. You can however undertake a work experience placement even if you are not studying.

There are many avenues for volunteering options in Australia, you can access these options via sites and organisations that provide volunteering experiences, (see the blue box over the page).

Unlike Volunteering, work experience is something that you will probably have to arrange for yourself (apart from Work Placements at School). Locating these opportunities will be something that you will need to spend some time considering. Once you have identified the type of work you are interested in pursuing as a career, then you need to do some online research, ask your family and friends and other people in your network of contacts if they have any connections with suitable businesses or organisations. You will need to do some cold calling to source a work experience placement.

People registered in the Work It Out programme can get support with this process and CONNECT may be able to cover the Insurance costs for the work experience placement.



Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering can provide a number of rewards, including:

- Providing an opportunity to be involved in activities, events or causes that interest you
- Enhancing your existing skills or building new skills as a pathway to future work and career paths
- Creating potential referees to support your application for work
- Creating connections with people to build your network of contacts for future job search activities and links to work
- Building a sense of wellbeing, social connection and belonging
- Creating a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction which can contribute to overall happiness
- A way of giving and adding value to your community and the causes which you support

Benefits of Work Experience

Work Experience can provide a number of rewards, including:

- All of the above benefits noted for volunteering
- Some employers may be so impressed with your efforts that they may offer you some ongoing paid work
- Your work experience employer may recommend you through word-of-mouth to another employer
- Work experience can give you demonstrated proof that you can complete tasks required in certain jobs
- The experience will help you to promote yourself more effectively at an interview as you will have practical examples to give when answering questions

Other resources:

[Volunteering Search](#) You can search for volunteering positions here.

[Volunteering in NSW](#) This site provides more information on volunteering

[Volunteering in Lismore](#) and [Volunteering in Northern Rivers](#) from Tweed Heads to Ballina

[Projects Abroad](#) and [Global Visions International](#) offer volunteering options overseas. You will have to cover the costs of these experiences. The opportunities vary between countries, with some positions requiring qualifications.

[Work Experience Reflection Tool](#). The Department of Education and Training provides this assessment tool for students undertaking Work Placement. It will help you translate this experience to your resume and job applications. You can use this tool for your work experience or voluntary work.

CONNECT, Northern Rivers Inc is a not-for-profit entity that operates in the Northern Rivers of NSW, Australia.

CONNECT is focused on supporting young people still in school, and those who have recently left school, to reach their full potential in the fields of work, education and training.

CONNECT offers a range of youth services, including the Work It Out programme which operates in the Northern Rivers of NSW. The Work It Out Programme is designed to support young people aged 15-19 who are not in employment, education or training to either re-engage with school or transition to training or work.

More information on the Work It Out Programme can be found at the Work It Out website, along with other guides in this series.

Check out our website at the link below for more Guides in the Work It Out series.



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www.workitout.org.au