

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL-BASED APPRENTICESHIPS (ASBAS) DURING COVID-19

Vocational Education and Training (VET) makes a substantial contribution to the community and the ACT Government values the contribution of employers in the Canberra region in supporting school-based apprenticeships.

Businesses across all sectors may be facing challenging circumstances as a result of COVID-19. Many school-based apprentices are employed in occupations that will continue to provide essential services to our local community and, where an employer is able to maintain their employment arrangements, ASbAs can continue, including during school holidays and/or pupil free days.

Australian Apprenticeship obligations remain unchanged and school-based apprentices should be supervised at all times by a qualified or appropriately experienced supervisor.

When in their ASbA workplaces, it is critical secondary school students and their work colleagues continue to practice good personal hygiene and social distancing. The following guidance has been issued by the Australian Government Department of Health for the consideration of employers and employees in all Australian workplaces:

- Stay at home if you are sick
- Stop handshaking as a greeting
- Physical distancing measures (1.5 metres) and frequent hand washing is strongly encouraged
- Hold meetings via video conferencing or phone call
- Defer large meetings
- Hold essential meetings outside in the open air if possible
- Promote good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and provide hand sanitisers for all staff and workers. Take lunch at your desk or outside rather than in the lunchroom
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly
- Consider opening windows and adjusting air conditioning for more ventilation
- Limit food handling and sharing of food in the workplace
- Reconsider any non-essential business travel
- Promote strictest hygiene among food preparation (canteen) staff and their close contacts
- Consider if large gatherings can be rescheduled, staggered or cancelled.

Where workplaces are impacted by COVID-19

Where an ASbA workplace is shut-down as a result of COVID-19, or an individual within the workplace tests positive for COVID-19 and the student must self-isolate as a result, the student or their parent/guardian must inform the school Principal and Skills Canberra.

Employers and students are also encouraged to contact the ACT Wage Entitlement Information Service or the FairWork Ombudsman to ensure all employment obligations are met.

Skills Canberra
Ph: 6205 8555
Email: skills@act.gov.au

Wage Entitlement Information Service
Ph: 1300 278 681
Email: apprenticeship@canberrabusiness.com

Skills Canberra will work with individual students and their employers to initiate any variation to the student's national training contract arrangements, if necessary.

The Education Directorate will work closely with the student's school and the ACT BSSS to support the school study program of any student impacted as a result of any required variation.

For further information, please contact the ACT Education Directorate on 6205 5268 or at VETforSS@act.edu.au