



# SBAT Best Practice Guide

Whatever the type of SBAT program you are involved in, the following elements of best practice will help make it successful.

- **Provide an opportunity for students to experience the workplace before they sign up for an SBAT:** This can be through a work experience program in Year 10 or a Structured Work Placement as part of VCAL or VCE in years 11 or 12. It gives students a chance to find out about the workplace and employers can learn a little about the student.
- **Careful selection of students:** Problems arise and SBATs fall over when either employer or student take on the SBAT for the wrong reason, or don't fully understand what's involved. School staff, Apprenticeship Centres and RTOs can all help with information and recruitment strategies. It is advisable for schools to invite a speaker in to provide an overview of SBATs to students prior to them seeking a suitable employer. Use of the brochures for students and employers produced by the Workplace Learning Coordinators would be appropriate at this stage.
- **Work to set up a meeting of all key parties at the beginning:** It is critical that the student, employer, parents, school and Apprenticeship Centre all sit down together to clarify what is involved and what each person's responsibilities will be. Parents can often be neglected but experience has shown that support from parents/care-givers helps students and contributes to the success of the SBAT
- **Designate one person as primarily responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the SBAT.** Although everyone has their own roles and responsibilities it is desirable for one person to take prime responsibility. The fact that so many parties are involved means that the young person can get lost and key information may not be passed on when it should. The key person may be a teacher or support person at the school, a parent, the employer or staff member, the consultant from the apprenticeship centre or the trainer from the RTO (see next point). This person needs to keep tabs on progress and ensure effective ongoing liaison between parties.

- **Clear training plan:** Once the employer and apprentice have selected a Registered Training Organisation for delivery of training, the RTO will prepare a Training Plan. Once this has occurred, everyone needs to know: what the training is going to cover, how much will be on-the-job and off-the-job, when and how it's going to be delivered etc. Who will be responsible for workplace learning and the assessment? What's the school's role? Where can the student go for help with their learning? How will the RTO report to the school, employer and student? There may be a need to set up another meeting of all parties at this stage.
- **Full supervision for students from workplace mentors/buddies chosen from experienced staff:** This is especially important when students are working directly with people. Students should have workplace buddies who they can learn from. Best practice models show that students manage well when they receive structured times for debriefing, are able to process their experiences and are in a supportive learning/working environment. Gradually as they develop skills and competence they are able to manage tasks themselves, but must always be directed and supervised by appropriate, experienced staff.
- **Dealing with issues or disputes:** When normal communication channels don't seem to be working or there are disputes between parties, help can be sought from the consultant at the Apprenticeship Centre or from one of the Apprenticeship Field Officers, or Apprenticeship Support Officers employed by Skills Victoria. Tel: 1300 722603
- **Accurate and timely reporting of student results:** It is critical if a student is to obtain credit as part of their VCE or VCAL studies that RTOs send results to schools in time for entry on the VASS system. This needs to occur in early November.
- **Career pathway information and mentoring at the end of the SBAT:** All students benefit from understanding the career paths available, not just at the beginning of the SBAT, but also at the end. As their interests and skills develop, new directions and opportunities open up for them. Career mentoring and support from the school, employer and RTO is invaluable at this time because of their knowledge of the student's abilities and the possibilities for them within the industry.