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Employer's Handbook

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1.Introduction

The TourX Employer's Handbook has been developed to support tourism and hospitality organisations that provide Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities within the TourX Hospitality Labs.

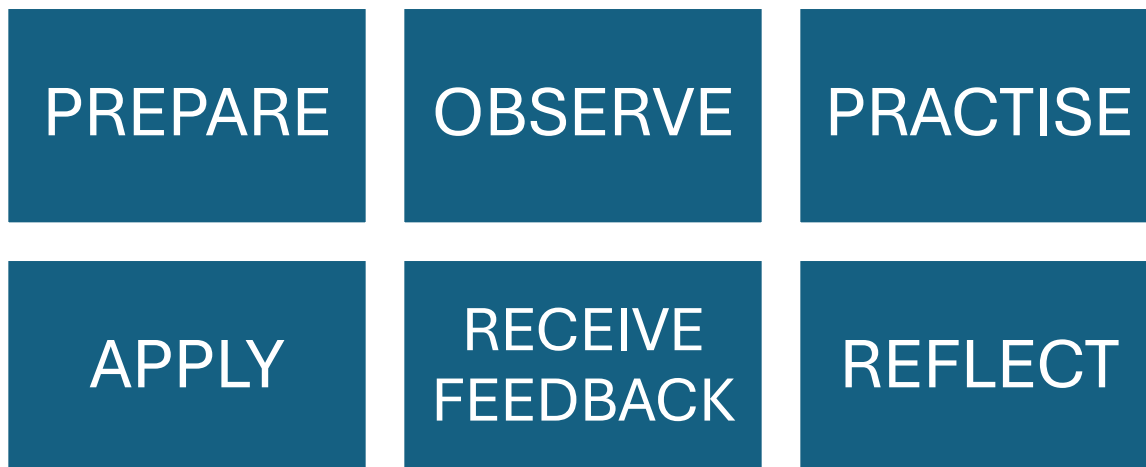
Work-Based Learning enables learners to develop and apply competences in authentic professional environments. Within TourX, workplace experience is not intended simply as exposure to a business environment. It forms part of a structured learning process connected to the competence-based curricula and their Learning Outcomes.

The Handbook therefore focuses on the practical question:

How can employers provide workplace experiences that contribute meaningfully to learner competence development?

The employer does not replace the trainer or VET provider. Instead, the workplace provides the professional context in which learners can observe, practise, apply and progressively develop relevant competences.

A simple TourX WBL pathway is:



1.1 Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide practical guidance for employers and workplace mentors involved in TourX Work-Based Learning.

It supports employers in:

1. understanding the purpose of WBL within TourX;
2. identifying appropriate workplace learning opportunities;
3. connecting workplace activities with learner competences and Learning Outcomes;
4. preparing learners for workplace participation;
5. providing appropriate guidance and supervision;
6. allowing learners to progress towards greater independence where appropriate;
7. observing learner performance;
8. providing constructive workplace feedback; and
9. communicating with trainers and VET providers about learner progress.

The Handbook is designed as a practical workplace resource. Employers are not expected to become educational specialists or to interpret the curriculum in the same way as a trainer.

Instead, the trainer or VET provider translates curriculum requirements into clear learning expectations, while the employer provides suitable opportunities for those competences to be developed and observed in professional practice.

- VET PROVIDER / TRAINER: identifies and communicates the learning expectations
- EMPLOYER / WORKPLACE MENTOR: provides appropriate professional learning opportunities
- LEARNER: observes, practises and applies competences
- TRAINER and WORKPLACE MENTOR and LEARNER: use evidence, feedback and reflection to support progress

1.2 Who This Handbook Is For

This Handbook is intended for organisations and professionals who host or support TourX learners in workplace settings.

This may include:

1. hotels and other accommodation providers;
2. restaurants and food-service businesses;
3. travel agencies and tourism organisations;
4. other tourism and hospitality enterprises participating in WBL;
5. managers responsible for hosting learners;
6. workplace mentors;
7. supervisors;

8. employees assigned to support learners during workplace activities; and
9. staff responsible for coordinating with VET providers.

The Handbook can be used by organisations with extensive experience of placements and internships as well as by employers participating in structured WBL for the first time.

Different organisations will provide different professional environments and learning opportunities. The objective is therefore not to make every WBL experience identical, but to ensure that workplace activities remain meaningful, appropriate and connected to the competences learners are expected to develop.

1.3 The Employer's Role in TourX

Employers play an important role in connecting vocational learning with professional practice.

Within WBL, the employer provides the authentic environment in which learners can experience how knowledge, skills and professional behaviours are used in real tourism and hospitality operations.

The employer's role may include:

Employer Contribution	In Practice
Provide professional context	Introduce learners to the workplace, team, procedures and relevant professional practices
Provide learning opportunities	Identify appropriate tasks, situations or processes that learners can observe or practise
Support progressive participation	Allow learners to move from observation towards supervised and, where appropriate, more independent practice
Provide guidance	Explain workplace expectations, procedures and professional standards
Observe performance	Pay attention to how the learner performs relevant workplace activities
Provide feedback	Explain what the learner is doing effectively and what could be improved
Communicate with the VET provider	Share relevant information about learner participation and progress

The employer is not expected to reproduce classroom teaching in the workplace.

The value of WBL comes from providing something that classroom and online learning cannot fully reproduce: opportunities to learn through participation in authentic professional activity.

1.4 How to Use This Handbook

The Handbook can be used before, during and after a TourX Work-Based Learning experience.

Before WBL

Use the Handbook to:

- understand the purpose of the learner's WBL;
- clarify roles and responsibilities;
- review the relevant learning expectations;

- identify appropriate workplace activities;
- decide who will support the learner; and
- prepare for the learner's arrival.

During WBL

Use it to:

- provide orientation and guidance;
- organise appropriate workplace participation;
- monitor learner progress;
- adjust the level of support where necessary;
- provide regular feedback; and
- communicate with the trainer or VET provider.

After or at Key Review Points

Use it to:

- review learner progress;
- provide feedback on workplace performance;
- identify competences that require further development;
- contribute to learner reflection; and
- review how the WBL experience could be improved.

The practical templates in Section 8: Employer Tools and Templates can be used throughout this process.

Employer WBL Cycle

BEFORE

Understand the learning expectations

Select appropriate workplace opportunities

Prepare the learner and workplace

DURING

Orient

Demonstrate

Supervise

Observe

Provide feedback

AFTER / REVIEW

Discuss progress

Share feedback

Support reflection

Identify next steps

The central principle throughout the Handbook is:

Work-Based Learning should connect what the learner is expected to achieve with what the learner has meaningful opportunities to observe, practise and apply in the workplace.

2. Understanding Work-Based Learning in TourX

Work-Based Learning (WBL) connects structured learning with authentic professional practice. In TourX, it enables learners to develop and apply competences from the Hospitality Labs curricula in real tourism and hospitality environments.

WBL is therefore more than being present in a workplace. It should have a clear learning purpose, be connected to relevant Learning Outcomes and provide opportunities for appropriate guidance, practice, observation, feedback and reflection.

2.1 What Is Work-Based Learning?

Work-Based Learning is structured learning that takes place through participation in authentic work situations.

Depending on the programme and workplace context, WBL may include:

- placements or internships;
- job shadowing;
- supervised workplace practice;
- project-based workplace assignments; and
- participation in appropriate professional tasks.

The important distinction is between workplace presence and workplace learning.

Workplace Experience	Structured Work-Based Learning
Learner is present in the workplace	Learner has identified learning objectives
Activities depend mainly on what happens during the day	Activities are selected where possible to support relevant competences
Learner may primarily observe	Observation is connected to a learning purpose and can progress towards practice
Tasks may not be connected to the curriculum	Workplace tasks are linked to relevant Learning Outcomes
Feedback may be informal or occasional	Feedback supports learner development
Experience ends when the placement ends	Experience is connected with reflection and further learning

For example, observing reception staff for several hours can provide useful workplace exposure. It becomes a stronger WBL opportunity when the learner knows what to observe, connects that observation with a relevant competence, progresses towards appropriate supervised practice and receives feedback.

2.2 Why WBL Matters

Tourism and hospitality competences are developed not only by understanding concepts but also by applying them in professional situations.

The workplace provides learners with opportunities to experience:

- authentic customer and guest interactions;
- workplace procedures and routines;
- professional standards;
- digital systems used in practice;
- teamwork and communication;
- operational decision-making;
- unexpected situations and problems;
- sustainability practices; and
- the responsibilities associated with professional work.

WBL can therefore help bridge the distance between:

“I understand how this should be done.” and “I can apply this appropriately in a professional environment.”

The workplace also exposes learners to the complexity of real professional practice. Situations do not always follow textbook examples, and learners may need to communicate, adapt, solve problems and make appropriate decisions within the boundaries of their role.

For this reason, employers make a distinctive contribution to TourX learning: they provide the authentic professional context in which competence can be practised and developed.

2.3 WBL within the TourX Hospitality Labs

Within the TourX learning approach, WBL is connected with the competence-based Hospitality Labs curricula rather than treated as an isolated placement. TourX also includes a horizontal Soft Skills pathway, covering communication, collaboration, customer service, resilience, critical thinking, presentation, risk management, contingency planning and conflict resolution. Employers can reinforce and observe these competences through authentic workplace tasks.

Learning may move across several environments:

Learning Stage	Example
Learn	Learner explores a concept, procedure or professional principle
Observe	Learner sees how it is demonstrated or applied
Practise	Learner tries the skill in a supported environment
Apply	Learner uses the competence in an appropriate workplace situation
Receive Feedback	Performance is discussed with the trainer and/or workplace mentor
Reflect	Learner considers what was learned and what should improve

This does not mean that every Learning Outcome must follow exactly the same sequence. Some competences may be particularly suitable for workplace practice, while others may be developed mainly through trainer-led or digital learning.

The objective is to create a meaningful connection between learning environments.

For employers, the most important point is that the workplace activity should have a recognisable learning purpose.

2.4 From Learning Outcomes to Workplace Practice

Employers do not need to redesign the TourX curriculum. The trainer or VET provider should communicate the relevant learning expectations and help identify how they could be supported in the workplace.

The basic process is:



For example:

Learning Area	Possible Workplace Opportunity
Guest communication	Observe and progressively participate in appropriate guest interactions
Customer service	Support appropriate service activities and respond to routine customer needs under supervision
Reservation processes	Observe and, where appropriate, progressively perform relevant reservation tasks
Digital competence	Use relevant workplace systems with appropriate guidance
Housekeeping operations	Observe and apply relevant procedures
Sustainability	Apply or examine resource-saving and waste-reduction practices
Teamwork	Participate in team activities and professional communication
Problem-solving	Examine or respond to appropriate operational situations

The exact task will depend on:

1. the Learning Outcome;
2. the learner's existing competence;
3. the workplace;
4. available professional activities;
5. operational requirements; and
6. the level of responsibility that can appropriately be given to the learner.

Not Every Workplace Is the Same

TourX WBL does not require every employer to provide identical activities.

For example, two hotels may use different reservation systems. Learners may therefore perform different specific actions while developing comparable competences related to digital reservation processes.

Similarly, sustainability practices may differ between a small independent restaurant and a large hotel. The workplace activity can be adapted while maintaining its connection with the intended competence.

The principle is:



Employers should therefore work with the trainer or VET provider to identify opportunities that are both educationally relevant and realistic within the workplace.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective Work-Based Learning depends on cooperation between the employer, workplace mentor or supervisor, trainer/VET provider and learner. Each has a different role, but all contribute to creating a structured connection between the curriculum and professional practice.

Clear responsibilities are particularly important before WBL begins. Employers should know what the learner is expected to develop, learners should understand what is expected of them, and trainers should remain involved in supporting and monitoring the learning process.

3.1 The Role of the Employer

The employer provides the professional environment in which WBL takes place.

The employer is responsible for creating appropriate conditions for workplace learning and identifying realistic opportunities for the learner to participate in professional activities.

Depending on the organisation and WBL arrangement, this may include:

- identifying an appropriate workplace mentor or supervisor;
- providing an introduction to the workplace;
- ensuring that relevant workplace rules and procedures are explained;
- identifying appropriate tasks and learning opportunities;
- enabling the learner to observe professional practice;
- allowing supervised participation where appropriate;
- supporting progression towards greater independence when the learner is ready;
- ensuring that tasks are appropriate to the learner's role and level of preparation;
- facilitating communication with the trainer or VET provider; and
- supporting the review of learner progress.

The employer does not need to create artificial activities when authentic professional opportunities are available. The objective is to identify where normal workplace practice can become a meaningful learning opportunity.

3.2 The Role of the Workplace Mentor or Supervisor

A workplace mentor or supervisor provides day-to-day support to the learner.

This role may be undertaken by a manager, supervisor or experienced member of staff who is familiar with the relevant professional activities.

The workplace mentor may:

Explain: Clarify procedures, expectations and professional standards.

Demonstrate: Show how relevant workplace tasks are performed.

Guide: Support the learner during initial practice.

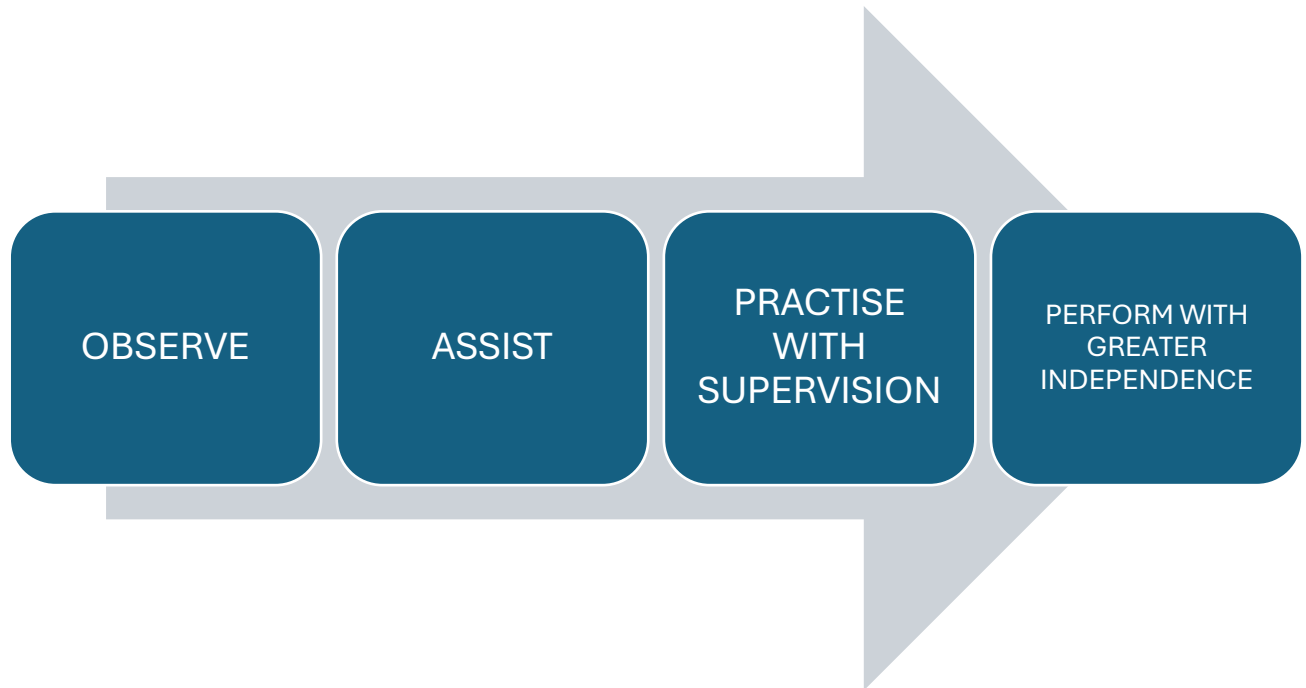
Observe: Pay attention to the learner's performance and development.

Provide Feedback: Identify effective performance and areas requiring improvement.

Encourage Reflection: Help the learner consider what they learned from the experience.

The mentor does not need to provide continuous instruction. The level of support should reflect the activity and the learner's readiness.

A typical progression may be:



Progression should not be automatic. Greater independence is appropriate when the learner demonstrates sufficient readiness and when the workplace activity allows it.

3.3 The Role of the Trainer / VET Provider

The trainer or VET provider maintains the connection between the curriculum and the workplace learning experience.

Their role includes:

- identifying relevant Learning Outcomes;
- explaining the intended competences to the employer and learner;
- helping translate Learning Outcomes into appropriate workplace activities;
- preparing learners before WBL;
- clarifying expected evidence of learning;
- maintaining appropriate communication with the workplace;
- monitoring learner progress;
- using workplace feedback to support further learning; and
- facilitating reflection on the WBL experience.

The trainer should not expect the employer to interpret educational terminology without support.

For example, instead of simply sending a Learning Outcome to the workplace, the trainer can clarify whether:

The learner is developing this competence

These types of workplace activities could support it

This is the type of performance we would like the learner to practise

This is the feedback that would be useful.

This makes the connection between education and workplace practice clearer for everyone involved.

3.4 The Role of the Learner

Learners are active participants in their WBL experience.

They should understand that WBL is not simply an opportunity to observe a workplace. They are expected to engage with the learning opportunities available and progressively take responsibility for their own development.

Learners should:

- understand the purpose of their WBL experience;
- know which competences they are expected to develop;
- follow workplace rules, procedures and professional expectations;
- ask questions when clarification is needed;
- participate actively in appropriate tasks;
- respond constructively to guidance;
- use feedback to improve performance;
- reflect on their experiences; and
- communicate difficulties or learning needs when necessary.

Learners should also recognise the limits of their role. They should not undertake activities for which they have not been adequately prepared or authorised.

3.5 Working Together

The strongest WBL experiences are based on communication between all parties.

VET Provider / Trainer	Employer / Mentor	Learner
Clarifies Learning Outcomes	Provides professional context	Engages actively
Prepares the learner	Identifies appropriate opportunities	Follows workplace expectations
Connects curriculum and workplace practice	Demonstrates and supervises	Observes and practises
Supports monitoring	Observes workplace performance	Requests clarification when needed
Uses workplace evidence and feedback	Provides feedback	Responds to feedback
Facilitates reflection	Contributes to progress discussions	Reflects on learning

Before WBL

The parties should clarify:

- the purpose of the WBL experience;
- relevant competences or Learning Outcomes;
- appropriate workplace activities;
- the learner's expected level of participation;
- who will supervise the learner;
- how progress will be monitored; and
- how communication will take place.

During WBL

Communication should help answer:

Is the learner receiving relevant opportunities?

Is the level of support appropriate?

Is the learner progressing?

Are any adjustments needed?

At Review Points

The trainer, workplace mentor and learner can bring together different perspectives:

Learner: what did i experience and learn?

Mentor: what did i observe in professional practice?

Trainer: how does this relate to the intended learning outcomes and next learning steps?

This shared approach helps ensure that WBL remains a learning experience rather than simply a period of workplace attendance.

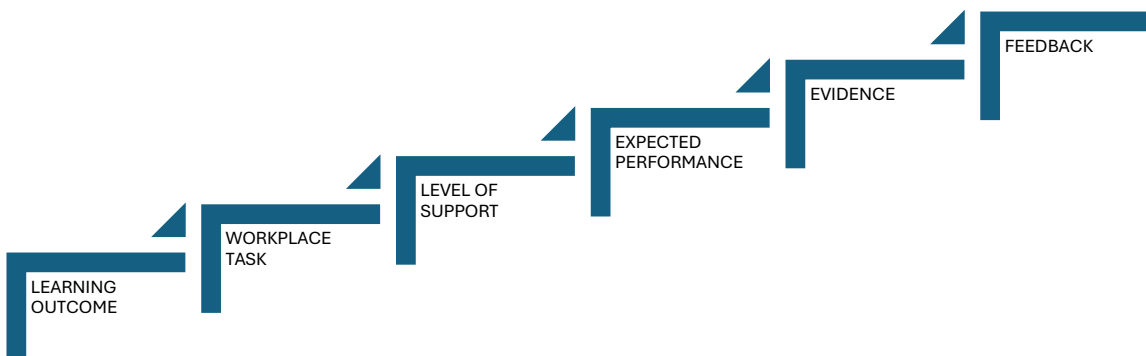
Task	Trainer / VET Provider	Employer / Mentor	Learner
<i>Clarify Learning Outcomes</i>	✓		
<i>Explain workplace context and expectations</i>		✓	
<i>Identify possible workplace tasks</i>	✓	✓	
<i>Prepare for workplace participation</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Participate in workplace activities</i>			✓
<i>Provide workplace supervision</i>		✓	
<i>Observe workplace performance</i>		✓	
<i>Provide workplace feedback</i>		✓	
<i>Reflect on experience</i>	✓		✓
<i>Review progress and next steps</i>	✓	✓	✓

4. Planning the Work-Based Learning Experience

A successful WBL experience should be planned around what the learner is expected to develop, rather than around a list of tasks that happen to be available in the workplace.

Planning does not require employers to redesign their normal operations. It requires the employer and VET provider to identify where authentic workplace activities can provide relevant learning opportunities.

The basic planning process is:



4.1 Understanding the Learner's Learning Outcomes

Before WBL begins, the employer or workplace mentor should receive clear information about the competences the learner is expected to develop.

The trainer or VET provider should communicate the relevant Learning Outcomes in practical terms.

Employers should be able to answer:

1. What is the learner expected to develop?
2. What might this competence look like in our workplace?
3. Which activities could provide relevant practice?
4. What level of performance can reasonably be expected?
5. What should we observe?
6. What feedback would be useful?

For example:

Learning Outcome Focus	What It Could Mean in the Workplace
Professional guest communication	Communicate appropriately with guests in relevant situations
Use of digital booking processes	Observe and progressively perform appropriate reservation-related tasks
Sustainable operational practice	Apply relevant resource-saving or waste-reduction practices
Teamwork	Participate appropriately in team activities and communication
Problem-solving	Identify and respond appropriately to relevant operational situations

Employers should ask the trainer for clarification if a Learning Outcome is difficult to translate into professional practice.

4.2 Selecting Appropriate Workplace Tasks

Once the intended competence is clear, the employer and trainer can identify suitable workplace activities.

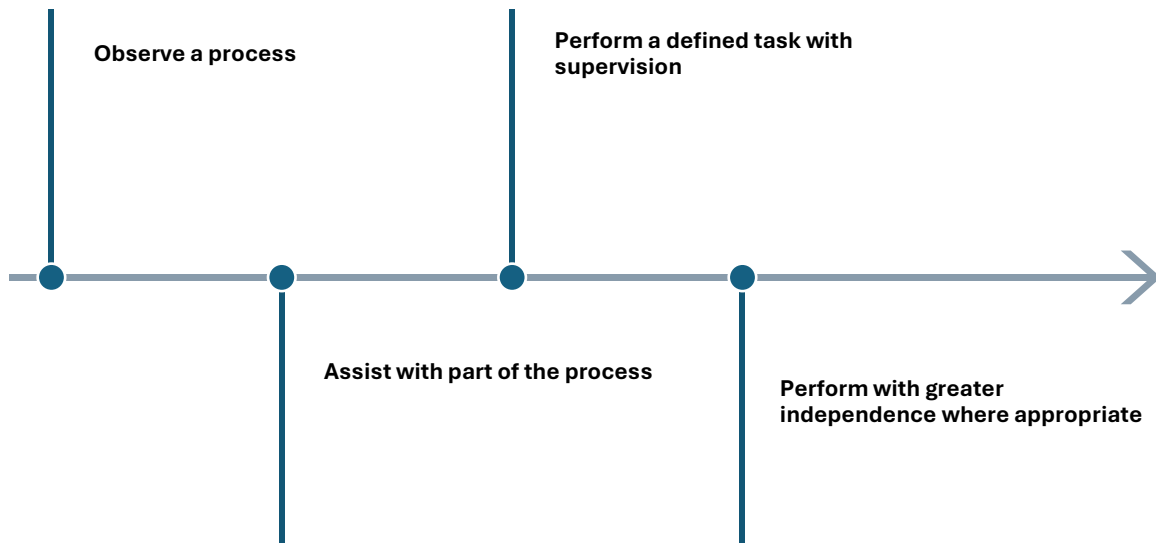
A good WBL task should be:

- Relevant : It contributes to the intended competence.
- Authentic : It reflects genuine workplace practice.
- Appropriate : It is suitable for the learner's level of preparation.
- Feasible : It can realistically be provided within the organisation.
- Observable : The mentor can see or review relevant aspects of learner performance.

Tasks may involve different levels of participation.

For example:

→ →



Not every task needs to involve independent performance.

Observation can itself be a useful learning activity when learners know what they are observing and why.

4.3 Matching Tasks to Learner Readiness

Learners may enter WBL with different levels of knowledge, experience and confidence.

The same workplace task may therefore require different levels of support.

Before assigning a task, consider:

Question	Why It Matters
<i>Has the learner encountered this process before?</i>	Determines how much introduction may be needed
<i>Has the learner practised it in training?</i>	Indicates readiness for workplace application
<i>Does the task involve customers, systems or operational responsibilities?</i>	May require closer supervision
<i>What could happen if the task is performed incorrectly?</i>	Helps determine appropriate responsibility
<i>Can the task be divided into smaller stages?</i>	Supports progressive participation
<i>What support will be available?</i>	Ensures the learner is not left without appropriate guidance

A learner should not be given greater responsibility simply because they have spent a certain amount of time in the workplace.

Progression should be based on demonstrated readiness.

TIME IN THE WORKPLACE ≠ READINESS FOR INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE

4.4 Planning Progressive Participation

Where appropriate, workplace participation can develop progressively.

Stage 1: Observe

The learner observes professional practice with a clear focus.

For example:

Observe how reception staff communicate with guests during check-in. Identify how information is explained and how questions are handled.

Stage 2: Assist

The learner supports part of the activity.

For example:

Assist the supervisor with appropriate elements of the check-in process.

Stage 3: Practise with Supervision

The learner performs an appropriate task while the mentor remains available to guide and intervene.

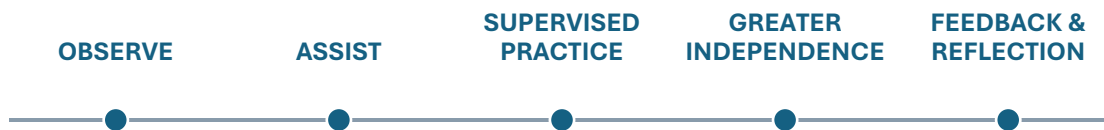
Stage 4: Greater Independence

Where the learner has demonstrated sufficient competence and workplace conditions allow it, the learner performs suitable tasks with less direct support.

Stage 5: Review and Reflect

The learner receives feedback and considers what should be maintained or improved.

The progression can therefore be represented as:



The stages are flexible. Some learners may require additional guided practice, and some activities may always require direct supervision.

4.5 Preparing the Workplace and the Learner

Preparation should take place before the learner begins substantive workplace activities.

Preparing the Workplace

The employer should, where applicable:

- identify the workplace mentor or supervisor;
- ensure relevant staff know the learner will be present;
- clarify the learner's role;
- identify initial learning opportunities;
- understand the relevant learning expectations;
- consider appropriate levels of access and responsibility;
- identify any workplace procedures the learner needs to understand; and
- establish how communication with the VET provider will take place.

Preparing the Learner

The learner should receive an appropriate workplace orientation.

This may cover:

- the organisation and its activities;
- relevant teams and roles;
- working arrangements;
- professional expectations;
- workplace rules and procedures;
- relevant health and safety requirements;
- confidentiality and data-related requirements where applicable;
- expected communication and behaviour;
- who to approach for guidance; and
- what to do when uncertain about a task.

The employer should also explain the learner's initial level of participation.

For example:

“During the first stage, you will observe this process and discuss it with your mentor. Once you are familiar with the procedure, you may begin supporting selected tasks under supervision.”

This provides clearer expectations than simply telling the learner to “follow the team and see how things work.”

<i>Planning Element</i>	<i>Agreed Information</i>
<i>Relevant Learning Outcome(s)</i>	What competence is being developed?
<i>Workplace opportunity</i>	Where can this competence be observed or practised?
<i>Learner activity</i>	What will the learner actually do?
<i>Initial level of participation</i>	Observe, assist, practise under supervision, etc.
<i>Workplace mentor</i>	Who will provide guidance?
<i>Expected performance</i>	What should the learner progressively demonstrate?
<i>Evidence</i>	What can be observed or recorded?
<i>Feedback</i>	Who will provide it and when?
<i>Reflection</i>	How will the learner review the experience?
<i>Communication</i>	When should the employer and trainer review progress?

5. Supporting Learners in the Workplace

Once the WBL experience has been planned, the employer and workplace mentor support the learner in moving from initial orientation towards meaningful participation in professional practice.

Effective workplace support does not mean supervising every action continuously. The level of guidance should reflect the learner's readiness, the complexity of the activity and the responsibilities involved.

The aim is progressive development:

5.1 Welcoming and Orienting the Learner

The first stage of WBL should help the learner understand the professional environment in which learning will take place.

A workplace orientation may include:

- introduction to the organisation and team;
- explanation of the learner's role;
- relevant workplace procedures;
- working arrangements and expectations;
- health and safety requirements;
- professional conduct;
- confidentiality and appropriate handling of information;
- relevant systems, equipment or work areas;
- who will act as workplace mentor or supervisor; and
- who the learner should contact when support is needed.

The orientation should also connect the workplace with the learner's learning objectives.

The mentor can explain:

"These are the areas you will be developing during your WBL. These are some of the activities in our workplace that can help you practise them."

This helps learners understand that workplace participation is part of their learning process.

5.2 Providing Guidance and Supervision

Learners need enough guidance to participate appropriately without the workplace mentor taking over every activity.

Before a new task, the mentor should clarify:

Purpose: Why is this activity important?

Task : What is the learner expected to do?

Process: Are there important steps or procedures?

Standard: What does appropriate performance look like?

Support: When should the learner ask for assistance?

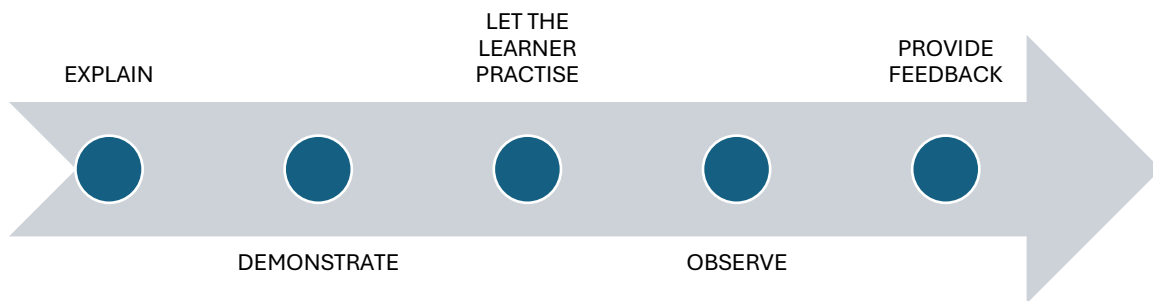
For example, rather than: “Help with the reservations.” a clearer instruction would identify the learner’s specific responsibility, the process to follow and when the supervisor should become involved.

Clear guidance reduces uncertainty and makes it easier to observe learner progress.

5.3 Demonstration and Guided Practice

Some workplace competences are best introduced through demonstration followed by practice.

A simple sequence is:



During demonstration, mentors should draw attention to important aspects of professional performance rather than simply completing the task while the learner watches.

For example:

“Watch how I confirm the booking details before completing the reservation. Pay particular attention to the information I verify with the guest.”

The learner then has a clear observation focus.

During guided practice, the mentor can provide prompts or correction when needed. As performance improves, this support can gradually decrease.

5.4 Supporting Progressive Independence

WBL should provide opportunities for learners to become more confident and capable where this is appropriate.

The mentor can progressively adjust support:

Stage	Mentor Role	Learner Role
<i>Observe</i>	Demonstrates and explains	Watches, listens and asks questions
<i>Assist</i>	Directs and supports	Contributes to selected parts of the task
<i>Guided Practice</i>	Supervises closely	Performs the task with support
<i>Supervised Performance</i>	Observes and intervenes when necessary	Performs more of the task
<i>Greater Independence</i>	Monitors as appropriate	Performs suitable tasks with reduced support
<i>Review</i>	Provides feedback	Reflects and identifies improvements

Not every learner or activity needs to reach the final stage during a WBL period.

The appropriate level depends on the learner, task and professional context.

5.5 Supporting Professional and Transversal Skills

Workplace learning also provides opportunities to develop competences that cut across individual technical tasks.

These may include:

1. communication;
2. teamwork;
3. problem-solving;
4. adaptability;
5. time management;
6. professional behaviour;
7. initiative;
8. intercultural communication;
9. digital competence; and
10. environmentally responsible practice.

These skills are often best developed within authentic professional situations.

For example, a learner assisting with a guest request may simultaneously practice.

Mentors can make this learning more visible through short feedback discussions.

Instead of commenting only on whether the task was completed, they might also discuss:

“Your explanation to the guest was clear. Next time, check with the relevant colleague before confirming the solution so that the information is consistent.”

This connects task performance with broader professional competence.

5.7 Learning from Mistakes

Workplace learning involves practice, and practice may include mistakes.

Where appropriate and safe, mistakes can become useful learning opportunities.

A constructive response can follow:

1. Identify
2. Explain
3. Correct
4. Practise again
5. Review

Feedback should focus on the learner’s performance or action, rather than on personal characteristics.

For example:

Less useful:

“You are not good at dealing with guests.”

More useful:

“You provided the correct information, but the guest had not finished explaining the problem. Next time, allow them to finish and confirm that you have understood the request before proposing a solution.”

The second example tells the learner:

- what happened;
- what should change; and
- what to do differently next time.

Serious errors, safety concerns or activities beyond the learner’s authorised role should, of course, be managed according to the organisation’s normal procedures.

6. Monitoring, Feedback and Assessment

Monitoring during Work-Based Learning helps determine whether the learner is developing the intended competences and whether the workplace experience is providing appropriate opportunities for learning.

The employer or workplace mentor does not need to reproduce formal classroom assessment. Their particular contribution is to provide evidence from authentic professional practice: what the learner was able to do, how much support was required, how performance developed and what should improve next.

The basic process is:



6.1 Observing Learner Performance

Observation should be connected to the relevant Learning Outcomes and workplace activities.

Rather than asking:

“Is the learner doing well?”

the mentor should focus on more specific questions:

- Can the learner perform the relevant task?
- Does the learner follow the appropriate process?
- How much guidance is required?
- Can the learner apply previous feedback?
- Does performance become more consistent?
- Does the learner recognise when assistance is required?
- How does the learner communicate and collaborate during the task?

Observation may take place during normal workplace activity. It does not always require a separate assessment event.

For example, during a reservation-related activity, the mentor might observe whether the learner:

- follows the appropriate sequence;
- uses the relevant system correctly;
- verifies necessary information;
- communicates professionally;
- identifies when supervisor support is required; and
- responds appropriately to feedback.

The focus should remain on observable performance, rather than general impressions about the learner.

6.2 What Evidence Should Employers Look For?

Evidence of competence can take different forms depending on the Learning Outcome and workplace activity.

Possible evidence includes:

Evidence	Example
Direct observation	Mentor observes the learner performing a workplace task
Completed workplace activity	Learner completes an appropriate operational task
Work output	Relevant workplace output demonstrates application of the competence
Professional interaction	Learner demonstrates appropriate communication or teamwork
Problem response	Learner responds appropriately to a relevant workplace situation
Learner explanation	Learner explains a process or decision
Reflection	Learner identifies what was learned and what needs improvement
Progress over time	Learner performs the same or related activity with less support or greater consistency

The appropriate evidence depends on the competence being developed.

The employer does not need to collect evidence simply for the sake of documentation. Evidence should help answer:

What has the learner demonstrated in professional practice?

6.3 Providing Effective Feedback

Feedback is one of the most important contributions a workplace mentor can make to learner development.

Effective feedback should be:

1. Specific : focused on a particular action or performance.
2. Timely : provided close enough to the activity to be useful.
3. Constructive : explaining how performance can improve.
4. Balanced : recognising effective performance as well as areas for development.
5. Actionable : giving the learner a clear next step.

A useful feedback structure is:

WHAT
HAPPENED

WHAT WAS
EFFECTIVE

WHAT NEEDS
IMPROVEMENT

WHAT TO DO
NEXT

For example:

“You followed the reservation process correctly and confirmed the main details with the guest. Before finalising the reservation, remember to verify the final requirement as well.

On the next booking, use the same process but include that additional check.”

This is more useful than:

“Good, but be more careful.”

The first example gives the learner information they can use during the next opportunity.

6.4 Supporting Learner Reflection

Feedback becomes more valuable when learners actively consider their own performance.

Before giving all the answers, the mentor can ask the learner to reflect:

1. How do you think that went?
2. What worked well?
3. Where did you need support?
4. What would you change next time?

The mentor can then add their own observations.

This creates a simple dialogue:

From learner reflection to mentor feedback and agreed next step

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Reflection can also help learners recognise progress that may otherwise be difficult to see.

For example:

“Last week you needed guidance throughout this process. Today you completed most of it independently. What helped you improve?”

This makes competence development visible to the learner.

6.5 Recording Progress

WBL monitoring should be practical and proportionate.

Depending on the arrangements agreed with the VET provider, progress may be documented through:

- observation checklists;
- supervisor or mentor notes;
- progress reviews;
- learner reflection records;
- workplace activity records;
- performance appraisal forms; or
- other agreed monitoring tools.

The TourX Employer’s Handbook provides practical templates in Section 8 that can support this process.

A simple progress record might include:

Area	Record
Learning Outcome / competence	What is being developed?
Workplace activity	What did the learner do?
Level of participation	Observe / Assist / Supervised / Greater independence
What was demonstrated?	Brief evidence from performance
Feedback provided	What should be maintained or improved?
Next step	What should the learner practise next?

The purpose is to create a useful record of learning, not unnecessary administrative work.

6.6 Communicating with the VET Trainer

Workplace mentors observe aspects of learner performance that trainers may not be able to see directly.

Communication between the workplace and VET provider therefore helps connect professional performance with the broader learning programme.

The employer should communicate relevant information about:

- significant learner progress;
- competences successfully demonstrated;

- areas requiring further practice;
- activities that could not be provided;
- changes to the planned WBL experience;
- difficulties affecting learner participation; and
- areas where additional trainer support may be useful.

For example:

Employer observation: The learner understands the reservation procedure but still requires support when an unexpected customer request changes the normal process.

This information can help the trainer identify an appropriate next learning activity, such as additional scenario practice or problem-solving.

Communication should therefore work in both directions:

Stage	Example of Progress
Observation	Learner identifies key steps in the process
Assisted participation	Learner completes selected parts with guidance
Guided practice	Learner performs the activity but requires prompts
Supervised performance	Learner completes the activity while the mentor monitors
Greater independence	Learner performs an appropriate task consistently with reduced support

7. Examples of TourX WBL Activities

The examples in this section illustrate how Learning Outcomes can be translated into authentic workplace activities. They are not fixed activities that every employer must reproduce.

The exact activity should be adapted to the learner's curriculum, level of readiness, workplace context and the professional opportunities available.

7.1 Digital Booking and Reservation Systems

Digital booking and reservation processes provide opportunities to connect digital competence with customer service and operational procedures.

Possible Learning Focus

Depending on the relevant Learning Outcomes, learners may develop their ability to:

- understand the basic reservation workflow;
- use relevant workplace digital systems;
- enter and verify information accurately;
- follow organisational procedures;
- communicate appropriately with customers or guests; and
- respond to routine problems or recognise when assistance is required.

Example WBL Progression

Stage	Possible Learner Activity
Observe	Observe how staff process reservations and use the booking system
Assist	Support selected elements of the reservation process
Supervised Practice	Complete routine reservation-related tasks with guidance
Greater Independence	Carry out appropriate routine tasks with reduced support
Reflect	Review accuracy, communication, difficulties and areas for improvement

The workplace mentor can observe both technical performance and professional behaviour.

For example:

- Was the correct process followed?
- Was information entered accurately?
- Were necessary details checked?
- Was communication professional?
- Did the learner recognise when support was required?

A simple reflection question is:

What part of the reservation process can you now complete confidently, and where do you still need support?

7.2 Sustainable Housekeeping and Resource Management

Housekeeping and other operational areas can provide practical opportunities to develop environmental awareness and sustainable professional practice.

Possible Learning Focus

Learners may:

- identify sustainability practices used by the organisation;
- apply relevant resource-saving procedures;
- recognise opportunities to reduce unnecessary waste;
- follow environmentally responsible workplace practices; and
- reflect on possible improvements.

Example WBL Activity

The learner first receives an introduction to relevant workplace sustainability practices.

They then:

- observe current practice
- apply relevant procedures

- record or discuss observations
- identify possible improvements
- receive feedback

For example, a learner could examine practices relating to:

water use; energy use; linen and towel management; cleaning materials; waste separation; reduction of unnecessary consumption; or other sustainability practices relevant to the workplace.

The learner could subsequently identify two realistic improvements based on their observations.

The workplace mentor can discuss:

1. Are the suggestions realistic?
Do they fit workplace operations?
What impact might they have?
What practical barriers would need to be considered?

This moves the activity beyond simply recognising sustainable practices towards applying and evaluating them in context.

7.3 Customer Service and Guest Communication

Customer-facing activities provide opportunities to develop communication, service awareness, problem-solving and professional behaviour.

Possible Activities

Depending on learner readiness, the learner might:

observe guest interactions; identify effective communication techniques; provide routine information under supervision; assist with customer requests; participate in appropriate service interactions; or analyse how more complex situations are handled.

Progressive Example

Stage 1 Observation

The learner observes a professional interaction and focuses on:

- how the guest is welcomed;
- how staff identify the guest's needs;
- the language and tone used;
- how information is explained; and
- how the interaction is concluded.

Stage 2 Supported Participation The learner provides selected routine information with mentor support.

Stage 3 Supervised Practice The learner manages an appropriate routine interaction while the mentor observes.

Stage 4 Feedback The mentor discusses specific aspects of performance.

“You provided the information clearly and maintained a professional tone. Next time, confirm that the guest has understood before ending the interaction.”

Stage 5 Reflection What did the guest need? What did you do? What worked? What would you change next time?

7.4 Teamwork and Professional Communication

Many tourism and hospitality activities depend on effective coordination between employees and departments.

WBL can therefore provide authentic opportunities for learners to develop teamwork and professional communication.

Possible Workplace Opportunities

The learner may:

- participate in team briefings;
- observe communication between departments;
- contribute to appropriate team activities;
- communicate relevant operational information;
- work with colleagues to complete a task;
- observe how responsibilities are coordinated; or
- reflect on how communication affects service delivery.

For example:

A learner observes how reception communicates a relevant guest requirement to another department and follows how that information affects subsequent service.

The mentor can then discuss:

- What information needed to be communicated?
- Who needed the information?
- Was it communicated clearly and at the appropriate time?
- What could happen if communication failed?

This helps the learner see teamwork as part of the service process, rather than as an abstract soft skill.

Competence	Workplace A	Workplace B
Digital customer management	Hotel reservation system	Travel booking platform
Customer communication	Hotel reception	Travel agency customer enquiry
Sustainability	Housekeeping resource management	Food-service waste reduction
Teamwork	Interdepartmental hotel coordination	Small-team service coordination
Problem-solving	Guest-service issue	Change to a travel arrangement
Everyday Workplace Situation	Turn It into WBL By...	
Staff member performs a task	Give the learner a specific observation focus	
Learner assists an employee	Clarify which competence is being practised	
Learner performs a routine task	Observe specific performance criteria	
Operational problem occurs	Discuss the problem and possible responses	
Task is completed	Provide short, specific feedback	
Learner makes a mistake	Explain, correct, practise again and reflect	
Team meeting takes place	Ask the learner to identify how information and responsibilities are coordinated	

8. Employer Tools and Templates

The tools in this section are designed to support employers and workplace mentors before, during and at the end of WBL. They can be adapted to the organisation and the specific TourX curriculum.

They are intended to keep WBL planning and monitoring practical rather than create unnecessary administration.

8.1 Pre-WBL Employer Checklist

Use this checklist before the learner begins workplace activities.

Learning Purpose

- ☐ I understand the purpose of the learner's WBL.
- ☐ I know the relevant Learning Outcomes or competences.
- ☐ I understand what the learner is expected to practise or develop.
- ☐ Any unclear learning expectations have been discussed with the trainer/VET provider.

Workplace Preparation

☐ A workplace mentor or supervisor has been identified.

- ☐ Relevant colleagues know about the learner and their role.
- ☐ Suitable workplace learning opportunities have been identified.
- ☐ The learner's initial level of participation has been considered.
- ☐ Relevant workplace procedures and requirements have been identified.

Learner Preparation

- ☐ An initial workplace orientation is planned.
- ☐ The learner will know who their mentor/supervisor is.
- ☐ Professional expectations will be explained.
- ☐ Relevant workplace, health and safety, confidentiality or operational requirements will be explained.
- ☐ The learner will know when and how to ask for assistance.

Monitoring and Communication

- ☐ I know what aspects of learner performance should be observed.
- ☐ I know how feedback will be provided.
- ☐ I know how progress should be recorded, where required.
- ☐ I know who to contact at the VET provider.
- ☐ Review or communication points have been agreed where appropriate.

8.2 WBL Activity Planning Template

Learner: _____

Workplace: _____

Workplace Mentor: _____

Trainer / VET Contact: _____

WBL Period: _____

Planning Element	Details
Relevant Learning Outcome / Competence	
Workplace activity	
Learning purpose	
What will the learner do?	
Initial participation level	☐ Observe ☐ Assist ☐ Guided Practice ☐ Supervised Performance ☐ Greater Independence
Guidance required	
What should be observed?	
Evidence of learning	
Feedback arrangements	
Reflection activity/question	
Agreed next step	

Before Starting the Activity

Confirm:

- ☐ The activity is relevant to the Learning Outcome.
- ☐ The activity is authentic and appropriate.
- ☐ The learner understands what they are expected to do.
- ☐ The required level of supervision is clear.
- ☐ The mentor knows what to observe.

8.3 Learner Induction Checklist

Learner: _____

Date: _____

Mentor/Supervisor: _____

Workplace Orientation

- ☐ Organisation and workplace introduced
- ☐ Relevant team members introduced
- ☐ Learner's role explained
- ☐ Working arrangements explained
- ☐ Workplace rules and procedures explained
- ☐ Health and safety requirements explained
- ☐ Confidentiality/data requirements explained where applicable
- ☐ Relevant systems/work areas introduced
- ☐ Professional conduct expectations explained
- ☐ Communication procedures explained
- ☐ Learner knows who to approach for support

Learning Orientation

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Purpose of WBL explained☐ Relevant competences discussed☐ Initial workplace activities identified☐ Expected level of participation explained☐ Feedback arrangements explained☐ Learner given opportunity to ask questions |
|--|

Additional notes:

8.4 Workplace Observation Checklist

This tool can be adapted to the specific Learning Outcome and workplace task.

Learner: _____

Activity: _____

Date: _____

Observer: _____

Relevant Learning Outcome / Competence:

Level of Participation

- ☐ Observation
- ☐ Assisted participation
- ☐ Guided practice
- ☐ Supervised performance
- ☐ Greater independence

Observation

Area	Observed	Further Development Needed	Not Applicable
Understands the task	☐	☐	☐
Follows relevant procedures	☐	☐	☐
Applies relevant knowledge/skills	☐	☐	☐
Uses tools/systems appropriately	☐	☐	☐
Communicates professionally	☐	☐	☐
Works effectively with others	☐	☐	☐
Responds appropriately to problems	☐	☐	☐
Recognises when support is required	☐	☐	☐
Responds to guidance and feedback	☐	☐	☐
Demonstrates appropriate professional behaviour	☐	☐	☐

What was demonstrated effectively?

What requires further development?

Recommended next step:

8.5 Workplace Feedback Record

Learner: _____

Workplace Activity: _____

Date: _____

Mentor Feedback

What did the learner do?

What was done effectively?

What could be improved?

What should the learner do next time?

Learner Reflection

What went well?

What was difficult?

What will I do differently next time?

Agreed Next Step

8.6 Learner Progress Review

This template can be used at an agreed review point during WBL.

Learner: _____

Review Period: _____

Workplace Mentor: _____

Trainer/VET Provider: _____

Competence / Learning Area	Workplace Opportunity Provided	Current Level of Participation	Progress / Evidence	Next Step
-------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------	--------------

Overall Progress

Areas of progress:

Areas requiring further practice:

Additional learning opportunities needed:

Any issues to discuss with the trainer/VET provider:

8.7 WBL Performance Appraisal Template

The appraisal should relate to the Learning Outcomes and workplace activities actually available to the learner.

Learner: _____

Workplace: _____

WBL Period: _____

Mentor/Supervisor: _____

Performance Review

Area	Demonstrated Consistently	Developing	Requires Further Practice	Not Observed / N/A
Relevant workplace knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Performance of relevant tasks	☐	☐	☐	☐
Following procedures	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional communication	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teamwork	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problem-solving	☐	☐	☐	☐
Digital competence where relevant	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sustainable professional practice where relevant	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐
Response to feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ability to work with appropriate independence	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence / Comments

Key strengths demonstrated:

Areas for further development:

Recommended next learning steps:

8.8 Employer–Trainer Communication Record

Use this tool where a brief record of communication between the workplace and VET provider is useful.

Learner: _____

Date: _____

Employer/Mentor: _____

Trainer/VET Representative: _____

Reason for Communication

- ☐ Routine progress review
 - ☐ Significant learner progress
 - ☐ Additional support required
 - ☐ Planned activity unavailable
 - ☐ Change to WBL arrangements
 - ☐ Workplace performance concern
 - ☐ Other: _____

Key Information

Agreed Action

Responsible Person

Follow-Up Date, if required

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8.9 End-of-WBL Review

At the end of the WBL experience, the employer, learner and VET provider can review what was achieved and identify further development needs.

Employer / Mentor Review

- ☐ The learner had opportunities relevant to the intended competences.
- ☐ Appropriate supervision and guidance were provided.
- ☐ The learner progressed in one or more areas of professional practice.
- ☐ Feedback was provided during WBL.
- ☐ Relevant learner progress has been communicated to the VET provider.
- ☐ Any competences that could not be practised have been identified.

Final Reflection Questions

For the Employer / Mentor

1. What progress did the learner demonstrate?
2. Which workplace activities were particularly valuable?
3. Where is further development needed?
4. Were there competences that could not be practised in this workplace?

For the Learner

1. What can I now do more confidently?
2. What was the most useful workplace learning experience?
3. What feedback helped me improve?
4. What competence do I need to develop next?

For the Trainer / VET Provider

1. How does the workplace evidence relate to the Learning Outcomes?
2. What further learning or practice is required?
3. What should the learner's next development step be?

Employer Quick Reference

The complete employer pathway can be summarised as:

1. Understand what is the learner expected to develop?
2. Plan which authentic workplace activities can support it?
3. Prepare is the learner and workplace ready?
4. Support: what guidance and supervision does the learner need?
5. Observe: what is the learner demonstrating in professional practice?
6. Feedback: what is effective and what should improve?
7. Reflect: what has the learner learned from the experience?
8. Review: what progress has been made and what should happen next?

The aim is not to turn employers into trainers or assessors. It is to create a structured partnership in which the workplace provides authentic opportunities for learners to practise, demonstrate and strengthen the competences developed through TourX.

9. Conclusion – Key Principles for Effective WBL

Effective Work-Based Learning in TourX is based on a clear connection between Learning Outcomes, authentic workplace opportunities, appropriate learner support, observation, feedback and reflection.

Employers and workplace mentors play a key role in this process by enabling learners to apply occupational and transversal competences in authentic tourism and hospitality environments. This includes the Soft Skills pathway, through which competences such as communication, collaboration, customer service, resilience, critical thinking and conflict resolution can be strengthened through workplace practice.

The aim is not simply to provide workplace exposure, but to create structured opportunities for learners to progressively develop and demonstrate competence. Effective cooperation between the learner, employer and VET provider ensures that workplace experience becomes an integral part of the wider TourX learning journey.

10. References and TourX Resources

The following TourX project resources and European reference materials support the Work-Based Learning approach and practical guidance presented in this Handbook.

TourX Project Resources

TourX – CoVEs for the Tourism Industry. *TourX Hospitality Labs Competence-Based Curricula.* Project No. 101056184.

TourX – CoVEs for the Tourism Industry. *Work-Based Learning and Its Role in TourX Hospitality Labs: Design of a Work-Based Learning Scheme including a Pool of Activities/Tasks and a Monitoring & Performance Appraisal Tool.*

TourX – CoVEs for the Tourism Industry. *TourX Learner's Guide.*

TourX – CoVEs for the Tourism Industry. *TourX Trainer's Manual.*

TourX – CoVEs for the Tourism Industry. *Hospitality Labs Toolbox for Excellence.*

TourX MOOC Platform. [TourX MOOC](#)

TourX Project Website. [TourX – CoVEs for the Tourism Industry](#)

European Reference Resources

European Commission. *European Qualifications Framework (EQF).* European reference framework supporting the comparison of qualifications and learning outcomes across qualification levels.

Cedefop – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Resources on vocational education and training and Work-Based Learning.

Related TourX Guidance Documents

The Employer's Handbook forms part of the wider **TourX Guidance Package**. It complements:

TourX Learner's Guide

TourX Trainer's Manual

TourX Train-the-Trainer Guide

Together, these resources support the coordination of learning, training and workplace practice across the TourX learning journey.