
Work Placement Program – Office Administration

Participant Information Sheet

Background: What is a Work Placement Program?

Work Placement Programs are part of the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation's (DEEDI) *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* (SQW) initiative. The Multicultural Development Association (MDA) has been funded under the SQW initiative to deliver two Work Placement Programs in Office Administration per year.

MDA's Work Placement Programs target refugee and migrant jobseekers to provide eligible participants with opportunities for full-time paid work experience. The program assists participants in developing new skills and gathering first-hand experience in an Australian workplace. Each Work Placement Program usually accepts 15 participants and generally runs for 15 weeks.

MDA's Work Placement Programs are delivered in a mix of supervised work and supporting training. Participants are placed with local not-for-profit host organisations (the "Host Employer") for work four days a week. In addition, they attend one day a week of non-accredited training at MDA in general employability skills and basic admin skills. Participants also receive individualised job search assistance.

The goal of MDA's Work Placement Programs is to provide participants with opportunities:

- to develop and practice new skills in a genuine work environment;
- to gather on-the-job experience in an Australian workplace; and
- to enhance their ability to gain meaningful and sustainable employment.

Participants should view these programs as a key aspect on their path into stable, long-term employment in the Australian labour market. Please note that Work Placement Programs are neither traineeships nor accredited training programs.

Eligibility: Who can apply?

Access to MDA's Work Placement Programs is competitive and merit-based. There are generally 15 places available in each program, and to apply, an **Expression of Interest Form** and a **current resume** need to be submitted to MDA before the application closing date. To be eligible for program participation, applicants must:

- live in Brisbane's southern suburbs;
- come from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, including recently arrived migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants;
- be currently unemployed, underemployed or otherwise disengaged from the labour market;
- be permanent residents, temporary protection visa holders or Australian citizens.

Further eligibility criteria may apply, for example regarding visa subclass and previous participation in an SQW-funded Work Placement Program, and will be assessed on an individual basis.

To be considered for participation, applicants must not only meet the above eligibility criteria, but should also:

- not have had any significant previous work experience in office administration in Australia;
- have some knowledge and/or prior overseas experience in office administration and/or customer service;
- have good spoken and written English skills;
- have sound computer skills; and
- be able to show initiative, problem solve and work in a diverse team.

Application Process: How to apply?

To apply for a Work Placement Program place, please submit to MDA:

- a completed Expression of Interest Form; and
- a current resume.

It is recommended applicants read through this **Participant Information Sheet** carefully before filling in the Expression of Interest Form.

MDA runs two Work Placement Programs in Office Administration per year, usually:

- from the beginning of September to the middle of December; and
- from the beginning of March to the middle of June.

Exact program dates are made available usually from mid-July and mid-January, respectively, when specific programs are advertised on MDA's website (www.mdainc.org.au) and on the Australian Government's JobSearch website (www.jobsearch.gov.au).

Complete applications must be received by MDA on or before the closing date advertised on the Expression of Interest Form. Applications can be submitted:

- by post to: MDA Employment Services, 512 Stanley St, South Brisbane QLD 4101
- by email to: wpp@mdabne.org.au

The selection of program participants is a two-step process:

- First, from among all received applications, suitable candidates are shortlisted for face-to-face interviews with a selection panel of MDA staff members.
- Second, candidates who successfully pass their interview at MDA are then interviewed by two to three host organisations.

Upon completion of the selection process, all applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome. The successful candidates will receive a written Letter of Offer from MDA for participation in the Work Placement Program.

Program structure: Work and training

MDA's Work Placement Programs normally run for 15 weeks and program participation is paid and full-time, i.e., Monday to Friday, 38 hours per week. Participants spend four days a week at **work** with a local not-for-profit host organisation. This gives them valuable first-hand experience in the

Australian work environment and an opportunity to gain new skills through structured workplace learning under the guidance of a dedicated workplace supervisor.

Typical work duties of program participants include:

- **Administrative tasks** (e.g., typing, data entry, drafting documents, ingoing/outgoing mail processing, order processing, receipting payments, filing documents, photocopying, faxing, emailing, etc.)
- **Reception and customer service tasks** (e.g., welcoming clients or customers, answering the telephone, responding to enquiries, etc.)
- **Project work tasks** (e.g., researching information, collating documents, collecting and processing data, etc.)

One day a week all participants come to MDA as a group to attend non-accredited **training** in general employability skills and basic admin skills. This training is based on units of competency from DEEDI's *Work Placement Course of Instruction* and focuses on the following areas:

- Social and work environment
- Workplace health and safety
- Problem solving and planning strategies
- Job search and career planning
- Office technology
- Records handling

Upon successful completion of these units, DEEDI will issue program participants with a **Certificate of Completion**. MDA will also issue participants with a **Certificate of Participation** at the end of the program. It should be noted that neither of these is a certificate of nationally accredited training outcomes.

Employment conditions: What will I be paid?

Work Placement Program participants are **employed by MDA** for the duration of the program. They are employed on a casual basis, with wage rates determined by the *Training Wage Award – State 2003* (and subsequent amendments), Wage Level A, which is currently as follows:

Base rate:	\$521.00 per week	
Plus 25% loading:	<u>\$130.20 per week</u>	
Total gross pay:	<u>\$651.20 per week</u>	(i.e., before tax is deducted)

Participants are paid fortnightly and are not entitled to annual leave, sick leave, pay for public holidays not worked and other allowances (as per the applicable Industrial Relations legislation). Instead, they receive a 25% loading in addition to the base rate of pay, as indicated above.

In addition to the above pay, MDA pays 9% of gross income into each participant's nominated superannuation fund. Moreover, all participants are covered by MDA's workers' compensation insurance.

As **casual employees**, Work Placement Program participants are not paid for any time that they are absent from work or training, except:

- to attend job interviews;
- to attend appointments with Centrelink;
- to attend appointments with their JSA Provider; or
- to attend appointments with their MDA Employment Worker.

In these cases, absence from work does not entail a loss of pay. All absences from work or training need to be negotiated with the workplace supervisor and/or MDA's Work Placement Program Supervisor(s).

Each participant should notify Centrelink of their participation in the Work Placement Program and get advice on how program participation will affect their Centrelink benefits.

All Work Placement Program participants will receive an induction to MDA as their new employer, as well as to the host organisation as their new workplace. There is a four week **probation period** for all participants. At the end of this period, each participant's performance in the program (i.e., both at work and in training) will be assessed and continued program participation is dependent on successful completion of this assessment. During the probation period, either the participant or MDA can end participation in the Work Placement Program at any time.

Program location and time: Where and when?

The weekly trainings, as well as the program induction, will be held at MDA's head office:

Multicultural Development Association Inc.
512 Stanley Street
South Brisbane QLD 4101

The office is located 100 metres from the Mater Hill bus stop or 300 metres from the South Bank train station.

For work, participants will be placed with host organisations at various locations throughout Brisbane's Southside. Individual participants will be matched to host organisations as part of the selection process (see above).

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Program participation is full-time, so Mondays to Fridays, 38 hours per week. Participants are at their host organisation Mondays to Thursdays (generally from 8.30 or 9.00 in the morning to 4.30 or 5.00 in the afternoon) and spend Fridays between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm in training at MDA.

Further information: Contact details

For further information on MDA's Work Placement Programs, please contact MDA Employment Services on (07) 3337 5400 or at wpp@mdabne.org.au.

This project has been funded under the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation's *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative.

Supported by



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