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**TSEP Consultant**

Handbook

Dear TSEP Consultant,

Welcome! Thanks so much for partnering with us to learn more about on-campus employment supports for graduates with disabilities.

This will be a great opportunity to learn new skills, make lots of new connections and get to work with employers and contacts that you may not have had the opportunity to in the past.

Your local and national TSEP partners are excited to have you on board and are here to support you in your success.

There are no silly questions in this process, and if any of the enclosed does not make sense then please do not hesitate to ask your TSEP team/representative on campus.

## **Background of TSEP - Why are we here?**

TSEP is based around choice and determination – enabling students to target careers that align with the study that has just been undertaken, and empowering employers to host work experience, and employ graduates with disability with confidence.

The model was developed so that the TSEP consultant has the ability to gain valuable knowledge from the TAFE careers and disability support teams, communicate frequently with project leads and other consultants, and share learnings with other partners and their host TAFE.

Because of the unique nature of the client group, the TSEP consultant does not provide any traditional specialist employment servicing on campus – they are a specialist project officer embedded into TAFE to serve as the critical intermediary in the transition to post-study employment.

## **Overview of your role as a TSEP Consultant:**

As a TSEP Consultant you will be co-located on campus or working remotely working one on one with students with disability in their final or post year of study to achieve their employment goals.

Students may choose to register with you outside of the TAFE environment prior to graduation (if studying part time) or after graduation, having built a good relationship with you and now aware of your provider’s expertise in this field. As a TSEP Consultant you should:

1. Foster high expectations with and for students with disability and employers
2. Ensure the students are fully prepared to job search. This includes having brilliant resumes, world class cover letters and selection criteria, winning LinkedIn and social media strategies, interview techniques and practice.
3. In some states you can refer students to the Skills and Jobs Centre to assist with the above.
4. Offer strategies and ideas to build the student’s confidence over time, and ability to effectively share information about disability when required. The ‘how, why and when’ to share information about disability, has been identified in research as a primary concern of TAFE students.
5. Seek opportunities with your TAFE TSEP team to build relationships with a range of internal TAFE staff (eg Human Resources, Education Unit/ Business Unit leaders, Skills and Jobs staff, Disability Support Services, Career Advisors, wellbeing and mentor program coordinators), to collaborate, learn and share expertise and skills.
6. Refer students with disability to existing TAFE services where possible and appropriate.
7. Ensure all new students registering with TSEP complete the initial online survey
8. Maintain record keeping and data collection for the TSEP partnership through surveys and a reporting template, and any method prescribed by your host in negotiation with the TSEP partnership (meeting OAIC privacy requirements and your organisation’s privacy policy). Statistical information gathered from student surveys will identify further opportunities for support and will build evidence to advocate for fundamental, systemic policy changes including ongoing funding for the TSEP project.
9. Create networks and contact lists ranging across sectors, industries, specialties, and roles relevant to the student with disability you are working with.
10. Organise placements, and work experience throughout the year while assisting with applications for work post-study for your students.
11. Build relationships with relevant businesses, negotiate work experience/placement intakes, and convert these into employment opportunities.
12. Utilise national partnerships and relationships with other TSEP consultants to share information and resources.
13. Communicate with your local TAFE partners to harness their networks, knowledge, and resources for your success!
14. Ensure that you have a privacy/confidentiality and media release/consent form for students to complete and sign. If under 18, a parent or guardian must sign in their presence.

## **Week 1-3 Checklist**

* TSEP Banner and promotional materials provided - please check with your TAFE contact officer. Digital marketing materials are available through the TSEP toolkit website: [www.tsep.com.au](http://www.tsep.com.au)
* Your LinkedIn profile - do you have one? Let us know!
* Organise internal staff introductions with TAFE partner
* Meet internal TAFE staff (check when complete):
  + the Student Equity/ Accessibility Team
  + the Careers Team
  + Student Services Manager
  + Careers Manager
  + Disability Services/Accessibility Team
  + IT Support orientation
  + Skills and Jobs Centre staff
* Undertake TAFE orientation/induction (as per TAFE HR policies)
  + Get to know the campus facilities, accessibility, and internal programs (e.g. student services)
  + Accommodation allocated in Student Services or Disability Services
  + TAFE email set-up and active (eg. [TSEP@tafe.edu.au](mailto:TSEP@tafe.edu.au)) or use your organisation’s email
* Work with the Disability/Access/ Equity and/ or Careers team to organise work shadowing to understand their role, how they support students and what services they offer.
* Provide TSEP Referral form copies to all staff in the above teams. Forms to be filled in electronically or hard copy then given/sent to you.

## **Format of Delivery**

Based on each student’s choice, you are welcome to meet with them anywhere on campus that they are comfortable.

You will have also allocated office space to hold confidential conversations from the Disability/Access/Equity and/or Careers team and would be welcome to base yourself there.

We are interested in trailing several modes to find out what works best.

Ideas for starting the conversation with TSEP students:

* Provide an overview of TSEP, why it exists and when you are on campus etc.
* Discuss mutual expectations, best way to communicate
* Check/discuss the quality of resumes/CV, cover letter, references, experience, volunteer work – refer to Skills and Jobs Centre if these need updating or development.
* Check/discuss graduate intakes in chosen field
* Check/discuss engagement with careers team so far
* Check/discuss career planning including sharing information about disability and experiences so far and concerns for the future
* Check/build/discuss a student's disability confidence and openness to talking about disability in job interviews. Work together to develop strength-based statements and confidently request workplace adjustments to enable best performance.
* Discuss Individual needs for modifications, adjustments and supports. Educate on workplace modification and build a plan for what requirements if any would need to be considered
* Directly market in addition to accessing advertised vacancies and unadvertised vacancies. Engage with the Careers team and let them know the client’s chosen field, cross reference for current relationships in that field & approach alongside careers staff members if appropriate.
* Educate students about state & federal initiatives for people with disability
* Register for federal (APSC) Recruit Ability program - create account and set interests

## **A Suggested guide for approaching larger employers**

Please note, the TAFE you are working with may have existing relationships with graduate employers.

For this reason, great communication is important with the Careers Team!

A warm referral is the best possible scenario….

Here are some ideas to get you started.

As you learn more and come across great strategies please let us know so we can add them to this list.

1. Research the business

* Do they have an equity or diversity policy?
* Look for any relevant memberships
* Look for any sponsorship of relevant events, press releases or partnerships that promote inclusion
* Do they have disability-specific programs? Do they have Accessibility/Disability Action Plans?

Establish who the right person (decision maker) is to talk to - i.e. diversity manager, HR manager and approach them directly, LinkedIn is helpful for this. Do not get stuck at reception!

1. Preparation for the first phone call

* Request to speak with the HR staff member.
* To generate interest, take a different approach. You could explain you are working with the careers team in ‘name of TAFE’ as part of the TSEP project which provides coordinated support for employers to hire graduates with disabilities.
* For example, my name is Sam and I am working in the ‘Name of TAFE’ Careers team. I am the TSEP consultant, which is basically the disability specialist in the team. I am currently working with final year students and we are enquiring about any opportunities you may have to take on as a graduate or an intern?
* Note you’ve read their inclusion/access plan
* Explain how you can help them achieve their equity goals by expanding them to include graduates with disability from (TAFE).
* Give two people and strength-based profiles of students who you know would love to work there- keep this brief
* Be prepared with dates to arrange a time to meet to get to know each other and discuss what you’re doing alongside (TAFE)

1. Preparation for the first meeting with an employer

* Is the business interested but not disability confident? Introduce Job Access to assist organisations to build a plan for employing people with disability if they do not have one via calling 1800 464 800 and letting them know you are an employment consultant who has met a business with more than 100 employees who would like help to set up inclusive hiring processes.
* Offer the business free online disability awareness training for them or their staff at: [www.disabilityawareness.com.au](http://www.disabilityawareness.com.au)
* Is this business a member of A.N.D.? If yes, engage A.N.D. If not, provide information for consideration. Aiming to build as much support and encouragement around them as possible.
* Optional relevant guide for managers new to inclusion in the workplace: [Link](https://www.and.org.au/pages/resources-publi-managers-guide-disability-in-the-workplace-969.html) to AND Guide  
  Do not offer wage subsidies.
* You have a pool of talented upcoming graduates with disability seeking graduate careers who will enhance the workplace. It is a last resort to fund some needed training etc.
* Suggest/request informal meet and greet with students/graduates - facilitate the connection and build student networks and confidence. Either one on one, or a ‘meet the employer’ group.
* Suggest mentorship arrangement and/or internship.  
  Follow up on JobAccess Employment plan and application for graduate role and modifications and adjustments as required.
* Suggest accessing workplace modification funding (if needed) and how you can facilitate that process with them and teach them how to manage it ongoing. <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf>
* Help businesses to build a successful flow of great graduates with disabilities starting and succeeding with them each year.

1. Employer Funding may be available:

Here is a written example of advising an employer who asks ‘what funding is attached’ about practical funding usage:

*“Depending on your employee and any specific access needs in the role, there is the potential for modifications of workplaces and the funding of specialised equipment via Job Access. Physical workplace and building modifications are capped at $30,000. Disability awareness training is capped at $1,500 a year for fellow staff members. This ensures the individual has the right equipment and environment to reach their maximum potential, and that the workplace is disability confident and welcoming.” Note: No wage subsidies mentioned or used, only practicality based on supporting employees to reach their full potential.*

Here is an example email to an employer you know:

*“Hi Betty,*

*[Susan’s] resume attached, final year [Uni] [accounting] student. I have met her personally and liked her attitude – she is pleasant and motivated.*

*She has engaged in a project I’ve been working on that is in trial at [Uni] as she wants advice and support about how to work with future employers to make sure the workplace is set up for success with her [medical condition]. [Susan] has done well at TAFE, with the right equipment available and in place. In practical application in work, this means having a sit/stand desk, working in a building with an elevator and limiting manual lifting tasks/handwriting. The negotiations for implementing this are straightforward and equipment can be funded to enable best performance when the time comes.*

*[Susan] is keen to do some extra work experience in addition to the upcoming coursework placement to make her applications stronger. As you will see on her resume, it would be much more competitive if she were to have demonstrable experience in real world accounting when going for graduate interviews. She has asked if we can help with this and I think it is an excellent idea. Is it possible that she does a work experience placement there? There is an insurance product for work experience & internships which we can put in place.*

*With thanks in advance, (You)”*

## **Finding Disability Confident Employers**

Many businesses that have acknowledged a commitment to inclusive practices have a Disability or Accessibility Action Plan developed and registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Check this list to see if any are located in your area or are large organisations, like banks, which have a national focus.

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/action-plans/register-disability-discrimination-act-action-plans>

You can also use the list to encourage potential employers who may not yet have disability equity on their agenda as industry related examples of who are currently doing it and why it’s beneficial (ie. to remain competitive, community focus, better represent your customers)

## **Supporting students & graduates on the Autism Spectrum**

Teaching employers how to create competency-based interviews (alternatives). For example, Specialisterne Australia, works with companies to assist in recruiting and supporting people on the autism spectrum. Further information is available at [http://au.specialisterne.com](http://au.specialisterne.com/).