

SCHOOL-BASED TRAINEESHIPS IN HUMAN SERVICES

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS



Attracting young people to the human services



Industry-informed training program design



Use of school-based traineeships as a recruitment strategy



School-based traineeships are one way of attracting young people to human services and helping employers to build their future workforce. Mabel Park State High School, itself an RTO, based in Logan, Queensland, has established a successful school-based traineeship model that prepares students for work in the health, aged care and disability sectors.

‘HEALTH HUB’ MODEL

Mabel Park’s ‘Health Hub’ trains students in health support service qualifications while still at school. Its purpose is to address shortages in the health workforce, as well as high rates of youth unemployment. Students are offered career talks, Health Inspiration Days, hands-on industry work experience, school-based vocational training, and school-based traineeships. A broad range of stakeholders are involved, including health service providers, RTOs, secondary schools, regional development groups, local councils and the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), which helps to coordinate the program.

Mabel Park partners with other RTOs to deliver training to Year 10, 11 and 12 students in a simulated training facility on the school campus.

Students complete a Certificate II in Health Support Services, attending training one day per week for nine months, with the option to complete 5 to 10 days of structured, relevant work experience with health employers. This gives them the foundation skills required for the health sector, which they can then build on by completing a Certificate III in Individual Support.

The program is open to other students in the area, and students from 14 local schools have accessed the Certificate II in Health Support Services program.

Mabel Park’s Head of Department for Training and Employment at the time of establishing the program, Judith Fewtrell, noted some of the benefits of school-based traineeships.

“

It’s good to start the traineeship at school because they have support...they don’t give up if they have a problem. They come to us and we help them work out a solution.”

“Students love the diversity of the work. It pays better than a job at Maccas, and it’s more fun. They enjoy it, as they are following their dreams.”

ATTRACTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE INDUSTRY

During the Health Inspiration Days, students visit hospital wards, aged care facilities or disability services to expose them to different industries and give them insight into school-based traineeships. Students also attend “A day in the life” talks by speakers from a cross section of health sectors who talk about employment possibilities within their industry.

Janine Lillico was Assistant Manager at My Horizon, a disability support provider, at the time of establishment of the program. Janine reported that My Horizon employed 12 school-based trainees from the first round of the program and found it a valuable recruitment strategy.

“Young people may not have the life experience, but they bring different things – they are a similar age to participants, they have similar interests and relate on the same level. In the first six months, you’ve got to carry them a bit and it does take a bit to roster and coordinate but it’s an investment. At the end you’ve got these great workers. You can’t get a better worker than someone who loves their job. They pay for themselves in so many ways.”

She also spoke about the diversity that young people bring to the disability sector.

“We are more flexible than other industries because it’s all about the match with participants. One student did a vocational placement in aged care but they didn’t want him back because he had a mohawk and piercings and just didn’t fit in. But we’ve employed him as a trainee. We don’t care what he looks like. He’s got great skills and the participants love him.”

STRONG COLLABORATION WITH INDUSTRY

The Health Hub aligns its program with industry and workplace needs so that trainees develop skills that are relevant and attractive to employers. The school has an Industry Liaison Officer whose role is to build strong relationships with local employers, to promote the program and find work experience opportunities for students. Employers are invited to be part of career days and the school’s annual review process.

In 2017 Mabel Park State High School’s Health Hub was awarded Education Queensland’s Showcase Award for Excellence in Industry Partnerships for the South East Region. The Health Hub was also one of three state finalists for the Queensland State Training Awards that year, in the Premier’s Industry Collaboration category.

(References - material for this case study was drawn from Jobs Queensland (2018) *Building the NDIS workforce through traineeships* and <https://www.gyoworkforce.com.au/engaging-school-students/>)

