



Australian Capital Territory

Accessible Work Experience Youth Bill 2026

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Rationale

In the ACT, formal work experience programs are primarily targeted at Year 10 students, which can limit opportunities for older students whose career interests may develop or change during Years 11 and 12 due to a fleeting window of opportunity.

Transport to and from school and work experience programs presents a significant challenge, particularly for students who do not have access to private vehicles or reliable public transport, limiting the range of placements they can realistically undertake.

Financial restraints of providers and financial insecurity of individual students may prevent students from participating in unpaid placements, especially where travel, equipment, or other associated costs are involved.

Geographic isolation further restricts opportunities for students living in rural areas or outside major employment centres, as a result students interested in certain industries may find few relevant placements available locally.

A lack of accessibility across diverse industry areas, which can limit practical and informational access for students in exploring a wide range of industry areas.

At present, access to work experience and career pathway opportunities across ACT schools is highly inconsistent. While some students are able to secure valuable placements through family connections, personal networks, or well-resourced schools, others face significant barriers despite having equal interest and ability.

Additionally, work experience programs are generally optional and often depend on the initiative of individual students, the availability of school staff, and existing relationships between schools and local employers (Skills builder editors, 2023). As a result, opportunities can vary considerably between schools and socioeconomic groups.

Issues in consistency across individual programs preventing students from accessing meaningful exposure to potential career pathways, before making important decisions about senior secondary studies, university; training; or employment. A significant portion of placements are not subject to consistent quality standards potentially causing student experiences to differ widely in terms of educational value. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may be particularly affected, as they are less likely to have access to professional networks that can help secure competitive placements.

Limited collection of system-wide data, specifically in relation to participation rates, placement quality, student satisfaction, or equity outcomes, making it difficult to identify gaps and improve access over time. Consequently, the existing system risks reinforcing existing inequalities, rather than providing all young people with fair and informed pathways into future education and employment.

There are few systems in place that allow students to participate in Work Experience. These include a website available, “In Place,” to public school students in the ACT and Year 10 in school work experience programs and intermediary support services. However, these have been largely regarded as not having the coverage needed to engage a broad demographic of Canberran students.



Australian Capital Territory

Accessible Work Experience Youth Bill 2026

Y2026-2

A Bill for an Act to increase accessibility to Work Experience opportunities for Youth and for related purposes.

The Youth Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory enacts as follows:

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Accessible Work Experience Youth Act 2026*.

2 Commencement

This Act commences six months after its notification day.

Note The naming and commencement provisions automatically commence on the notification day (see [Legislation Act](#), s 75 (1)).

3 Dictionary

The dictionary at the end of this Act is part of this Act.

Note 1 The dictionary at the end of this Act defines certain terms used in this Act, and includes references (*signpost definitions*) to other terms defined elsewhere.

For example, the signpost definition ‘*head of service*—see the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#), dictionary.’ means that the term ‘head of service’ is defined in that dictionary and the definition applies to this Act.

Note 2 A definition in the dictionary (including a signpost definition) applies to the entire Act unless the definition, or another provision of the Act, provides otherwise or the contrary intention otherwise appears (see [Legislation Act](#), s 155 and s 156 (1)).

4 Object of the Act

The object of this Act is to help young people by —

- (a) increasing accessibility to work experience placements for young Canberrans;
- (b) improving awareness of work experience services available to young Canberrans; and
- (c) including young Canberrans in exploring career development.

Part 2

Work experience framework

5 Work Experience Accessibility and Support Committee

- (1) The ACT Education Directorate shall support the Work Experience Accessibility and Support Committee (WEASC).
- (2) The Committee shall be composed of:
 - (a) the Secretary of the ACT Education Directorate or their delegate;
 - (b) two teaching members appointed by the Australian Education Union (ACT Branch);
 - (c) one member appointed by the Association of Independent Schools ACT;
 - (d) one member appointed by the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn;
 - (e) three student members appointed by the Minister administering the *Education Act 2004* on advice of the Children and Young People Commissioner appointed under the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005*;
 - (f) one work experience provider appointed by the Secretary of the ACT Education Directorate; and
 - (g) one teaching member who is a work experience co-ordinator appointed by the Secretary of the ACT Education Directorate.
- (3) The Committee shall work towards increasing the uptake of work experience in the ACT and will provide advice to students, schools, the Directorate, work experience providers, and other relevant stakeholders.
- (4) The Committee shall be consulted on all decisions made in the furtherance of this Act. Where the Committee does not approve of such a decision, the Minister administering the *Education Act 2004* must table a statement of reasons for disagreeing with the Committee in the Legislative Assembly within 10 sitting days.

6 Modern work experience resources

- (1) The ACT Education Directorate must create *resources* to assist students in accessing work experience opportunities, including a website.
- (2) The Directorate must ensure that the *resources* are simple, accessible, and navigable and consult with the WEASC and students on the website's design.
- (3) The Directorate must create a questionnaire for students which assists them in discovering industries and experiences available to them which assesses a student's overall interest, ideal workplace and personality traits.

7 Variety of experiences

- (1) The ACT Education Directorate shall ensure that work experience opportunities are geographically diverse and that there are opportunities in all career and industry pathways.
- (2) The Directorate must ensure that work experience providers are not using work experience as a substitute for paid labour and must be offering a genuine learning experience for students.
- (3) A small business which accepts a work experience placement shall receive subsidised advertisement on public transport vehicles.

8 Annual reporting

- (1) The ACT Education Directorate shall collect data on and survey:
 - (a) all work experience providers and participating students about their experience; and
 - (a) non-participating students on why they chose not to do work experience.
- (2) At the conclusion of every school year, the WEASC shall review this data and create a report with recommendations to the Directorate on how to improve work experience and ensure a more equitable distribution of placements.

Part 3 Work experience for all

9 Awareness about work experience

- (1) All government and non-government schools must permit their students to take work experience and teach students how to navigate the *resources* established under s5.
- (2) The ACT Education Directorate must ensure that schools are adequately informed about the work experience *resources* available and create a continuing professional development program for schools about work experience.
- (3) The Directorate shall run voluntary information presentations on work experience to students and parents.

10 Accessibility of work experience

- (1) The ACT Education Directorate must work with Transport Canberra to ensure that public transport is readily available from schools to areas with large numbers of work experience providers.
- (2) Where public transport is unavailable or not a reasonable option for a student, the Directorate shall make the flexible bus service available for government school students needing to access their work experience provider.
- (3) The Directorate must ensure that work experience locations are wheelchair accessible.
- (4) The Directorate shall support the training of work experience providers in Auslan.

11 Removing financial barriers to work experience

- (1) The ACT Education Directorate shall create a bursary to support disadvantaged students in accessing work experience. When assessing applications for bursaries, the Directorate must give priority to:
 - (a) students with low socioeconomic backgrounds;

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- (b) students with a disability;
 - (c) students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - (e) young carers;
 - (f) students with lived experience of homelessness; and
 - (g) students with disrupted educational experiences.

Dictionary

(see s 3)

Note 1 The [Legislation Act](#) contains definitions and other provisions relevant to this Act.

Note 2 For example, the [Legislation Act](#), dict, pt 1, defines the following terms:

- ACT
- auditor-general
- entity
- head of service
- integrity commissioner
- Legislative Assembly
- Minister (see s 162)
- Office of the Legislative Assembly
- officer of the Assembly
- ombudsman
- public sector standards commissioner
- public service
- statutory office-holder
- Supreme Court
- territory authority
- territory instrumentality
- territory law
- territory-owned corporation
- the Territory.

Resources means any form of any monetary, information, or practical tools that enable students to access work experience.

Student means a person enrolled in and attending a government or non-government school from years 7 to 12.

Work Experience means an internship a school student takes as a part of their secondary or senior secondary studies.

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Youth Voice (Representation) Youth Act 2026, which originated in the Legislative Assembly as the Youth Voice (Representation) Youth Bill 2026 and was passed by the Assembly on 1 January 2026.

Clerk of the Youth Legislative Assembly