# WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES INDUSTRY

This module is about the Administrative and Support Services Industry. It has been prepared to support teachers to develop lessons for students with disabilities who will be undertaking work experience in this industry. The module provides information on occupational health and safety for this industry.

While undertaking work experience, students learn primarily through observing and assisting with simple tasks. They **must NOT** undertake activities that require extensive training or experience, or expose them, or others in the workplace, to unreasonable risks to health and safety.

Before commencing preparation of students with disabilities for work experience, teachers should review the information on Occupational Health and Safety requirements as outlined in the Work Experience Manual for Victorian Secondary Schools.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/wemanualrev.pdf>

### Key messages:

* Work experience is about observing the world of work in action.
* Students on work experience must be under supervision at all times.
* Students must complete A Job Well Done modules before undertaking work experience.

## General Information

The Administrative and Support Services industry provides many services like office administration, call centres, travel agencies, building cleaning, pest control and gardening services.

There are many job opportunities in this industry that range from entry level positions to professional positions. Employment in the industry can be full-time, part-time and casual.

## Jobs in the Administrative and Support industry

* Office administration
* Receptionist
* Travel agency staff
* Data entry officers
* Building cleaners
* Call centre staff
* Personal Assistants
* Human resource officers.

**Further information on the types of occupations in this industry can be found on Job Outlook -** <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Default.aspx>

**What can students do to stay safe at work in the Administrative and Support** **Services industry?**

Injuries can happen in the Administrative and Support Service industry if adequate care is not taken. Students must follow work instructions safely. Students must consider their own safety and the safety of others.

To stay safe, students with disabilities must:

* be under supervision at all times
* have proper training before undertaking simple tasks
* speak to their supervisor if they are unsure about how to perform a task safely
* have clear instructions about safety procedures
* must be familiar with what do in an emergency.

A healthy work environment is very important for the Administrative and Support Services industry as employees are often working indoors or at their computers for most of the day.

## Ventilation

Ventilation is the movement of air around a closed space. The air in an office building is controlled by an air conditioning system and it helps to clear the air in the building and provide heat or cooling.

Cleaning products, glue sprays, dust, fumes from machines such as photocopiers can affect the quality of the air in the office. Breathing unclean air can cause health problems and make people very sick.

To stay safe students need to:

* make sure they have access to fresh / clean air
* avoid exposure to dust, fumes and cleaning products
* let their supervisor know if they are feeling unwell.

## Noise

There are many different noises in a workplace. In the Administrative and Support Services industry noise can come from photocopiers, printers, telephones ringing and many people talking in an office space. There may be noise from outside coming from a building site work.

To stay safe students need to:

* tell their supervisor if noise from the workplace is too loud for them
* follow their supervisor’s instructions to protect them from noise.

## Lighting

Good lighting in a workspace is important for you to see clearly. Glare can cause problems.

Glare can come from a computer screen and a bright window. Students should be able to see without hurting their eyes, so they can be safe when completing simple tasks.

To stay safe students need to:

* tell their supervisor if bright lights are bothering them
* not stare at a computer screen for prolonged periods of time.

## Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS)

Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) refers to a number of conditions where there is constant pain in the muscles, tendons and other soft tissues. OOS (once known as Repetitive Strain Injury, or RSI) can be a serious problem in the office and business industry if adequate care is not taken.

OOS affects parts of the body that are used in work activities which require one or more of the following:

* frequent or repetitive movements (such as operating keyboards for long periods)
* forceful movements (such as using a hole punch or a stapler)
* postures held for long periods of time (such as looking at a computer screen that is too high, or holding your head at an angle to see past glare on the screen).

In the Administrative and Support Services industry this can be a serious problem. Examples of OOS are using computer keyboards and sitting at a desk in the same position for a long time. Injuries which can occur include:

* strain
* fatigue
* swelling
* headaches
* back pain.

To stay safe students need to:

* follow all safety instructions and ask their supervisor if they are unsure of how to do a task
* be mindful of their posture when sitting at a desk
* have regular breaks from their desk to move around and stretch
* have a comfortable chair to sit on
* tell their supervisor if they are not comfortable.

## Lifting and moving Items (Manual Handling)

Students must follow safety procedures when lifting and moving items in the workplace. Manual handling is work that involves carrying, pushing, pulling, lifting, or moving something. The employer must assess and control manual handling tasks that may present risk. Examples of these tasks are lifting boxes, moving stationery supplies, computers, printers and other office furniture, placing items on shelves, carrying trays and vacuuming.

Injuries from lifting heavy items can cause serious damage.

To stay safe students need to:

* have clear instructions from their supervisor on how to be safe at work
* know the correct lifting procedure
* know how to split large loads into smaller loads and not carry everything at one time.
* know how to use a trolley to move large items
* place items on a bench so they don’t need to bend down to use it
* take rest breaks to prevent muscle strain and feeling tired
* know how to speak to their supervisor if they are unsure of how to do a task safely.

## Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are very common injuries in the Administrative and Support Services industry. You can trip over or bump into items such as boxes, bins or cartons which are left on the floor where people need to walk. If there is a spill on the floor or it is wet people can slip and fall.

Injuries from slips, trips and falls can involve sprains, bruises, broken bones, fractures, cuts and back injuries.

To stay safe students need to:

* follow all safety instructions and ask their supervisor if they are unsure of how to do a task
* wear shoes which are comfortable, have rubber non-slip soles and are in good condition
* let their supervisor know straight away if there is a spill on the floor.

## Electricity

Students undertaking work experience **MUST NOT** be asked to do any electrical work or repairs while on work experience.

Many types of electrical equipment and machinery are used in the Administrative and Support Services. Examples include:

* telephones
* photocopiers
* computers
* printers
* cleaning equipment such as vacuum cleaners.

Damaged electrical cords, faulty appliances and equipment, stretched cords and water leaking onto electrical equipment can be very unsafe and cause serious damage.

To stay safe students need to follow all safety instructions and ask their supervisor if they are unsure of how to do a simple task

## Poisons and Dangerous Materials

Students undertaking work experience **MUST NOT** handle chemicals or poisons while in the workplace.

Poisons and dangerous materials are products that can be used in the Administrative and Support Services industry. Poisons are often called Hazardous Substances. Common examples of these are cleaning detergents, glue, printer ink and insect sprays used for indoor plants.

To stay safe students need to always follow clear instructions from their supervisor if they are unsure of how to do a task

## Photocopiers

Photocopiers and printers are used in many workplaces in the Administrative and Support Services industry. These can cause health problems for some people but if you use them properly they can be safe to use.

To stay safe students need to:

* have proper training from their supervisor before using a photocopier or printer
* follow all safety instructions and know how to ask their supervisor if they are unsure of how to do a simple task
* know how to let their supervisor know if the photocopier is not working and seek assistance to complete their tasks.

## What can your supervisor do to make the workplace safe for students?

The Occupational Health and Safety Act is a written law to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and other people at work. The employer is responsible for the safety of all employees and must provide a high standard of health and safety at their workplace.

To make the workplace safe, employers must:

* be aware of the laws and regulations and follow these laws to protect their employees
* supervise work experience students, or have another qualified employee supervise work experience students at all times
* provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This is any equipment used or worn to keep employees safe in the workplace. PPE includes safety shoes, earplugs, goggles, hard hats, high visibility clothing, face masks, gloves and sunscreen
* provide training for the simple tasks students undertake while on work experience.

### Information about the Administrative and Support Services industry is located at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/officebusinessmodule.aspx>

### Administrative and support services industry fact sheet

<https://www.business.gov.au/planning/templates-and-tools/industry-factsheets/administrative-and-support-services-industry-fact-sheet#top>

### Workplace Learning Toolbox

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/Pages/teachers.aspx>

### safe@work

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/swguide.aspx?Redirect=1>