

SIR - Retail Services Training Package

SIR10116—Cert. 1 in Retail Services

SIR20216—Cert. 2 in Retail Services

SIR30216—Cert. 3 in Retail

Unit

SIRXIND001

Work effectively in a service environment

This is not a complete document.
SAMPLE ONLY

Student/Trainee Manual



LANE

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STUDENT/TRAINEE DETAILS

Student/Trainee Name**Student/Trainee Email****Teacher / Trainer Name****School / Institution / Training Organisation / Employer**

SAMPLE SAMPLE

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INTRODUCTION

This manual was developed to provide training content that addresses the specific 'Unit of Competency' as outlined in the following pages.

We encourage you the student / trainee to take your time when reviewing this content and seek any assistance from your teacher/trainer should you have difficulty in understanding the information.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Also included in this Student / Trainee manual are a series of Learning Activities.

The learning activities in the student and/or trainee manuals are 'Form Enabled' so that if the resources are delivered online, the activities can be entered in using the computer keyboard.

Each learning activity is identified with the following icon.

A blue rounded rectangular button with the text "Learning Activity" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Learning activities come in the following forms.

- ☆ Questions
- ☆ Research
- ☆ Tasks
- ☆ Interviews

INTRODUCTION—CONT'D

Questions

Questions generally relate to the information presented on previous pages. Questions will also include multiple choice questions, 'Yes' and 'No' questions and/or 'True' and 'False' questions.

Research

This type of learning activity requires you to locate information by using research methods. The research methods could include:

- ☆ Internet searches
- ☆ Reading textbooks and other reference sources
- ☆ Location visits

Tasks

This learning activity type requires you to actually do something and some examples of tasks may include:

- ☆ Creating reports
- ☆ Visiting locations such as workplaces
- ☆ Performing an activity in a workplace

Interviews

This learning activity type would require you to interview person(s) in an actual workplace environment or a person(s) who are experienced in the industry sector which you currently are undergoing training.

You will be made aware of the type of learning activity by noting the learning activity type displayed under the learning activity icon.

INTRODUCTION—CONT'D

USING THE FORM ENABLED FEATURE

If you are using this manual online, you can fill in some of the answers using your computer keyboard.

Your teacher or trainer will provide you with the information and instructions on how to use the 'Form Enabled' feature in this manual.

SELF ASSESSMENT

At the end of each manual is a series of questions that you should review and answer either Yes or No.

The term 'Self Assessment' means you will ask yourself these questions and therefore is no need to provide the answers to the self assessment questions to your teacher or trainer, unless they require you to do so.

This self assessment is to ensure you have reviewed and understood the information that was presented in this manual.

If you answered 'No' to any of these questions or are unsure of your understanding in any of the topics reviewed, you are encouraged to go back and review the information again and/or seek the assistance of your teacher or trainer.

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UNIT OF COMPETENCY OVERVIEW

The following pages are extracts from Training.gov.au website and outlines this specific 'Unit of Competency' including the 'Elements' and the 'Performance Criteria'. The content within this manual has been developed to address this unit.

SIRXIND001 - WORK EFFECTIVELY IN A SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. Source and use information on employment rights and responsibilities	1.1.Access current sources of information on employee and employer rights and responsibilities 1.2.Obtain and interpret key information on laws for anti-discrimination, harassment and equal employment opportunity 1.3.Source and interpret information on national employment standards and specific employment arrangements for current role 1.4.Comply with all employment requirements
2. Work within organisational requirements	2.1.Interpret and comply with key employment policies and procedures 2.2.Seek advice from supervisors and managers to clarify organisational requirements as required 2.3.Interpret staff rosters and provide notice of availability according to organisational policies and procedures 2.4.Apply dress or uniform standards and maintain personal grooming standards according to organisational policies and procedures 2.5.Use designated lines of communication and reporting
3. Use effective work habits	3.1.Act promptly on instructions and information, and follow procedures relevant to workplace activities 3.2.Display appropriate behaviours in line with the organisations code of conduct 3.3.Use initiative to contribute to an effective and efficient workplace environment

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Section One

Source and Use Information on Employment Rights and Responsibilities

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WORK EFFECTIVELY IN A SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

SECTION ONE—SOURCE AND USE INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

INTRODUCTION

Industrial relations legislation has been established in Australia to protect the rights of both the employers and employees in the workplace. Employers have created organisations or associations to represent specific industries or employer groups as well as also to assist companies with several regulatory, legal or managerial issues.

Employee organisations (better known as Trade Unions) have been established to represent and negotiate wage and working conditions on behalf of their members. The following makes up the industrial relations system in Australia.

The Australian *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1987* prohibits breaches of human rights by the Commonwealth and discrimination in employment on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, age, medical record, impairment, marital status, mental, intellectual or psychiatric disability, nationality, physical disability, sexual preference, trade union activity.

In this section we look at the two areas 1) industrial relations and 2) workplace discrimination topics.

SECTION LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this section you will learn information relating to:

- ☆ Accessing current sources of information on employee and employer rights and responsibilities
- ☆ Obtaining and interpreting key information on laws for anti-discrimination, harassment and equal employment opportunity
- ☆ Sourcing and interpreting information on national employment standards and specific employment arrangements for current role
- ☆ Complying with all employment requirements



ACCESS CURRENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AND

OBTAIN AND INTERPRET KEY INFORMATION ON LAWS FOR ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

AND

SOURCE AND INTERPRET INFORMATION ON NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AND SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR CURRENT ROLE

(Over the next few pages we cover three 'Performance Criteria' points at the same time to avoid repetition)

The retail industry is a large industry sector and employs a substantial number of people. To locate information on the industry can be daunting however, the best place to start looking for anything related to the retail industry would be to the peak industry bodies, or also known as industry associations.

Peak bodies are major organisations that represent the interests of groups, organisations and individuals that are drawn together by their common participation or involvement in a particular activity or field of endeavour, in this case the retail industry and those working in the industry or operating within the industry.

Peak bodies carry out a variety of roles. They develop policies and protocols, advise governments, provide a reference point for their members, maintain quality and standards of operation by organisations and individuals and represent their members in many different ways.

They offer advice on employment standards, wage awards and other employment issues, laws and regulations.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

There are two major retail industry associations:

Australian Retailers Association



National Retail Association



Both provide information on:

- ☆ Current pay rates for employees
- ☆ Award or enterprise agreement information
- ☆ Dealing with discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying complaints

UNIONS

The unions are also a source of workplace employee entitlements, rights and responsibilities.

Unions have been operating for many years in Australia and have managed to obtain benefits, working conditions and safe workplaces that are today taken for granted by many people who are not members of trade unions. All employees have a right to join a union. People join trade unions to enable them to have a stronger voice when fighting for improved and safe working conditions, wages rates, redundancy settlements, and settlement of disputes. A union is generally better able to achieve a successful outcome, whereas one person may not be heard.

Unions in Australia are collectively represented by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). The ACTU is the peak council and national centre representing the Australian Unions. The ACTU's main role is to lobby Federal and State governments for changes in industrial relations laws and compliance issues. They also assist specific Unions or industry employee groups in negotiating wage and working agreements.

For more information about the ACTU, visit their website at **www.actu.org.au**



The ACTU has a website for schools called ACTU Worksite. This website has extensive information on wages, discrimination and other employee rights. The website can be found at **<http://worksite.actu.org.au/>**



The unions specifically for the retail industry is the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees' Association (SDA). Their website is at **<http://www.sda.org.au/>**



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Federal government has several agencies where information about wages, working conditions and employee rights can be found.

The main agency is the 'Fair Work Commission'. Their website has information on minimum wage levels, wage awards, termination topics and workplace disputes. Their website is at **<https://www.fwc.gov.au>**



FAIR WORK
COMMISSION

Another Federal government agency called the 'Fair Work Ombudsman' has information on discrimination in the workplace and the legal rights of employees. Their website is at **<https://www.fairwork.gov.au>**



Australian Government

Fair Work
OMBUDSMAN

STATE/TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Each State and Territory has legislation that governs the state or territory industrial relations system, as well as managing the Federal laws, including the areas of rights and obligations of both employers and employees. These include:

- ☆ rates of pay
- ☆ leave entitlements (including public holidays)
- ☆ termination and resignation from work
- ☆ discrimination
- ☆ taxation and superannuation
- ☆ employment records

It also assists in the definition of what is known as 'industrial instruments'. These include:

- ☆ An award
- ☆ Approved enterprise agreement

For more information about the State and Territory industrial relations departments and agencies visit their respective websites at:

New South Wales - <http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au>
Queensland - <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/fair-and-safe-work/industrial-relations>
Victoria - <http://www.business.vic.gov.au/workplacerrights>
South Australia - <http://www.safework.sa.gov.au>
Western Australia - <http://www.wairc.wa.gov.au>

Tasmania, ACT and Northern Territory have transferred the administration of industrial relations to the Fair Work Commission.

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

It is against the law to treat someone unfairly, or harass (or hassle) them in an employment situation. This includes sexual harassment.

The law covers job applicants, employees, co-workers, managers, supervisors and contract workers. It applies when deciding who to hire, how to treat employees and which employees to dismiss, retire or make redundant. It covers industrial organisations, partnerships and professional qualifying bodies.

Some areas where employers need to take special care include:

Job Advertisements

Job advertisements should list the main selection criteria. Avoid using gender-specific terms such as "Barmaid" and "Girl Friday" or potentially ageist terms such as "mature" and "office junior". Advertisements should not state, or even imply, that the job is restricted to people on the basis of personal characteristics such as sex, unless sex is a genuine occupational requirement. There are guidelines published to assist employers when advertising for positions.



Interview Questions

It is against the law to ask another person for information which could be used to discriminate against them. This includes interview questions. Job interview questions need to be relevant. Questions should directly relate to a person's ability to do the job.

Example:

"What are your childcare arrangements?" is discriminatory.

"This job requires long hours and some travel. How flexible are you with regard to overtime or out of hours activity?" seeks the necessary information in a non-discriminatory way.

Reasonable Precautions

Employees have a major role to play in the elimination of discriminatory attitudes or actions in the workplace. How they treat fellow employees can lead to complaints and/ or legal action. The company is expected to take reasonable precautions to prevent any discrimination in his/her business.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when employers refuse to change practices, policies and procedures to enable all persons to participate in the workplace. For example, if a wheelchair bound person applied for a position and it was decided that the applicant was the best for the position, if he/she was refused the position because the workplace had did not have ramps in place to assist them to move through the office, then this would constitute indirect discrimination. As would insisting that an employee perform duties that are contrary to his/her religious, or cultural beliefs.

The Australia Human Rights Commission (formerly known as Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) is responsible for handling complaints from the public and employees who have experienced discrimination at work. There are also laws that exist in each State and Territory throughout Australia to protect people from unfair work practices relating to discrimination and equal employment opportunities.

For more information from the Australian Human Rights Commission, visit their website at **www.hreoc.gov.au** or by contacting them on 02 9284 9600.



Equal Opportunity

Equal employment opportunity relates to the opportunities available to all employees. Not only does it include the hiring of employees but also training of employees, promotion opportunities and receipt of benefits offered by employers.

All employees in the workplace should be treated equally and employment opportunities should be given to the most appropriate person for the position based on merit, or their ability to address or meet the criteria for employment or promotion.

In some instances, it may be necessary to offer a position to someone based on their ethnic origin or language skills if their duties require them to deal with the same ethnic group or require speaking a specific language.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favours or conduct of a sexual nature that you find offensive, unwelcome or unwarranted, are referred to as sexual harassment. It applies to both men and women. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- ☆ Unwelcome physical touching
- ☆ Sexual or suggestive comments, jokes or innuendo
- ☆ Sexually based insults or taunts
- ☆ Sexual propositions
- ☆ Inquires into your sex/private life
- ☆ Pressure to 'date' if after repeated refusals
- ☆ Sexually explicit materials – posters, pictures, magazines, etc.
- ☆ Made to feel uncomfortable through stares or leering
- ☆ Offensive emails, telephone calls, faxes, etc.

If at your place of employment you experience sexual harassment or are a witness to sexual harassment, it is your responsibility to report it to the most appropriate person -such as your manager or supervisor. It can also be referred to the local office of Human Rights in your state, or if you are a member of a union it can be reported to the union representative.

The suggested steps of action if you experience sexual harassment are:

- ☆ Clearly state to the person that you are not comfortable with their advances or actions
- ☆ Request that they cease their advance immediately
- ☆ Learn the company's policy on reporting such instances
- ☆ Report the matter
- ☆ Follow any procedure that is required to report the harassment



Bullying - Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve 'negative or degrading' physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents, or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people.

While bullying is a form of aggression, the actions can be both obvious and subtle. The following list is only a basic overview of what may be considered as bullying. Bullying is a repetitive behavioural trait and therefore it may require one or more incidents to help clearly indicate when bullying is taking place.

Examples include:

- ☆ Spreading of malicious rumours, gossip, or innuendo that is not true
- ☆ Openly excluding or socially isolating someone
- ☆ Intimidating a person
- ☆ Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work
- ☆ Physically abusing or threatening abuse
- ☆ Removing areas of responsibilities without cause or explanation
- ☆ Constantly changing work guidelines or procedures
- ☆ Establishing impossible deadlines that will set the employee up to fail
- ☆ Withholding necessary information or purposefully giving the wrong information
- ☆ Making jokes that are 'obviously offensive' by spoken word, or email
- ☆ Intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying, or stalking
- ☆ Assigning unreasonable duties or workload which are unfavourable to one person (in a way that creates unnecessary pressure)
- ☆ Underutilising - creating a feeling of uselessness
- ☆ Yelling or using profanity
- ☆ Criticising a person persistently or constantly
- ☆ Belittling a person's opinions
- ☆ Unwarranted (or undeserved) punishment
- ☆ Blocking applications for training, leave or promotion without cause or explanation
- ☆ Tampering with a person's personal belongings or work equipment



DISCRIMINATION LAWS

Each state has laws pertaining to discrimination and human rights.

Below, are some of the more relevant Federal laws:

- ☆ The ***Racial Discrimination Act 1976*** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, immigration (or that of a relative or associate)
- ☆ ***The Sex Discrimination Act (1984)*** prohibits direct and indirect discrimination with regard to sex, sexual harassment, marital status, pregnancy, or dismissal on the grounds of family responsibilities.
- ☆ ***The Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability.
- ☆ The ***Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*** prohibits breaches of human rights by the Commonwealth and discrimination in employment on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, age, medical record, impairment, marital status, mental, intellectual or psychiatric disability, nationality, physical disability, sexual preference, trade union activity.



DEALING WITH WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT OR BULLYING

Employers are strongly encouraged to establish internal complaints procedures for dealing with discrimination and harassment complaints. This would maximise the possibility of in-house resolution.

There are no hard and fast rules as to how any internal complaint procedures should be set up, as each would need to be developed to meet the needs of the retail operation.

If the complaint procedures are documented, then you as an employee should get access to the information in the event of any act of discrimination, or harassment.

Also there are numerous examples where complaints of discrimination or harassment are made by persons not being affected by the discrimination or harassment, yet have observed it happening and have reported the events.

Employers generally would have two types of complaint procedures 1) informal and 2) formal.

Reporting Procedures Informal



Informal Complaint Procedures - Informal procedures focus on quick resolution rather than the laborious and sometimes painful gathering of factual proof or substantiation of a complaint. Informal ways of dealing with complaints of discrimination and harassment generally include:

- ☆ The individual who has been discriminated against or harassed wants to deal with the situation themselves but are seeking advice on possible strategies from their supervisor or management
- ☆ The individual who has been discriminated against or harassed, asks their supervisor to speak to the alleged harasser on their behalf
- ☆ A complaint is made, the perpetrator admits the behaviour, investigation is not required, and the complaint is resolved
- ☆ A supervisor or manager observes unacceptable conduct occurring and takes independent action, even though no complaint has been made

Informal action is the best method when:

- ☆ The allegations are of a less serious nature, but the individual subjected to the behaviour wants it to cease nonetheless
- ☆ The individual subjected to the behaviour wishes to pursue an informal resolution
- ☆ The parties are likely to have ongoing contact with one another and the complainant wishes to pursue an informal resolution so that the working relationship can be maintained

SAMPLE SAMPLE

Reporting Procedures

Formal



Formal Complaint Procedures - Formal complaints procedures focus on looking at substantiating the complaint and whether the parties can be brought together to try and reach a satisfactory outcome. Formal complaints procedures usually involve:

- ☆ Investigation of the allegations
- ☆ Reviewing the evidence and complaints in terms of fairness
- ☆ Making a decision that the discrimination or harassment event did occur, or was likely to occur
- ☆ Preparing a report with a recommended course
- ☆ Submit report to management for approval
- ☆ Implementation of the proposed actions

Formal procedures are usually appropriate where:

- ☆ Informal attempts at resolution have failed
- ☆ Informal method is rejected by the complainant
- ☆ The person alleging discrimination or harassment has been 'victimised'
- ☆ Informal resolution could compromise the rights of the parties
- ☆ The complaint is against a more senior member of staff
- ☆ The allegations are denied, so more investigation is required

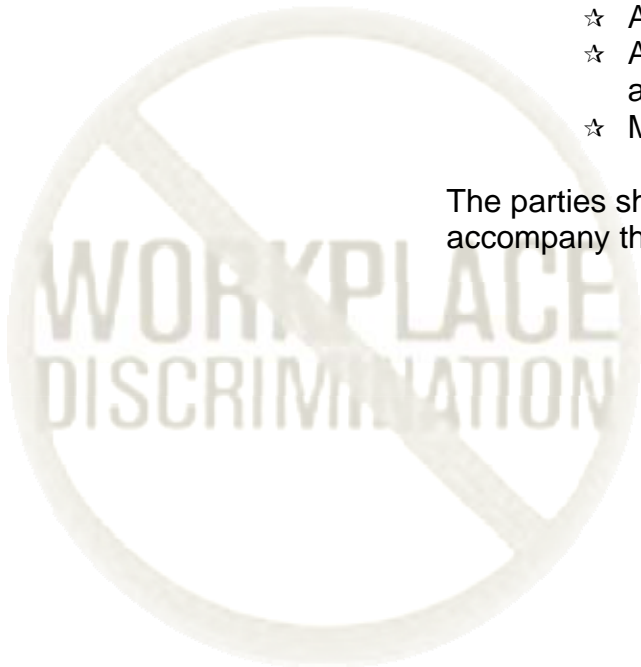
It is important that both informal and formal methods are consistent and fair.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

Employers would document the steps involved in a formal complaint as outlined below:

- ☆ The complainant is interviewed
- ☆ Allegations are recorded in writing
- ☆ The allegations are conveyed to the person whom the complaint is against
- ☆ Person whom the complaint is against is given the opportunity to respond and defend themselves against the allegations
- ☆ If there is a dispute over facts, statements from any witnesses and other relevant evidence are gathered
- ☆ A decision is made
- ☆ A report documenting the investigation process, the evidence, the finding and recommended actions is submitted to management
- ☆ Management implements the recommended actions or decides on an alternative course of action

The parties should be permitted to have a union official, support person, advocate or other representative accompany them to any interviews or meetings.



SAMPLE SAMPLE

Outcomes to a Complaint - Employers must ensure that the outcome of a substantiated complaint does not disadvantage in any way the person who was discriminated against or harassed.

Outcomes generally include:

- ☆ Counselling
- ☆ Formal apology
- ☆ Mediation conducted by an impartial third party where the parties to the complaint agree to a mutually acceptable resolution
- ☆ Official warnings that are noted on the offending employee's personnel file
- ☆ Legal action if serious enough

It should also be noted that there can be serious consequences against persons making false accusations.

If internal complaint procedures have not resulted in resolution, persons have the right to seek assistance from either the State or Federal agencies that are able to receive, investigate and decide on any discrimination or harassment complaint.

Each state or territory will have an Anti-Discrimination Board. Their contact details are generally available on the Internet.

The Federal agency is the Human Rights Commission. Their website is at www.hreoc.gov.au, or they can be contacted on 02 9284 9600.



**Learning
Activity**

Research

LEARNING ACTIVITY ONE

In this activity you are to do some research and locate the government department in your state or territory that handles discrimination complaints.

Tell us the name of the department and all their contact details.

Then summarise what their complaints procedures are in a few words .

Name of Department and Contact Details***Summary of Complaints Procedure***

**Learning
Activity**

Task

LEARNING ACTIVITY TWO

Tick the statements that you think are a discriminatory act.

Hiring a female to work in a women's lingerie shop. _____

Giving the promotion to Bob, even though Carol was better suited to the job. _____

Not giving the job to a wheelchair bound candidate, because you would need to modify the computer station. _____

Not being allowed to smoke in the staff room. _____

Not giving a young man a job at a Chinese newspaper publisher because he cannot speak Chinese. _____

Sam making rude jokes to Sally just to 'bug' her a bit. _____

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Task

LEARNING ACTIVITY THREE

Bullying is not acceptable in any workplace.

We went through 19 examples of bullying in this section.

Without looking back at those examples, give us 6 examples of workplace bullying just from memory.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY FOUR

Here is a scenario.

Carol is taking visual merchandising at a local TAFE and is nearing completion of it.

She works part time at a large retail store while taking her studies.

One of her co-workers Sam, is a full time employee and is a good friend of the store manager.

Every time the store needs to design a new display, Sam gets the job even though Carol has asked to have a chance of doing one.

No reason is given why the job is given to Sam, except that he has been with the store longer.

This is a type of discrimination.

What type is it?

**Learning
Activity**

Research

LEARNING ACTIVITY FIVE

In this Section we mentioned the Fair Work Ombudsman. In this activity we want you to go to their website and locate a PDF Factsheet called 'About the Fair Work Ombudsman'. Once you have located this fact sheet, we want you to summarise the Fair Work Ombudsman's role. Do this task below.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Research

LEARNING ACTIVITY SIX

In this section we mentioned the ‘ACTU Worksite’. In this activity we want you to access this website and do some research.

Find the page that has the ten steps in getting your first job.

Tell us what those ten steps are.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Research

LEARNING ACTIVITY SEVEN

There is a Federal Government website called 'Jobsearch.gov.au'.

In this activity we want you to locate the website.

There is a link on the home page called 'Jobactive for Job Seekers'. Click on this link.

On the next page there is a 'Career Quiz'. We want you to take the quiz and tell us below how you went.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



COMPLY WITH ALL EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

We start with a brief review of both the employer's and the employee's rights and responsibilities within the workplace environment.

When a retailer hires an employee to perform a job role within their operation, they expect the employee to support him/her and the team of employees to work towards the store's goals.

As an employee, you would have agreed to the job and expect to be paid for work completed, to work in a safe workplace and to be properly trained in order to perform the job in the way the retailer requires.

EMPLOYER'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees are a significant part of a retailer's operation. They are also a significant cost to the operation. The store owner would then expect to get value for money.

The retailer would expect the employee to:

- ☆ Perform work duties to the best of his/her ability.
- ☆ Maintain confidentiality of their work and tasks
- ☆ Be punctual. Come to work on time, leave at the agreed time and advise the management of any planned absences.
- ☆ Follow policies and procedures as set out by the retailer
- ☆ Work ethically, be honest and trustworthy
- ☆ Respect other staff, especially those with cultural and religious differences
- ☆ Work safely and assist in maintaining a safe workplace



Other employer rights would include the right to dismiss an employee if:

- ☆ They committed a criminal act
- ☆ Unsafe, careless or negligent actions causing serious damage or injury
- ☆ Reveal or release sensitive or confidential financial, customer, staff and/or customer information

The employer's responsibilities would include:

- ☆ Providing a safe workplace and training about safe practices
- ☆ Prevent any discriminatory activities and provide an equal opportunity workplace environment
- ☆ Pay fairly and pay all statutory and/or agreed to entitlements
- ☆ Use proper procedures when terminating employment
- ☆ Train staff when required
- ☆ Keeping staff personal details confidential

Other responsibilities are just good business practice, or morally correct:

- ☆ Ensure the management is approachable.
- ☆ Be honest with staff
- ☆ Treat staff with respect



EMPLOYEE'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees have responsibilities to the employer. The retailer would have hired an employee based on the belief that they can perform the tasks they are being hired to do or can be trained to do.

Your responsibilities as an employee are:

- ☆ Being punctual and working for the agreed amount of time
- ☆ Work to your best ability and skills
- ☆ Maintain confidentiality
- ☆ Follow health and safety rules
- ☆ Provide assistance to fellow employees if they need it
- ☆ Be courteous and helpful to other staff members
- ☆ Respect others with cultural and religious differences
- ☆ Honesty and ethical work practices
- ☆ Maintain good personal hygiene
- ☆ Assist in achieving the retailer's goals

An employee's rights include:

- ☆ A safe environment
- ☆ To have equal promotional opportunities
- ☆ Not to be harassed or discriminated against
- ☆ To be trained properly
- ☆ To be paid on time and paid your entitlements
- ☆ To have your personal details kept confidential
- ☆ To have the choice of joining a union or not



EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS/OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER

It is common today that every new employee receives an “employment contract” or a “offer of employment letter” when they are hired.

This protects both the employer and the employee from any misunderstandings or disagreements relating to the job and duties.

An employment contract, or offer of employment letter would cover:

- ☆ The rate of pay you would receive
- ☆ Other pay entitlements
- ☆ Hours and days you would be working
- ☆ Leave entitlements, such as holidays or sick leave
- ☆ Union details (if the retailer is unionised)
- ☆ Policies as to dress code and personal appearance
- ☆ Training required, or offered
- ☆ Conflict resolution procedures
- ☆ The supervisory structure (who is your immediate supervisors)
- ☆ Management contact details

Included with an employment contract or offer of employment letter, would likely be an “induction package” that would include:

- ☆ Policies manuals
- ☆ Procedure manuals
- ☆ Emergency, as well as health and safety information

Having this documentation avoids many misunderstandings, or disagreements about the job.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY EIGHT

What are the six general responsibilities an employer has?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

SAMPLE SAMPLE

LEARNING ACTIVITY NINE

What are the ten general responsibilities an employee has?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY TEN

SAMPLE SAMPLE

What are the ten general areas an employment contract or offer of employment letter would cover?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

Section Two

Work within Organisational Requirements

SAMPLE SAMPLE

WORK EFFECTIVELY IN A SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

SECTION TWO—WORK WITHIN ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As an employee within a retail business structure you will be expected to comply with the organisational requirements and if these are not known or understood, you will need to ensure to find out about these organisational requirements and clarify those you do not understand.

In this section we go into this subject in a little more detail.

SECTION LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this section you will learn information relating to:

- ☆ Interpreting and complying with key employment policies and procedures
- ☆ Seeking advice from supervisors and managers to clarify organisational requirements as required
- ☆ Interpreting staff rosters and providing notice of availability according to organisational policies and procedures
- ☆ Applying dress or uniform standards and maintaining personal grooming standards according to organisational policies and procedures
- ☆ Using designated lines of communication and reporting



INTERPRET AND COMPLY WITH KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND

SEEK ADVICE FROM SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS TO CLARIFY ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AS REQUIRED

(Over the next few pages we cover two 'Performance Criteria' points at the same time to avoid repetition)

Every business, including those in the retail industry, have certain requirements and responsibilities that all staff are expected to know, understand and follow.

Some of these are formalised in documents called “policy and procedure manuals” and others are less formal and may not even be documented.

Common requirements found in all organisations would include:

- ☆ Who your managers or supervisors are and how to communicate with them
- ☆ What level of performance is expected of the staff
- ☆ Ethical and non-discriminatory behaviour
- ☆ Working safely
- ☆ Understanding your legal responsibilities
- ☆ Quality customer service

An organisation's responsibilities would need to include:

- ☆ Maintaining a healthy and safe workplace
- ☆ Provide necessary training
- ☆ Maintaining an ethical and non-discriminatory workplace
- ☆ Pay and other employee entitlements in line with industry awards and standards

If there are requirements and responsibilities that the retail business expects staff to follow, these would likely be documented.

Store Policies & Procedures



POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUALS

Workplace policies manuals are official organisation documents that inform staff regarding what must be done within the particular workplace.

A procedure manual is the organisation's official document that explains how staff should do their job.

It is very important that staff follow the workplace policies and procedures to:

- ☆ Ensure the safety of all staff and the customers
- ☆ Encourage and maintain good work practices
- ☆ Obey the law and other regulations associated with the retail industry and job

Procedural manuals may simply be the documentation of a common procedure.

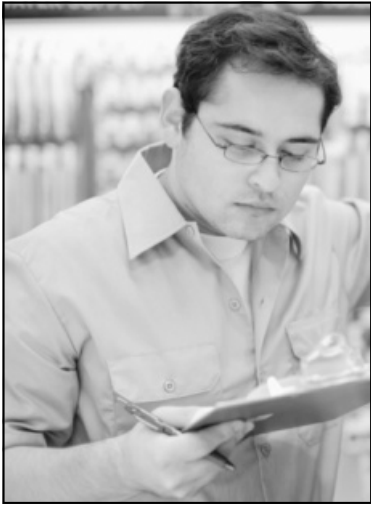
They are generally not complicated - just stating the proper steps out in a common procedure within the store environment.

It can be as simple as a single piece of paper.

In a larger retail organisation, the documentation would include far more information.

Also documented workplace procedures:

- ☆ Help new employees to perform their duties
- ☆ Assist existing employees to learn and do new tasks
- ☆ Are valuable as reference for tasks performed infrequently
- ☆ Ensure that correct methods are used
- ☆ Help where there is more than one person doing a task
- ☆ Maintain consistency in performance of tasks



Knowing and reading what a retail organisation's requirements are does not always mean that you understand it.

Staff members that do not fully understand the retail organisation's requirements, need to ask for assistance.

Generally this assistance would come from:

- ☆ Other staff members with a greater understanding of the requirements
- ☆ Store supervisors or managers
- ☆ Or, human resource managers in larger retail organisations

If the organisation's requirements were communicated verbally, it is important that you write down the information and clarify any information missed, or not understood.

It is also suggested that you show your notes to the supervisor or the store owner in order to confirm your understanding.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY ONE

What were the six common requirements from staff that most organisations would have?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY TWO

If the retailer has policies and procedures in place, why is it so important that the staff follow these policies and procedures?

SAMPLE SAMPLE



INTERPRET STAFF ROSTERS AND PROVIDE NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY ACCORDING TO ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As you now know, the employee of a retail operation has numerous responsibilities.

One of the most important employee responsibilities is to come to work when required, as well as on time.

Simply put, the managers of a retail store rely on the reliability of the staff.

No staff...no business.

When a person had applied for a retail job, the hirer would have clearly outlined the hours expected of the new employee.

This likely would have also been written in the new employee's offer of employment letter and job description.

In most retail operations there will be:

- ☆ Casual employees
- ☆ Part time employees
- ☆ Full time employees

Store managers or supervisors would use this mix of worker types to create work schedules called "staff rosters".

Casual workers in particular are generally "on call", so often do not have a regular schedule in which they can rely on.

They are used to help out in busier periods, or to cover for part time or full time staff that are absent.



Once a staff roster is created, the store manager would ensure that all staff have a copy of the roster, so each would know when they are expected to be at work.

Even though a worker is full time, they may be required to work on certain weekends and the staff roster would reflect those times.

This would be the same for part time staff.

They may work three days a week for example, however those three days may fluctuate.

Also in many retail operations the actual hours a staff member works may fluctuate.

Some staff may work the morning shift and then the following week work the afternoon shifts.

So having everyone read and interpret the staff roster is important.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



FLEXIBILITY AND UNAVAILABILITY

An efficient store manager would likely issue the staff roster days, if not weeks in advance.

This would be beneficial to staff whose working hours fluctuate.

They can schedule other personal activities around the roster.

However, there may be a situation where an employee cannot work the days or hours they have been rostered on for.

In these cases, it is the responsibility of the employee to inform the store manager of any roster issues, so changes can be made and the roster re-issued.

Leaving it too late could result in the store being understaffed.

There would likely be policies and procedures relating to roster issues that could cover:

- ☆ Acceptable time in advance to inform unavailability if rostered on
- ☆ Acceptable time in advance to inform unavailability before being rostered on
- ☆ Procedures to follow to request time off

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY THREE

A roster may have details on the days and hours that each staff member would be working.

Many retail operations employ casual, part time and full time employees, each working a different amount of hours.

In this activity, tell us the difference between casual, part time and full time employees.

Casual***Part time******Full time***

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY FOUR

What is an employee's responsibility when it comes to being rostered on.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



APPLY DRESS OR UNIFORM STANDARDS AND MAINTAIN PERSONAL GROOMING STANDARDS ACCORDING TO ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Most workplaces will have policies that staff are expected to follow.

The need for documented policies would directly relate to the size of the retail operation and the number of employees. In a small operation the policies would be verbally expressed and reinforced when required.



With a retailer that has a large workforce and/or a workforce in different store locations, the need for documented policies is greater.

There are many types of policies a retailer could have, but one common policy many retailers have is called the store's dress code.

Some dress codes are easy to follow because the retailer would supply uniforms for all the staff to wear.

The type of uniform varies widely, depending on the type of retailer and the product they sell.

SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE



For example, Bunnings Warehouse is a large hardware chain with locations across Australia.

Bunnings Warehouse provides a red polo shirt and a work style apron for their staff.

The dress code of Bunnings Warehouse would likely be that they wear the red polo shirt at all times and the work style apron when needed.

The policy may go further by saying that clean and untorn jeans or work pants, are to be worn with clean lace up work style boots or shoes.

It would be the responsibility of the staff member to launder the uniforms regularly and ask for replacements when the uniform is worn or damaged.

Because Bunnings Warehouse products relate to building, construction and gardening, the uniforms and other garments would reflect that theme.

Then there are clothing retailers that require staff to wear garments that are sold in the store.

This is common for street wear type retailers and clothing retailers in tourist locations.

Perhaps there are those retailers that do not provide any uniforms, however still have a dress code that staff would need to abide by.

For example, a retailer's dress code could be:

- ☆ Women to wear white blouses with black skirt or pants and black low heel shoes
- ☆ Men to wear black or dark grey suit, white shirt, plain blue tie, black socks and black shoes

Generally, a dress code is created and put into place to enhance the store's image.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



FOOD RETAILERS

Retailers that prepare and/or sell food products would have different dress codes, especially those in the food preparation areas.

In the retail food industry it is common for retail operators to issue uniforms. There are duties, for example in a kitchen, where uniforms are only worn once before requiring cleaning. In cases such as these, the employee would likely be given several complete sets of uniforms.

Due to health and safety regulations relating to safe food handling and preparation, staff is not generally allowed to wear their uniform to and from work, so they would change into the uniform at work.

More attention would be given to the need to wear hats or hair nets, special chef or cook aprons and cook pants.

Kitchen or cook/chef clothing are designed to protect the kitchen personnel, as well as for numerous health and safety reasons.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE



PERSONAL PRESENTATION

As part of the dress code, there would be other requirements that a retailer would require the staff to follow.

Some examples include:

- ☆ The type and amount of jewellery to be worn
- ☆ Covering of tattoos if required
- ☆ Type of footwear to be worn and the condition of the footwear
- ☆ Type of hairstyles
- ☆ Type and amount of facial hair
- ☆ The use of other fashion accessories such as belts, scarves, hats and so on

The retailer may have provided you with a very smart looking uniform, but if you are wearing torn jeans and dirty runners, the smart looking uniform totally loses its effectiveness.

The type of clothes, the condition they are in, as well as what you wear with them can either enhance the store's image, or damage it.

So it is important to learn and follow the store's dress code, especially if you are interacting with customers on a regular basis.

SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE



FOLLOW PERSONAL HYGIENE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We have learned that many retailers will have dress code policies in place, mainly to enhance the store's image.

An extension to the dress code is one's personal hygiene.

Personal hygiene involves:

- ☆ Skincare
- ☆ Hand care
- ☆ Hair care
- ☆ Dental hygiene
- ☆ Foot care
- ☆ Habits

Personal hygiene is especially important in the retail food industry where food is prepared and sold to customers.

Let's look at parts of personal hygiene closer.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE



SKINCARE

The importance of keeping your skin healthy can't be overemphasised.

It's the body's first defence against disease and infection, and it protects your internal organs from injuries. It is, in fact, the largest organ in the body. It regulates body temperature and prevents excess fluid loss and it also helps your body remove excess water and salt.

Most women strive to keep their skin looking youthful. Skin care is important to persons of all ages – male or female. It is true that women spend more time with skin care than men do. However skin care is just as important for men.

Skin care begins with a healthy lifestyle and diet. These include:

- ☆ Proper diet including plenty of fruit and vegetables
- ☆ Plenty of exercise
- ☆ Drinking lots of water daily
- ☆ Plenty of rest and relaxation
- ☆ Controlling stress
- ☆ Avoid smoking
- ☆ Avoiding excessive alcohol consumption
- ☆ Protection from the sun

It is recommended that a person should shower or bathe at least once a day.

The use of antiperspirants/deodorants is also highly recommended.

Nothing can turn a customer off more than a sales assistant with bad body order.



HAND CARE

Hand care is also important in protecting the image of the store and for health and safety reasons.

Hands should be clean at all times. Fingernails on men should be clean and trimmed, a reasonable length on women and polished with conservative colours.

It is not very attractive when fingernails are dirty, or nail polish is chipped.

In retail food preparation hand care is of paramount importance. The hands are major carriers of bacteria both residing in the skin and also transferred by touching.

An effective hand-washing programme can be split into the following steps:

- ☆ Recognise when hand washing is required - after using the toilet, touching any part of the body, coming into contact with a contaminant, handling rubbish
- ☆ Remember to use an anti-bacterial soap in order to maximise the number of bacteria being eliminated
- ☆ Wash hands effectively and regularly, so as not to miss the thumbs, the fingernails, the fingertips and areas between the fingers. Scrubbing should take place for at least 30 seconds. Washing and rinsing must be very thorough in all these areas and must be dried thoroughly as well.

Hands are susceptible to injury from handling hot or frozen food products, as well as hot equipment or utensils. Cleaning chemicals can cause serious injury to hands if not adequately protected.

With those dealing directly with customers, the hands are on show. Hands are seen by customers when they are being served food, handed the bill, or at the cash register.

Hand creams will keep the hands soft and healthy and should be used regularly.

Any cuts or abrasions must be covered with proper adhesive bandages, especially in the food preparation area and it may be required for some wounds to be covered with gloves. There are special bandages available on the market for persons working in the retail food service industry.



HAIR CARE

Hair care in the retail industry is important for two reasons:

- ☆ Health, safety and hygiene
- ☆ Image

Staff working in the store would need to follow any policies related to hairstyles, hair lengths and facial hair.

Men would want to present themselves with a conservative, well-kept trim look that includes a length of hair that matches the image of the establishment and the position held by the employee. This would include facial hair that is shaven or trimmed.

Women would want their hair to be well-styled, conservatively coloured and if long, tied back.

Kitchen staff would be required by law to wear hair nets or caps to prevent hair from falling into food being prepared or served. Long hair can also get caught in kitchen equipment or catch fire.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



DENTAL HYGIENE

Quality customer service requires an employee to be friendly and smile. Your smile therefore should be showing healthy teeth and gums.

Attention and care of your teeth is not only important to your personal presentation, but also to your health.

The common rules for taking care of your teeth and gums are:

- ☆ Brush regularly – after each meal if possible, twice a day at a minimum
- ☆ Floss regularly
- ☆ Use a mouthwash regularly
- ☆ Visit a dentist at least twice a year
- ☆ Eat foods that are recommended to help strengthen teeth and gums

Bad breath can be very annoying and embarrassing. Causes of bad breath can be a sign of a dental/medical problem, which should be checked out quickly.

Other causes include:

- ☆ Type of foods consumed
- ☆ Lack of dental hygiene
- ☆ A person's diet
- ☆ Smoking

Regular brushing and the use of mouthwashes or breath mints especially after eating foods that cause bad breath, will solve many of your bad breath problems.

Your customers and fellow employees will appreciate it!

SAMPLE SAMPLE



FOOT CARE

Footwear would have to be one of the most important pieces of clothing worn in the retail industry.

The greater percentage of staff are required to be on their feet for long hours. Footwear must not only meet the dress code but also be comfortable.

Many foot specialists recommend that you have two pair of shoes and alternate each day. The shoes not worn should be sprayed with anti-bacterial shoe spray or powder. This prevents the build-up of bacteria that causes foot odours and ailments.

Shoes should also be leather and not made of synthetic materials. Leather allows the shoe to breathe avoiding the build-up of sweat in the shoe.

The following are some general hints in caring for your feet.

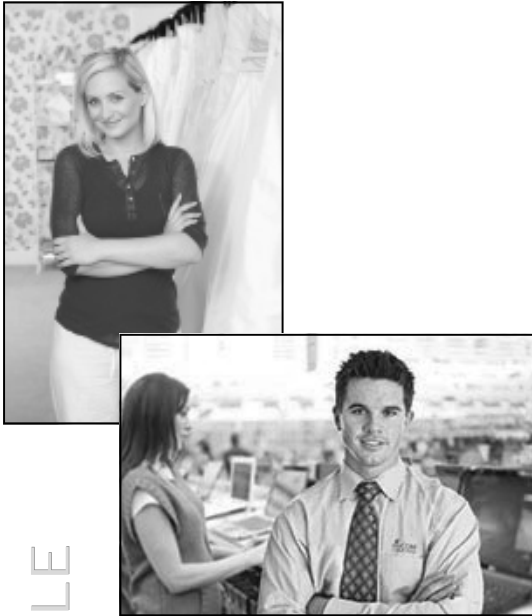
- ☆ Wash your feet daily. Rinse off all soap and dry thoroughly, especially between toes
- ☆ Trim nails straight across, and not too short. Don't cut out or dig at corners
- ☆ Wear clean socks or stockings, changed daily. Don't wear any that are too short, or too tight
- ☆ Cotton socks are recommended for cushioning properties and moisture absorption
- ☆ Wear well-fitting shoes.
- ☆ See your doctor to treat persisting foot problems

In a retail food operation, kitchen staff would require non-slip shoes, low heels, have arch support and be fully enclosed to protect the foot.

Thongs, sandals, runners or work boots are not recommended and are normally unacceptable. Clogs are acceptable as they protect the foot and are comfortable.

Clogs are quite common in the kitchen. Comfort is extremely important, as most kitchen staff are on their feet for an entire shift.

In the kitchen, the foot must be protected against hot food or liquids, as well as sharp or heavy utensils and equipment that may fall.



HABITS

Certain habits, such as smoking can cause bad breath and also cause the person's clothing to smell of stale smoke.

In a retail food operation, there are certain habits that can cause food contaminations and are strictly prohibited in a food preparation area. They include:

- ☆ Smoking during food preparation
- ☆ Tasting food with fingers – tasting spoons should be used
- ☆ Sitting on food preparation benches or counters
- ☆ Playing with earring studs while preparing food
- ☆ Spitting
- ☆ Constant touching of the face, beards or hair
- ☆ Not washing hands properly

BENEFITS OF GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE

The first benefit is that you would feel better about yourself.

The benefit to the retailer is that the staff looks healthier and fellow employees and customers are not put off with the effects of bad personal hygiene.

In a retail food operation, personal hygiene is very important.

Bad personal hygiene can cause food contamination, leading to sick customers and even legal action.

So, good personal hygiene benefits everyone!

**Learning
Activity**

Research

LEARNING ACTIVITY FIVE

In this section we used Bunning Warehouse as an example of a retailer that provides their staff with uniforms.

In this activity we want you to do some research and locate three other retailers in Australia that provide uniforms to their staff.

Retailer 1***Retailer 2******Retailer 3***

**Learning
Activity**

Interview

LEARNING ACTIVITY SIX

In this activity we want you interview four people.

Ask them to name a retailer from memory that they have been to where the staff wore uniforms.

Tell us the first name of each person, age and location they live in.

1) PERSON FIRST NAME	AGE	LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETAILER NAME

2) PERSON FIRST NAME	AGE	LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETAILER NAME

3)	PERSON FIRST NAME	AGE	LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETAILER NAME

4)	PERSON FIRST NAME	AGE	LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETAILER NAME

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Task

LEARNING ACTIVITY SEVEN

We mentioned on many occasions in this section, that personal hygiene is of the utmost importance in a retail food outlet.

In this activity we want you to do some research and find a poster that would be placed in a retail food outlet toilet which would remind staff about washing their hands properly.

The poster should show the steps used in washing hands.

Do a screen shot and printout the example.

Present your poster example to your teacher or trainer for review and discussion.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY EIGHT

What are the effects of bad hygiene in the following areas?

Bad dental hygiene***Bad skin hygiene***

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Interview

LEARNING ACTIVITY NINE

In this activity you are to interview six people of various ages and a mix of male and female.

Ask them what they would think of a sales assistant that had either very bad breath and/or bad body odour.

Then ask them what they would think of a store where their sales staff displayed bad personal hygiene.

Tell us the first name of the person, their age and gender, as well as the location where they live.

Use the area on the next pages.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

1) PERSON FIRST NAME

AGE/GENDER

LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)

RETAILER NAME

2) PERSON FIRST NAME

AGE/GENDER

LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)

RETAILER NAME

3) PERSON FIRST NAME

AGE/GENDER

LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)

RETAILER NAME

4) PERSON FIRST NAME

AGE/GENDER

LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)

RETAILER NAME

5) PERSON FIRST NAME

AGE/GENDER

LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)

RETAILER NAME

6) PERSON FIRST NAME

AGE/GENDER

LOCATION THEY LIVE (E.G. CITY, TOWN, ETC.)

RETAILER NAME



USE DESIGNATED LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING

Whether the retail operation is small or large, all will have a management and staff structure, or hierarchy.

Smaller operations may have only the store owner and a couple of staff.

Larger operations could have a store manager, supervisor and a mix of casual, part time and full time staff.

No matter what the structure, each person in the operation will have a role to play as well as associated responsibilities.

Knowing what each person's role and responsibilities are in a retail operation is important, especially if it has a strong team culture.

Knowing each person's roles and responsibilities greatly help the staff understand:

- ☆ Each person's level of decision making authority
- ☆ Who has the most experience in various areas of the operation
- ☆ Who best to ask for help when required
- ☆ The lines of communication, especially when dealing with problems or conflicts

There are many times persons have special skills in a retail operation. If others are aware of these skills, the skills the person has can often be beneficial to other staff.

Some of these special skills could include:

- ☆ Speaking another language
- ☆ First aid training
- ☆ High level of computer skills
- ☆ Design skills

Knowing each other's skills, roles and responsibilities in a retail environment can make it far easier to work as a team.

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY TEN

Why is it important for a staff member to know what other staff members and managers roles and responsibilities are?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

Section Three

Use Effective Work Habits

SAMPLE SAMPLE

WORK EFFECTIVELY IN A SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

SECTION THREE—USE EFFECTIVE WORK HABITS

INTRODUCTION

An effective and productive workplace involves employees that know what their role and responsibilities are and are able to develop their own work schedules so that they are able to complete their tasks as expected of them.

An effective and productive workplace is also one that is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

And finally, an effective and productive workplace is one where employees achieve a balance between work priorities and personal life priorities.

In this section we look at how this is done.

SECTION LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this section you will learn information relating to:

- ☆ Acting promptly on instructions and information and following procedures relevant to workplace activities
- ☆ Displaying appropriate behaviours in line with the organisations code of conduct
- ☆ Using initiative to contribute to an effective and efficient workplace environment



ACT PROMPTLY ON INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION, AND FOLLOW PROCEDURES RELEVANT TO WORKPLACE ACTIVITIES

As an employee you would have been informed of your role and responsibilities when you were hired and what tasks you would likely be doing.

The initial information you would have received would have been included in either an employment contract, or a simple offer of employment letter.

Either document would have included:

- ☆ Your job description including tasks
- ☆ The rate of pay you would receive
- ☆ Other pay entitlements
- ☆ Hours and days you would be working
- ☆ Leave entitlements, such as holidays or sick leave
- ☆ Union details (if the retailer is unionised)
- ☆ Policies as to dress code and personal appearance
- ☆ Training required or offered
- ☆ Conflict resolution procedures
- ☆ The supervisorial structure (who is your immediate supervisors)
- ☆ Management contact details

From this initial piece of information you would have a clear understanding of the tasks you will be encountering and if it was not clear, then the time to clarify your understanding would have been at the time you were hired.

Each task you are given will often come with instructions on what to do and when it needs to be done by.

These instructions could be provided to you either verbally, or in writing.



It is important that when you are given tasks with instructions, you are clear on what those instructions are.

If there is any part of those instructions that are not clear, then it is important you get some clarification so that you totally understand what the instructions are, as well as mean.

In earlier sections we learned about how to clarify information which is not totally understood.

It may be a good idea to review that information if you are unclear on how to clarify any information that is not understood.

So now you know what the task is, you have received and confirmed your understanding of the instructions associated with the tasks, next is actually completing the task.

This may require locating additional information and learning about any procedures in place to complete the task successfully and in the expected timeframe.

Information sources you may need to access could include:

- ☆ Policy and procedural manuals
- ☆ Manufacturer owner's or user manuals
- ☆ Instruction manuals
- ☆ Other staff member's experience and advice



Accessing information is only the first step.

As with receiving instructions, you need to be able interpret the information you gather or receive, as well as apply that information to the task you are about to perform.

Again, this may take some assistance from others to make sure the information you have access to is relevant to the task, current and you have clear understanding of the information.

Finally, is knowing what procedures may be in place that you should consider or need to follow when starting your task.

We mentioned that some tasks have procedures that are outlined in a procedural manual. In this case you would follow those procedures.

You may be verbally provided with a procedure to use when starting a task.

In this case it would be important that you understand the procedure, possibly write down the information and confirm your understanding of the procedure with the other person.

After gathering and receiving information, instructions and procedures related to the task, confirmed your understanding, then you are able to start the task with confidence, knowing that you will be able to complete it successfully.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



USE QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES TO CLARIFY INSTRUCTIONS OR RESPONSIBILITIES

As an employee you will encounter supervisors or managers giving you instructions generally relating to your assigned duties or responsibilities on a constant basis.

This requires strong listening skills.

Receiving instructions requires you to listen attentively.

If the instructions are unclear or you do not understand them, it is important that you take the time and clarify those instructions.

This would require questioning skills.

Simple questions can help clarify instructions.

Example

“Could you show me that again?”

“Can you go over the bit about.....?”

“Is there an instruction manual I can read that has the information?”

Tactfully asking for additional information or assistance will ensure you will be fully confident about the procedure, instructions, or routine.



A more formal approach may be required.

It may be advisable that you schedule a meeting with the store manager, owner or your supervisor.

Go to the meeting with a list of simple questions that relate to the responsibilities that you want to receive a better understanding of.

Take a notepad and jot down what was discussed and the answers to your questions or concerns.

Ask for any procedural or instructional manuals that may exist for tasks that you are assigned. These should be reviewed carefully and again, if any part of the instructions are unclear, request some clarification.

Leave the meeting with a clearer understanding about your responsibilities.

So in summary, if given instructions, be sure you fully understand them and if not, clarify the instructions by asking questions.

And if your job responsibilities are unclear, ask for some time with management in order to clarify those responsibilities.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Task

SAMPLE SAMPLE

LEARNING ACTIVITY ONE

Below are some scenarios where store staff may need to access workplace information.

Under each, tell us what sources they may need access to.

Change a receipt role in a cash register.

--

Answer a customer's question on the telephone regarding a product's availability.

--

Using a cleaning chemical properly.

--

Asking for some time off.

--

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY TWO

Here is a scenario.

You are asked by another staff member to go to the storeroom and do a product inventory count.

You are handed the inventory stock sheets and quickly told what to do.

You are somewhat confused for two reasons, 1) this is not part of your normal duties and 2) the staff member (who is not your supervisor) gave you instructions that were very brief and unclear.

What would you do?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY THREE

What is the difference between instructions and procedures?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY FOUR

If your job responsibilities are unclear to you, what should you do?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE



DISPLAY APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS IN LINE WITH THE ORGANISATIONS CODE OF CONDUCT

It is always said that people not only listen to what you say, but also watch what you do.

If you always act in a way that is courteous and helpful, you will be judged as being a courteous and helpful person.

Everyone likes to be treated with respect and courtesy.

That includes people you work with.

A happy and effective workplace will have employees working in a respectful environment in which they are treated fairly and can focus on getting their work done.

Employees who do their best to be courteous and friendly to other staff, managers and customers make the workplace much more pleasant than those who seek to cause disturbances or drama.

These employees brighten up the store.

They leave their egos and outside problems at the door with the goal of becoming a good worker and trying to maintain a good work atmosphere.



Here are 12 very simple tips for proper, courteous and helpful workplace behaviour:

- 1) Watch your language. Profane language, rude jokes and insensitive comments do not belong in the workplace
- 2) Do not criticise or complain in public. Arguing with a colleague or a supervisor where others can hear makes you look petty and unprofessional. Any problems should be dealt with in private
- 3) If someone you work with does a good job, compliment them
- 4) Stay cool. Take a moment to collect your thoughts and control your emotions before responding to criticism or an annoying staff member. If you gain a reputation for losing your temper, few people will want to work with you
- 5) Respond as promptly as possible to requests for assistance or answers to a question. Making other staff members wait may have an effect on their customer service or completing an important task. If someone is relying on you for information or help, be cooperative
- 6) Avoid interrupting others, especially if they are servicing a customer. If it is important ask “May I interrupt you?”, or “Is this a convenient time for a question?”
- 7) Be aware of the workloads of other staff. Remember, just because it’s a priority for you, does not mean it’s a priority for others
- 8) If you are not busy, look for staff that may use some help from you
- 9) Remember to say “please” and “thank you.” So basic, but so important.
- 10) Respect each other. Clean up after yourself in the staff room. Do not pry into personal information.
- 11) Never gossip
- 12) Be pleasant and cheerful



DISPLAY A NON-DISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDE

In today's workplace, which includes retail operations, staff will be interacting with a very diverse cross-section of people, both fellow employees as well as customers.

Diversity would include:

- ☆ Age and gender
- ☆ People from different cultures, religions or ethnicity
- ☆ Persons with limited English speaking or writing skills
- ☆ Diversity based on sexual preferences
- ☆ Disabled individuals
- ☆ Persons with special needs

When dealing with diversity, the interpersonal skills that are important include:

- ☆ Being genuine
- ☆ Being respectful
- ☆ Being sensitive
- ☆ Showing a positive attitude
- ☆ Caring attitude
- ☆ Attentiveness
- ☆ Problem-solving



Customers from different cultural backgrounds, those with disabilities, age groups and so on need to be treated like any other customer. They need to feel comfortable with the store staff.

They will likely talk to friends and family, therefore store staff need to ensure that they share positive experiences about the retail operation they may visit.

All staff members need to display a non-discriminatory attitude, both to each other as well as to customers.

This non-discriminatory attitude would need to be demonstrated through one's actions and how they communicate.

Diversity in the workplace and with customers should never be looked at as stumbling blocks to displaying non-discriminatory attitudes.

Showing a non-discriminatory attitude will be to everyone's benefit.

**Learning
Activity**

SAMPLE SAMPLE

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY FIVE

What were the twelve tips that we mentioned in this section for proper, courteous and helpful workplace behaviour?

Using simple language, summarise those tips in bullet form.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

SAMPLE SAMPLE

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY SIX

What were the seven interpersonal skills we looked at in this section that help people develop a strong non-discriminatory attitude?

SAMPLE SAMPLE



USE INITIATIVE TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Based on your understanding of your job, it is important you work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

So it will be common for you to develop a work schedule.

A work schedule will assist you in using your time as effectively as possible. The factors you need to consider when developing a work schedule need to include:

- ☆ Your tasks and responsibilities in the store
- ☆ Your own skills and talents
- ☆ Your working environment, such as your working relationship with other store staff
- ☆ The available tools or resources
- ☆ Targets, goals or performance levels that need to be achieved

Let's look at each one in detail.

Tasks and Responsibilities – We learned that when you were hired by the retailer, you would have been told your tasks, responsibilities or duties in a written job description.

Your work schedule would need to include all these tasks or duties, as well as any associated responsibilities.

Skills and Talents - Your work schedule would need to reflect your own skills and talents. This is especially important when you are being trained to do a particular function, or use a specific piece of retail equipment, such as a cash register.

Your schedule would need to include the time required to learn and practise new skills. It will also prevent you from being drawn into tasks where you are not sufficiently skilled and therefore not an efficient use of your time or talents.



Working Environment - Your schedule would need to reflect the environment you are working in, especially including how your duties or tasks interact with other employees, departments or customers.

Your schedule may need to incorporate certain elements of other people's schedules as you may be working as a store's team member, or within a collective group as part of a store department.

Tools and Resources - Your work schedule needs to take into account what tools are available to you such as computers, display tools and other retail or office equipment.

As an example, your task may include the design assembly of product displays. Does your office have proper tools to build display components, or would you need to go to an outside supplier to buy display components?

Resources include the level of supplies, equipment consumables and other items used regularly while performing your duties.

Resources can also include what the retailer provides as far as training is concerned, or whom you may need to go to for assistance.

Targets and Performance Levels - You would need to include any specific targets or performance levels you are expected to achieve in your schedule. Your duties may require you to reach certain performance levels.

As an example, you may be expected to process 50 online customer orders a day.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

LAYING OUT YOUR WORK SCHEDULE

When developing your work schedule you need to know what has to be accomplished and the timeframe required to do so.

A work schedule should be detailed enough to clearly show duties and timing.

The schedule should show short, medium and long term tasks or duties.

A typical work schedule would include daily, weekly and most likely, monthly tasks.

A schedule could look like this.

Work Schedule		
<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Deadlines</i>
Arrive at store, turn on lights	Daily	8:00 AM
Vacuum floors, general cleaning tasks	Daily	8:30PM
Inspect and re-stock shelves and displays	Daily	9:30 AM
Prepare cash float	Daily	9:45 AM
Open doors to customers	Daily	10:00 AM
Inspect displays and make repairs	Weekly	Monday
Clean storeroom	Weekly	Thursday
Prepare staff roster for next week	Weekly	Friday
Staff meeting	Monthly	Beginning first week
Count stock in storeroom	Monthly	Mid first week
Compile stock order ready for approval	Monthly	End first week
Get approval for stock order	Monthly	Beginning second week
Place order for stock order	Monthly	Mid second week

The example shows the regular duties expected of you and deadlines related to those tasks.



PRIORITISING AND COMPLETING TASKS ACCORDING TO REQUIRED TIMEFRAMES

Your work schedule must be flexible.

Our earlier example shows general and expected tasks considered part of a normal daily, weekly and monthly routine.

However everyone knows that normal routines will and do, change.

Everyone is always complaining of the lack of time. They seem to have an overcrowded schedule.

A key in the scheduling process:

“Do not prioritise your schedule – schedule your priorities!”

SAMPLE SAMPLE



PRIORITISING WORK

As time goes on you will begin to get a feel for how long each of your tasks take to complete.

After developing time estimates, ask yourself these questions:

- ☆ Are you spending excessive time on low priority tasks?
- ☆ Would additional training help you to perform tasks more effectively?
- ☆ Are there some tasks that can be delegated?
- ☆ Are you confident that you are managing your time effectively?

Also, as time goes on your skills increase and this leads to greater efficiency in the way you work and use your time.

In most retail operations staff are given additional tasks and your work scheduling needs to cater for these.

This requires you to prioritise your work, or tasks.

Example:

Your routine tasks require you to do the re-stocking of merchandise and cash float – both needing to be completed before the store opens for the day. These tasks would have a high priority.

When developing your work schedule each task would be prioritised from most important, to least important.

You would estimate the time it would take to complete each task and this would show the demands placed on your time.

When requested to perform additional tasks outside your routine you would need to re-prioritise your tasks, ensuring that the most important tasks are still completed.



Another issue to be aware of when prioritising your tasks are your social/family commitments.

You may be in a workplace environment that could overlap into your family, or social time schedules.

In this case you would need to list the tasks that demand some of your time and the order of priority or importance in the family and social areas.

Priorities can change at a moment's notice.

An example – your manager requires the stock order to be done earlier than expected, because of low stock of a certain fast moving product.

This task now affects all the other tasks that would be part of your normal routine.

This now requires you to solve conflicting priorities and related problems arising from changing your priorities.

SAMPLE SAMPLE



PROBLEM SOLVING

To outline and explain problem-solving skills it is best to use an example.

The store manager has told you that the big sale shop held in the previous days has made a specific product critically low in stock.

A stock order needs to be prepared urgently and the supplier contacted and the order placed.

This urgent task places pressure on your other tasks, some of which are considered a high priority.

Because today you only work a half day, it is also quite clear that this urgent task will require you to stay longer at work by at least two hours and this causes a potential problem with a family commitment.

You have some problems to solve.

Your first important task is the cash float. It is clear that you will not be able to do this, so you ask your manager to re-delegate this task this one time.

The second important task is the re-stocking. You ask a colleague to assist by re-stocking the shelves for you.

You have a child in a day care facility and because it is likely you will need to stay longer at work, you would need to arrange for your child to be picked up by the other parent, relative or friend.

With these problems solved, you are now free to focus on the new priority.

With this example we have shown how an unexpected change in priorities can affect both work and social/family priorities.

We also have shown you that if the store you work in has a strong team culture, asking for assistance will dramatically relieve any problems that arise from the change in tasks and priorities.



ASK QUESTIONS TO SEEK AND CLARIFY WORKPLACE INFORMATION

In a retail operation all employees will have access to, or be given a substantial amount of workplace information.

This information could include:

- ☆ Details about your role, responsibilities and tasks
- ☆ Policies and procedures
- ☆ Product or service information
- ☆ Training materials
- ☆ Retail equipment user manuals
- ☆ Pricelists

...to name just a few.

This information may be provided either in a written form, or verbally.

It is fair to say that there will be times that when you receive workplace information, not all of it will be clear or understandable to you.

In numerous previous sections we learned the importance of clarifying information you do not understand by asking questions.

This clarifying of information includes both verbal, as well as written information.

Clarity of workplace information is very important to a retailer.

If the staff does not fully understand any workplace information associated with their work, unsafe work practices, mistakes and confusion will occur. This would affect the operation's productivity and an unproductive retail operation will result in financial pressures.

So it is very likely that the retail management would not only welcome, but also insist that you take the time to clarify any workplace information that is not understandable.



There will be times when you are trying to locate workplace information and need assistance accessing the information.

This too would require questioning skills that we have learned about in previous sections.

When seeking workplace information, ensure your questions include the reason why you need the information.

And finally, remember the need for all staff to keep sensitive and private workplace information confidential.



TAKE OPPORTUNITIES OFFER ASSISTANCE

As a team member in a retail operation you will be expected to offer assistance to other team members whenever possible.

This assistance is an important contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of the workplace environment.

The type or level of assistance you are able to offer depends on:

- ☆ Your workload at the time the assistance is requested
- ☆ Your roster
- ☆ Your skills and knowledge

To become a more valued and respected team member, you should look at how you can enhance your level of assistance if, or when asked.

If you have routine tasks, having an efficient work schedule where you can complete those tasks efficiently with time to spare, will allow you to become more available to assist others.

If you tell your supervisor or manager you are able to work extra hours on certain days or extra days during the week, then you will become more available to assist others.

Learning new skills or increasing product knowledge allows you to assist in more ways than if you did not have those skills or knowledge.

Also remember, that offering your assistance does not only mean helping someone do their tasks, it also means assisting them in learning new skills that you may have, or helping them increase their product knowledge.



DEPENDABILITY

Once your offer for assistance has been accepted, the other team member(s) expect you to provide that assistance.

For example, if you offered to help do the store stocktake early Sunday morning, the person managing the stock take would expect you to be there on Sunday morning at the agreed time.

Or, if you agreed to restock the shelves for another team member and this needed to be done before the store opened, then you would be expected to stock those shelves in the agreed timeframe.

So it is important to understand what is required of you before agreeing to assist others.

If the request for assistance seems unreasonable, it is often better to politely say no, or negotiate a level of assistance that would achieve the outcomes the other team member(s) would be agreeable to.

Trying to help someone with unreasonable deadlines or tasks you are not capable of doing, could cause far more issues/problems than if you did not offer assistance at all.

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY SEVEN

After assigning time estimates to all your tasks in the work schedule, what questions should you ask after reviewing the work schedule?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY EIGHT

Why is it important to have flexibility in your work schedule?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY NINE

What are the five factors that need to be considered when developing a work schedule?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY TEN

In this section we listed six common types of retail workplace information.

What were those six examples?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY ELEVEN

The type or level of assistance you are able to offer depends on what?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

**Learning
Activity**

Question

LEARNING ACTIVITY TWELVE

What does it mean to be dependable?

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SAMPLE SAMPLE

SELF ASSESSMENT

Self assessment is where you ask yourself certain questions to ensure you have understood what you have learned while reading this manual and completing the learning activities.

This unit requires you the student or trainee at the completion of your training to have a certain level of 'Required Knowledge' in which you would be need to have acquired and in which you will be assessed on.

This self assessment section reviews this required knowledge by way of questions and if you are able to say YES to all of them you can be confident your assessment will be satisfactory.

- ☆ Do you remember what types of policies and procedures manuals are important parts of running a business?
- ☆ Do you recall the differences between the working schedule of the following;
 - a) Casual Employees?
 - b) Part Time Employees?
 - c) Full Time Employees?
- ☆ Are you able to explain some of the rights and responsibilities an employer has within the workplace environment?
- ☆ Can you describe why it is a benefit for all staff members to be aware of other employees' special skills?
- ☆ Are you able to understand what areas in regard to its standards and values a retail operation would adopt in order to avoid problems in the workplace?
- ☆ Can you recall some of the various tips to adopt in order to become a proper, courteous and helpful employee?
- ☆ Are you able to explain why it is so important to be a dependable team member, in regards to offering assistance to other team members?
- ☆ Do you know what three factors a staff member should know in order to complete an allocated task that was new to them?
- ☆ Can you describe what can happen if a staff member does not ask for assistance when completing a task that is new to them?
- ☆ Are you able to understand the reason why a team member would need to use questions in order to clarify any instructions or responsibilities they are unsure of?
- ☆ Do you remember what types of interpersonal skills retail staff should show in order to display a non-discriminatory attitude to customers or their staff members?
- ☆ Can you describe how the uniform for a food retailer would differ from that of a fashion clothing store?

- ☆ Are you able to explain how staff members can improve their personnel hygiene in the following areas?
 - a) Skincare?
 - b) Hand Care?
 - c) Hair Care?
 - d) Dental Hygiene?
 - e) Foot Care?
 - f) Habits?
- ☆ Do you know where to look for additional information when trying to complete a new task successfully?
- ☆ Can you describe how an issue of workplace discrimination, bullying and or harassment can be dealt with by using;
 - a) Informal Complaint Procedures?
 - b) Formal Complaint Procedures?
- ☆ Are you able to understand why it is essential to use questioning skills in order to help clarify workplace information?
- ☆ Do you remember how the following factors can be considered to assist in making a work schedule;
 - a) Tasks and Responsibilities?
 - b) Skills and Talents?
 - c) Working Environment?
 - d) Tools and Resources?
 - e) Targets and Performance Levels?
- ☆ Can you recall how using 'Problem Solving' skills can assist in prioritising task work schedules?

If there were any questions that you were unable to confidently say YES to, we encourage you to review the information again in this manual and if needed seek the assistance of your teacher or trainer.

NOTES

SAMPLE SAMPLE