

# ASVET Conference 2021 Panel 2

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## Linking Education, Training and Employment

This panel aimed to discuss the skills built during study and how these skills can be successfully transferred to sustainable employment outcomes. As an imperative, it is critical that people explore their broader pathway to employment during their time studying.

Panellists included representatives from a range of education, education support organisations and employment services from across Melbourne and regionally.

Prior to the conference the panellists were asked to consider three questions:

1. When someone comes to speak with you about their identified pathway in education, and/or employment, what strengths are you excited about?
2. When identifying success factors for study and work we recognise that many individuals make extraordinary efforts. But what do we do when people are struggling? Are there any tools or strategies that you find particularly helpful for students in these situations?
3. We know that the goal of ASVET students is to enter the job market and find secure and reliable work. What are some of the 'hands-on' or experiential work-readiness strategies and /or opportunities that support the successful transition from study to employment?

### Question 1: What strengths are you excited about?

- Positive attitude, motivation, hope and initiative – which can be recognized by their enthusiasm to do work outside of appointments as well as the research they have already done when they present to an appointment.
- Development or a developing mixture of short-, medium- and long-term goals, and students are able to see valuable skills that can be or have been built in seemingly unrelated fields such as working in the cleaning social enterprise as they pursue another industry.
- Self-awareness of their skills and strengths as well as skills they need to build.
- Awareness of their environment; Knowing here they are limited and in what circumstances they can have control. By taking control in circumstances where possible, participants have expressed they were able to see their own progress and felt empowered.

### Question 2: What do we do when people are struggling?

- Create clear opportunities for people to ask for advice as they adjust to new systems; not assuming any prior knowledge of Australian education and employment services, with the understanding that there is no such thing as a bad question.
- Maintain an understanding that there can be cultural differences in how a person feels comfortable asking for help and creating multiple channels to ask for help, for example a survey someone can do in their own time, face to face, feedback from others such as managers, teachers.
- Targeted and individual support such as individual pathway plans, self- assessments and/or mentoring.
- Create an understanding that progress is not a straight line. Ideally this understanding is cultivated before a participant begins pursuing their chosen pathway

- Reassurance when students become frustrated with the speed of their progress, both in their studies and their career pathway.
- Encouragement when setbacks are experienced such as unsuccessful application for a course, scholarship or job. Continue to urge participants to explore why they were unsuccessful and identify actions to improve their chances next time.
- Create confidence in prior knowledge by identifying skills and values the student has already developed and that are transferrable. Assuring students that they do know things.
- The importance of building trust and safety -not 'fail-safe' systems but systems where it is 'safe to fail'. Examples included providing tasters in a field or industry through a day of volunteering or in a social enterprise, rather than enrolling straight in an accredited course so participants can gauge their skills, abilities and commitment.
- The importance of providers following through with actions and checking in regularly to foster trust, reliability and respect.

### **Question 3: What are some of the 'hands-on' or experiential work-readiness strategies**

This question was prefaced with the knowledge that people seeking asylum face substantial barriers to employment which are often governed by factors out of their control. The panellists' responses included;

- Organise warm referrals with students included in the referral process, for example cc'd into emails. This point identified the importance of networking and activities such as the ASVET conference to improve the connections between organisations and agencies; to better assist people seeking asylum explore multiple opportunities.
- Individual strategies that utilise the person's agency and control over their transition to work as much as possible, while still offering support.
- Support into employment such as brokered employment opportunities.
- Partnerships with not for profits and social enterprises.
- Training and mentoring support for employers looking to hire people seeking asylum.
- Continued support post-employment in the first six months of employment to address specific challenges or barriers.
- Encourage participants to explore and understand possible pathways in the job market before they start studying.
- If possible, encourage participant to volunteer in their chosen industry before finishing the course. It was mentioned that few people seeking asylum have the resources to spend time unemployed and looking for work after finishing the course. It is important to stress the importance of local work experience and encourage students to study at a pace that would allow them to gain experience as they study. Stressing the importance of showing initiative and the ability to collaborate while gaining work experience.
- Focus on improving networking and communicating skills and other transferrable soft skills for finding work.