



DEVELOPING A SUPPORTED RETURNER PROGRAM

- Program Principles and structural elements
- Design Template
- Program Checklist

Program principles and structural elements

A successful returner program considers business, team, and individual requirements. Guiding principles and influencing factors are outlined below.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL Programs are designed to meet business and individual needs	FLEXIBLE Programs are flexible, supporting the diverse needs and requirements of returners	SUPPORTIVE Returners, managers, and employees are supported to ensure a valuable and positive experience	STRENGTHS BASED Returners are valued for the skills and experience they bring and are given opportunities to shine
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DESIGN FEATURES

Infrastructure

- Businesses provide Returners with the tools they need to succeed, including laptops, equipment, internet connection, and facilities.
- Facilities cater to the needs of men and women.

Valued skills and experience

- The professional experience and skills of returners are valued and showcased by the program.
- Returners are paid at a competitive rate, which is consistent with their skills, experience, and level of work undertaken.
- Managers are prepared and able to accommodate flexible working requests.

Supportive ecosystems

- Business leaders own, sponsor, and advance returner programs and the participants.
- Returners have access to a 'support ecosystem' to aid professional self-belief, including a team manager, team buddy, HR 'business partner,' mentor and learning and development coaching.
- Returners receive adequate role-specific training to support the professional development of the returner.

Job design

- Flexible job design enables returners to balance ongoing caring responsibilities with work requirements.
- There is a focus on essential skills or shared company values rather than recent skills and experience.
- The position is or has the potential to be ongoing.
- There is a consideration of the long-term retention and career pathways of returners.

Feedback and growth

- There are opportunities for constructive and meaningful feedback throughout the program (for both the returner and the business).
- The business adopts a growth mindset, adjusting the program and supports for returners as required.
 - There are opportunities for accelerated development and promotion for the returner beyond the completion of the returner program.

Motivation

- The business case for returners has been clearly articulated to leaders, managers, and employees.
- Line managers and employees are engaged with the program and are excited to bring new talent into the team.

Design Template

Drag and drop tiles to develop your high-level supported program framework.

RATIONALE:

For example, KN actively seeks women returning to work following a career break to bring a fresh perspective to project management within the business.

PLACEMENT TYPE	PROGRAM TIMING	INTAKE	AREA AND NATURE OF WORK	PRE-INTERVIEW SUPPORT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role specific program 2. Balance of general and specific placements within the business 3. Broad exposure with a view to finding more specific placements later on 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. 3 months 5. 6 months 6. Direct Recruit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Group program (and number in group) 8. Individual program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Line manager or supervisor 10. Lower level role to build skills and knowledge 11. Senior roles with inbuilt supports 12. Part-time role 13. Full-time role 14. Work from home arrangements 15. Job share 16. Flexible start and finish time 17. Compressed hours 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Supportive webinar 19. Pre-interview workshop 20. Written interview guidance 21. Familiarisation days 22. Pre-interview coaching 23. Personalised feedback for unsuccessful candidates

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EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS	INDUCTION	ONGOING SUPPORT	FEEDBACK AND GROWTH
<p>24. Structured assessor training offered prior to interview</p> <p>25. Training for line managers including structure and objectives of the program, common concerns felt by returners and how best to support returners throughout the program</p>	<p>26. Standard new employee induction</p> <p>27. Tailored induction</p> <p>28. Introductory sessions with other returners, working parents or new employees</p> <p>29. Identify training requirements during induction process</p> <p>30. Expectation setting with manager – including targets, timeframes and how success will be measured</p>	<p>31. Buddy</p> <p>32. Mentor</p> <p>33. HR meet and greet</p> <p>34. Coach (individual or group)</p> <p>35. Skills update sessions</p> <p>36. Weekly coffee with different business areas</p>	<p>37. Initial goal setting with manager</p> <p>38. Midway goal check-in</p> <p>39. Final goal setting session with discussion about permanency</p> <p>40. Survey returner, manager and team members to determine how they found the program</p>

Program checklist

Before signing off on your program, use the following checklist to ensure you have covered all aspects of a returner program.

PLACEMENT TYPE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Existing skills of returners are valued and showcased by the placement in the business and program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The returner will gain access to suitable work which makes the most of their professional experience and skills and can be reflected on their CV.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Returners are paid at a competitive rate which is consistent with their skills, experience and level of work undertaken.
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is pay parity with existing employees (male and female).

PROGRAM TIMING	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The timing of the program is adequate to enable the returner to prove their skills on the job.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The program is timed to avoid peak times of year, to enable managers to support returners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offers for the program are made with adequate time to enable returners who are carers to make arrangements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The program does not conflict with peak caring times (including school holidays) which may make it difficult for returners to participate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The hiring manager has adequate time to assess the suitability of returners for ongoing roles.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The program is likely to finish at a time where there are permanent positions available for the returner.

INTAKE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Program design reflects number of participants (cohort or individual).

AREA AND NATURE OF WORK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The program has been designed on a flexible basis or can incorporate flexibility.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career pathway have been considered, including stepping stone approaches to support returners to transition into the business.

PRE-INTERVIEW SUPPORT

- Returners are provided with support throughout the application and interview process.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

- Individuals assessing and interviewing returners have received training.
- Managers are aware of the structure and objectives of the program.
- Managers are prepared and able to accommodate flexible working requests.
- Managers and business units are engaged with the program, excited to bring talent into the team and are prepared.

INDUCTION

- Expectations have been set by the manager.
- Training requirements have been identified.

ONGOING SUPPORT

- The returner has the tools they need to succeed: laptops, equipment, internet connection and facilities.
- Returners will receive adequate role specific training.
- Returners have a 'support ecosystem' including a team manager, team buddy, HR business partner, mentor, and learning and developing coaches.

FEEDBACK AND GROWTH

- The business has considered how individual performance will be evaluated. Ideally performance will be based on outputs (results) rather than inputs (time spent on the job).
- There are opportunities for constructive and meaningful feedback throughout the program.