

Pathology Assistant



An Australian School-based Apprenticeship Case Study Industry Skills Council

An ASBA pathway into the health industry

The Queensland Health Pathology Services, based at the Nambour General Hospital on the Sunshine Coast, has had a number of Australian School-based Apprentices (ASBA) and finds the arrangement works well for them.

Nic Simon, a Year 12 student from the Pacific Lutheran School, is a current ASBA. He's completing the Certificate III in Pathology Assistance and works one day a week in the laboratory helping prepare specimens for testing, assisting with administration and reception work.

Students from Pacific Lutheran College can take on a modified timetable that allows them to spend one day a week at work and if they wish, they can do an ASBA pathway on top of a study program that will allow them to be eligible for university entry.

At a glance

- An ASBA arrangement with one employer, one student and a RTO.
- Students do a minimum of 48 days on-the-job each year in both Year 11 and 12, and complete their theory work in addition to this, either at school or in their time. They usually begin the ASBA early in Year 11 and complete in 24 months. (Note: Other states and territories have different arrangements for ASBA rules for hours etc).
- Students work either one day a week (or equivalent) and sometimes during school holidays, or weekends on a casual basis.
- The RTO is Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE. They provide a flexible mode of delivery with workbooks and email/phone assistance. Nic has a Workplace Supervisor and staff at the Laboratory help both with on-the-job training and theory-based tasks. Assessment is in the workplace with staff who have workplace assessor qualifications.

Key outcomes

Nic will receive a Certificate III in Pathology Assistance when he completes his ASBA, and will find it easy to gain employment in Pathology Services.

When Nic finishes he hopes to get work directly as a Pathology Assistant at the Nambour General Hospital. He also has the option of continuing with further studies in Pathology Collection, or choosing from a range of Health Technician courses at Certificate IV level and Diploma level. The practical skills he has learnt will give him a head start.

Nic says working at the Hospital's pathology service is "a great experience and very hands on." He enjoys the practical side, especially preparing specimens for testing and gets to do admin and reception work too. He feels the ASBA program has made a difference. "I understand the infrastructure and how it all works, and enjoy the responsibility," he says.



CAREER FACTS

- *ASBA Qualification: Certificate III Health Assistance (Pathology Assistance)*
- *Jobs: Work as a Pathology Assistant or Laboratory Aide or Specimen Reception Assistant*
- *Career Pathway: Further study Certificate IV Pathology Collection or range of Health Technician courses*

"Students become very helpful and it is a positive outcome for both the student and the laboratory. The experience certainly gives them a head start."

Julieanne Lucas
Workplace Supervisor
Queensland Health Pathology Services

Further information

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