Overview of the USEP model in application for prospective Disability Employment Services partner organisations

The University Specialist Employment Partnerships (USEP) model is a scalable pilot to determine what happens when we embed a suitably qualified consultant on university campuses to work directly with graduating students with disability to find them a graduate job. USEP will build local and national partnerships around each university and partner. This model relies on Disability Employment Services (DES) outcome payments received post-graduation to support the upfront investment of partner organisations who provide a consultant for USEP.

Prospective partners will be organisations willing to invest in research and development in the specialist area of graduate employment for students with disability, and those who would like to build organisational experience and competency working on campus to improve employment rates for graduates with disability.

Working independently of any DES servicing requirements, the USEP consultant is able to put their whole focus into working on campus to prepare and place students. They will work in partnership with university and faculty staff to approach employers and work with peak bodies and JobAccess to promote graduate employment opportunities for people with disability for their host university. The model is developed so that the USEP consultant has the ability to learn from the university’s graduate careers and disability support teams, communicate frequently with USEP project leads and other pilot consultants and share learnings with partner organisations and their host universities.

This is a long-term partnership model which involves sharing with and learning from other consultants and campuses involved in USEP, including creating and sharing national relationships. It is structured to ensure the consultant is embedded in the university and the partner organisations build strong and enduring relationships while working towards improving graduate employment outcomes for students with disability.

All data gained and agreed upon with USEP parameters will be released in public reports for the purposes of encouraging and informing government employment policy and funding to improve graduate outcome rates for students with disability. Organisations’ individual results will not be released unless approved and/or requested.

Any employer relationships established by the USEP consultant in conjunction with their role are to be first primarily utilised to benefit the students and future graduates of the university. We acknowledge that in small markets and regions your organisation will interact with employers who are working with your USEP consultant. We encourage good communication within your organisation to ensure that frontline employment consultants are aware of the relationships of the USEP consultant. This avoids confusing an employer with multiple and different conversations within your organisation.

# **Rules of engagement**

DES providers entering into this partnership must be prepared to provide a DES consultant who has the expertise and skills to work with university graduates. The organisation understands that all initial work provided by the (DES) USEP consultant will not be funded and will not be part of their current DES contract. Income will not be obtained until students in the program graduate and commence employment.

The expertise and knowledge of the USEP consultant will be drawn from their work as a DES consultant, but it is important to note that when the USEP consultant is on campus the role is NOT to deliver DES services. As the USEP consultant is not bound by DES contractual obligations and restrictions, they will be required to be innovative, forward-thinking, problem solvers with excellent communication skills to interact successfully in the university setting and to obtain graduate/internship positions with appropriate employers.

Students engaging with the USEP consultant will not be registered with the DES provider until after graduation. If the student chooses to register with the DES before this time, then any DES activity must happen with a DES consultant and this will take place off campus.

The USEP consultant will immerse themselves into the university’s career space, sharing knowledge and resources and drawing on the university’s expertise in graduate employment. They will work with the university to assist the student in preparing for employment, including developing the student's CV, advising them on use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn, assisting with selection criteria and sourcing suitable work experience opportunities.

We encourage positive communication between all parties within relationships created by the USEP consultant with businesses on behalf of the university, or in conjunction with the university. This is to ensure the relationship is managed professionally and at a strategic level.

The USEP consultant and organisation are careful to ensure knowledge and relationships obtained by being on campus are not misdirected or misused – acting with integrity and ensuring open lines of communication between all partners is essential.

The partners will work together to create a best-practice guide for DES and the university to work towards the common goal of improving graduate employment rates for students with disability in Australia.

For queries, please contact us via the website: <https://www.usep.com.au/>