



Clubhouse International

Creating Community: Changing the World of Mental Health

2025 Employment Guidelines Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Introduction

Work is central to recovery in the Clubhouse Model of Psychosocial Rehabilitation and assisting members to obtain meaningful, paid employment in the broader community is one of the ways the model supports recovery and social inclusion. The Employment Guidelines help Clubhouses deliver consistent, high-quality opportunities that engage members, strengthen partnerships, and reflect the model's commitment to ensuring access to meaningful employment for members.

This FAQ addresses common questions about the purpose, use, and implementation of the Employment Guidelines, particularly in the Clubhouse International Accreditation process, offering guidance about maintaining fidelity to the Clubhouse model and the core principles of Clubhouse employment.

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| Q | 1. Why do we have Employment Guidelines? |
| A | The Employment Guidelines exist to support Clubhouses in developing robust employment programs that align with the International Standards for Clubhouse Programs™. They ensure consistency in how employment efforts are understood and assessed across the global Clubhouse community, particularly during the Accreditation process. The guidelines reflect the Clubhouse model's core belief that meaningful work is essential to recovery. |
| Q | 2. Where can I find the guidelines? |
| A | The Clubhouse International Employment Guidelines are available in the Employment Toolkit on the Clubhouse International portal. They are also included in the pre-Accreditation packet the Clubhouse receives once the Accreditation application and fee have been submitted, and included in the comprehensive Clubhouse training manual. |
| Q | 3. How are the guidelines used? |
| A | The Employment Guidelines are used by the Clubhouse International Faculty for Clubhouse Development to evaluate employment Standards during the Accreditation process. They help assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The diversity, quality, and quantity of employment opportunities across the entire spectrum of Clubhouse employment (Transitional, Supported, and Independent Employment).• How employment is integrated into the Clubhouse unit structure.• The effectiveness of job development efforts.• Documentation and outreach to employers.• Current external factors like economic conditions, job losses, and benefits systems that may impact a Clubhouse's employment system. |

Q 4. How often are the Employment Guidelines revised?

A There is no fixed schedule, but revisions are made when needed, based on input from:

- Surveys of Clubhouses, Training Centers, and Faculty.
- Emerging economic trends or changes in the global employment landscape.
- Feedback from Accreditation processes highlighting common challenges.

The 2025 update reflects significant global changes following the COVID-19 pandemic and introduces a more qualitative, holistic approach to employment assessment. The Clubhouse International Faculty Group regularly reviews and refines best practices.

Q 5. How are the percentages determined?

A The employment percentages in the Clubhouse International Guidelines were established to be both ambitious and achievable. When first introduced, the guidelines recommended that at least 50% of the Clubhouse average daily Work-Ordered Day attendance (ADA-WOD) was engaged in Standards-consistent jobs, and a minimum of 25% of the Clubhouse ADA-WOD was working on Transitional Employment placements in the labor market. About ten years later, the Transitional Employment (TE) target was adjusted to 20% to reflect ongoing feedback from the Clubhouse community.

These quantitative guidelines were initially developed approximately 20 years ago by surveying Clubhouses worldwide, and they have been reviewed consistently – most recently in 2025 – to ensure they remain relevant, challenging, and attainable. This process is informed by the reality that globally, around 80% of adults with serious mental illness are unemployed. In practice, the percentages are reassessed approximately every ten years or as needed, based on community feedback and evolving evidence.

Q 6. What’s the difference between Supported Employment (SE) and Independent Employment (IE) and how are they reviewed in the Accreditation process?

A The key distinction lies in the *relationship with the employer, as outlined in Standard 23.*

| SE (Supported Employment) | IE (Independent Employment) |
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| Clubhouse maintains an ongoing relationship with the employer. | Clubhouse does not have a formal relationship with the employer. |
| Clubhouse offers on-site and off-site support to both the member and the employer. | Support is offered only to the member, as needed. |
| The employer recognizes the Clubhouse as a partner in the employment process. | The employer is not aware of the Clubhouse as an employment support system for the member. |

If there is no contact with the employer, the job is considered Independent Employment – even if member support is robust.

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| Q | 7. What are “competitive integrated job placements”? |
| A | <p>These are jobs that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are in inclusive work settings (not segregated or exclusively for people with disabilities). 2. Offer the same wage, benefits, expectations, employment conditions and career development opportunities as jobs held by others without disabilities. 3. Affirm the Clubhouse’s commitment to full societal integration for its members. |

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| Q | 8. What does it mean to integrate employment into the unit structure? |
| A | <p>Integrating employment into the unit structure means that employment is a visible, collective responsibility within the Clubhouse – not a specific staff responsibility. Faculty look to find that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment efforts are shared by staff and members and organized through the unit structure. ● Unit boards and meetings highlight job development work, employer contacts, and support strategies. ● Job development is seen as ongoing Clubhouse work, not separate programming. ● Supporting and celebrating employed members is an integral function of the unit. ● Unit meetings include opportunities for members to work on employment goals and request support. |

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| Q | 9. How do Clubhouses document job development efforts? |
| A | <p>Effective documentation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employer outreach logs (contacts, meetings, follow-ups), for example using the Clubhouse International Job Development Tracking Form. ● Records of job leads and placement outcomes. ● Notes on member participation in job development activities. ● Examples of employment-related tasks or projects on the unit workboard ● Meeting agendas focused on employment. ● Member survey(s) about their employment interests and needs to inform job development efforts <p>This documentation demonstrates that the Clubhouse is proactively cultivating opportunities and maintaining consistent follow-up with potential employers. This remains a continuous and intentional focus.</p> |

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| Q | 10. What if all our Transitional Employment (TE) placements are with our auspice agency? |
| A | <p>A strong TE program represents the Clubhouse’s broader community integration, not just internal partners. While having placements within the auspice agency can be a helpful starting point, Standard #22 highlights that it’s also important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand placements into the broader community to reflect diversity, reduce stigma and ensure integration. ● Demonstrate a range of industries, environments, job types and employers to better meet the interests of the diverse membership ● Avoid reliance on a single source of TE opportunities, since dependence on one partner creates vulnerability if that source is lost due to business changes, economic shifts, or other unforeseen circumstances. |

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| Q | 11. What does it mean that Accreditation considers "Clubhouses that attract an unusually high percentage of their active membership on a daily basis"? |
| A | <p>“Unusually high average daily attendance (ADA)” refers to Clubhouses that engage a notably large portion of their 90-day active membership on a daily basis. The Accreditation process views high ADA as a key indicator of a vibrant Clubhouse community; this high level of engagement is considered alongside all other employment guideline factors in the holistic Accreditation review and affirmatively noted in the final report.</p> |

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| Q | 12. What if we don’t provide absence coverage in TE? |
| A | <p>Absence coverage is a foundational element of the TE model. However, if absence coverage isn’t possible due to employer policies, the Clubhouse:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintains regular communication with employers. 2. Documents efforts to sustain the partnership. 3. Demonstrates that the Clubhouse – not the member – is seen as the job position holder, ensuring that the placement is available for multiple members over time. 4. Explores ways to preserve job security and reliability. 5. Ensures that the employer sees the value and benefit of the partnership <p>Maintaining a log of employer contacts and regular check-ins helps demonstrate the strength of these relationships and provides meaningful work for the unit to track and document.</p> |

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| Q | 13. What if my country or region has laws or economic conditions that make it difficult to implement a Standards-based employment program, such as Transitional Employment (TE), and what should a Clubhouse do to respond to these challenges? |
| A | <p>While local laws, economic conditions, or benefits systems may make TE challenging, providing entry-level, highly supported employment opportunities for members with significant vocational challenges is a core value and pillar of the Clubhouse model. Accreditation considers local challenges in its holistic review, and Faculty will look for evidence of how the Clubhouse ensures these opportunities are available to members.</p> <p>It is important for Clubhouses to document these challenges in the Self-Study, describe any legal or economic restrictions, and show how they adapt the employment program to remain faithful to TE principles. Faculty will look for placements that are designed for members facing significant vocational challenges – entry-level, highly supported, foster strong employer-Clubhouse partnerships – as well as evidence of advocacy to reduce systemic barriers and ongoing efforts to expand meaningful work opportunities for members.</p> <p>Even in the context of specific regional challenges, when a TE program or other highly supported placement opportunities are not in place, Faculty will make a recommendation and provide helpful suggestions in Standard 22 to guide the Clubhouse toward alignment with the model’s employment expectations.</p> |

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| Q | 14. How do we show advocacy around restrictive benefits systems? |
| A | <p>Rather than simply concluding that TE is not feasible, Clubhouses that actively engage in advocacy or policy initiatives, collaborate within the coalition (if available), and work to address systemic barriers to employment, demonstrate a strong commitment to the Employment Standards and to supporting members’ right to meaningful work. Such efforts are formally recognized in the employment section of the Accreditation process.</p> <p>Clubhouses are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner with disability rights organizations or employment coalitions. ● Participate in public policy work related to income supports and work disincentives. ● Educate policymakers about the barriers to returning to work. ● Document advocacy efforts in the Self-Study and Accreditation materials. ● Educate and support members about the option and process of eliminating government benefits. |