

Work Experience

A Guide for Employers



What is a work experience placement

A placement with an employer in which a young person carries out a range of tasks in much the same way as an employee, with the emphasis on learning from the experience. Work experience provides opportunities for learning about the skills, behaviours, careers, roles and structures that exist within a workplace.

How long is a work experience placement

Most students will spend one or two weeks with an employer (Block placement), though on occasions, employers may assist with a placement for 1 or 2 days a week (Extended placement) over a longer period of time, perhaps even a school term or more.

Students eligible to take part in work experience

Students who, by their age, are in the last 2 years of compulsory schooling i.e. 15 years old by 31st August in the Academic Year of the placement, can take part in work experience.

Is work experience of benefit to employers

Apart from making a real difference to a young person's working life, offering work experience is beneficial to employers for a number of reasons.

- Recruitment opportunities, by seeing a young person who could be a future employee
- Staff Development for an experienced employee who learns how to give training and support to someone on work experience
- A more engaged workforce by improving the employees' experience of the company
- Engagement in the local community through supporting a local school or college
- Contribution to economic development in the local area, by helping young people with their career development.

How do students benefit from a work experience placement

Work experience supports young people to make career decisions, develop employability skills and support successful transition into college, university, apprenticeships, and the workplace.

- More confidence and Improved self esteem
- Ability to communicate with adults
- Improved timekeeping
- Additional practical work skills
- Team Working
- Problem Solving Skills
- Time management and organisation
- Clarifies job roles within industry
- Broadens horizons in relation to career routes and job roles available

What type of work can students do

There are very few occupational placements that are prohibited to a student. The emphasis is always on trying to provide an interesting and well-balanced placement with real tasks accompanied by real responsibility. In some cases, legislation imposes restrictions on the type of work which students can do, these restrictions are designed to protect students from harm through tasks that are unsuitable for them. Due to a student's inexperience and age some tasks may only be completed under strict supervision or may, in exceptional circumstances, be observation only. If you are in any doubt, contact the Work Experience Team at EBP South.

What hours can a student work whilst on work experience

Students should not work for more than 5 days in any consecutive seven-day period and it is a requirement that students should not work more than a standard eight-hour day or forty hours in a week. They should not work excessively long hours or unnecessarily unsocial hours. The number of hours worked together with the pattern of work is normally a matter of agreement by the employer, school and student. Some industries work on shift basis or work evenings, nightshifts. please discuss this with student and ensure travel arrangements suit later working.

Are there are particular Health & Safety considerations

EBP South will undertake a 'placement suitability check'. This will include confirming contact details, finding out about the tasks a student will do on a placement and some questions in relation to the health and safety of work experience and that of the business.

What insurance cover is required

Students on a work experience placement are treated as employees for the purposes of insurance against bodily injury. Therefore, the employer must have 'Employers Liability Insurance' in place.

What should an induction include

- A comprehensive induction should be given to students on their first day and should include, as a minimum:
- Orientation taking into account emergency arrangements (fire, accident and first aid)
- Any significant risks which may affect them e.g. machinery, equipment, manual handling, hazardous substances, slips/trips, dealing with the public.
- Control measures e.g. safe systems of work, supervision, use of PPE, signs and notices.
- Supervision and key contacts in the organisation.
- Restrictions and prohibitions in the workplace
- Reporting accidents and "near misses".
- Welfare arrangements such as breaks, toilets, eating/drinking arrangements.
- Company Health and Safety policy and Risk Assessments.
- Any other "do's" and "don't's".

Top tips for a successful work experience

- Meet the young person before the work placement starts.
- Discuss objectives and expectations.
- Agree suitable work tasks to give an understanding of your organisation.
- Devise a work plan and timetable of activities.
- Prepare a risk assessment appropriate to age and work to be done.
- Ensure significant risks are communicated to the school and the Work Experience team at EBP South.
- Plan an induction programme.
- Identify a supervisor and mentor.
- Review progress during the work placement.
- Provide feedback to the student and school.
- **Notify the school immediately of any absence.**