

WORK EXPERIENCE WORKS

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



Thomas Telford School
Careers Department

According to the Chartered Institute of Personal Development, Work experience works!

It works for students, who get the opportunity to participate in the world of work and gain practical experience that will enable them to believe and prove that they can be valuable and productive members of the workforce.

It works for employers, who see work experience as vital in providing a talent pipeline for their business.

It works for the wider economy and society, as it brings more people into work and helps to prevent our students leaving education without a positive destination.

The government has placed a responsibility on schools and employers to ensure that all students in their first year of sixth form study engage in a period of work experience, because they recognise that employers and schools both have a role to play in building the transition from the world of work into education. These valuable experiences help equip our students with the tools they need to enhance their employability skills. It also helps them to make informed choices about their future.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2012

THOMAS TELFORD SCHOOL

WORK EXPERIENCE QUALITY CHARTER

Work experience placements that work have positive outcomes for the employer, the student and society. They are voluntary placements, but they still need to be based around some key principles the employer and the student both adhere to.

The Careers Team at Thomas Telford School are committed to working with employers to offer consistently high-quality experience placements in which:

- 1.** The placement is tailored to the student's needs and circumstances. This includes finding out what the student wants to get out of the placement, which skills they want to develop, what barriers they face and what their career aspirations are.
- 2.** There is clarity about the role that the student plays in the organisation and how they will be supported, supervised and mentored within the placement.
- 3.** Expectations are managed, the student knows what they will contribute, whether there are any job opportunities or not and how the placement might be able to help the student to build their CV.
- 4.** The student is treated as an active member of staff, but the placement is not used to fill a vacancy.
- 5.** The student is introduced to the structure of working life; they are helped to learn and to develop a range of transferable skills, personal qualities and competencies which will contribute towards their employability.
- 6.** Success is celebrated and the student has an enjoyable and positive work experience that encourages them to become more confident in their abilities.
- 7.** The student is encouraged to relate their experiences and skills to the workplace and supported in making a more informed decision about their future. They receive open and honest feedback about what went well and what areas need to be improved and, if possible, advice on how to do this.
- 8.** Employers clearly explain to the student up front what their expectations are: show an interest in the organisation and the industry and make the most of the opportunity; demonstrate a willingness to learn; respect the values of the host organisation; and abide by the rules.
- 9.** Placement hosts work closely with the student to make sure they use the placement to find out about the different employment options available and how to access them, including recruitment processes, and hosts support them in building a network of contacts.
- 10.** Placement hosts have an integrated approach to working with, investing in, recruiting and developing young people, with work experience placements being a part of the commitment to help students to access and progress within their chosen sector.

OUR GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

WHY USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide provides you with information about the practical steps you need to take to set up high-quality work experience placements, along with advice on how to support, supervise and mentor the student in order to maximise the benefits of the placement.

WHAT IS WORK EXPERIENCE?

Work experience is an opportunity to introduce our students to the reality of working life within a willing organisation, to help them to secure and sustain employment. The aim is to provide learning and insight into working life by exposing the student to a variety of tasks and experiences. This will be for a limited period of time during which individuals have an opportunity to learn directly about the working environment.

WHY GET INVOLVED?

Work experience can help break the cycle of 'no experience, no job' and assist students to make competitive applications for higher education, apprenticeships and employment. It can also help to challenge perceptions of young people's skills and attitudes, give students access to networks and help them to make more informed career choices.

THE BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

Work experience placements enable you to access a wider range of talent and engage with your community, potentially with a view to employing more young people as part of your workforce in the longer term. Offering work experience placements can also make a useful contribution to your strategic talent management and workforce planning. Our students can offer new ideas and fresh ways of thinking, reflecting the interests and needs of the next generation of customers and consumers. Furthermore, it can be an opportunity for staff development with potential for management opportunities, because staff can act as 'buddies' or mentors.

HEALTH & SAFETY, RISK ASSESSMENT, INSURANCES

Under health and safety law, work experience students are your employees. You treat them no differently to other young people you employ. Simply use your existing arrangements for assessments and management of risks to young people. If you have fewer than five employees you are not required to have a written risk assessment. A member of the Thomas Telford School Careers team will provide you with a form to complete that asks you to confirm your liability insurance and review any risks that the student may be exposed to. For further information please visit

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm>

Process for 6:1 work experience

For school sourced placements

1. Advertise placements to students
2. Student contacts the department requesting a placement.
3. Send the student request for work experience letter and the work experience request form to student for completion.
4. Student returns completed form to Careers department to be forwarded to the employer on their behalf along with work experience confirmation form.
5. Completed forms returned to Careers department by employer.
6. The document is checked, risk assessed and any concerns investigated and noted on the form.
7. A copy of the forms is attached to the student's record. A further copy forwarded to student and the original retained.

For student sourced placements

1. The student secures provisional agreement from an employer to host them on work experience.
2. The student sends the request for work experience letter, the work experience request form and work experience confirmation form to the employer for completion.
3. Student returns completed forms to the Careers department.
4. The document is checked, risk assessed and any concerns investigated and noted on the form.
5. A copy of the forms is attached to the student's record. A further copy forwarded to student and the original retained.

HOW WORK EXPERIENCE WORKS FOR EMPLOYERS

Work experience is beneficial for organisations for a number of reasons:

- **Recruitment opportunities:** providing work experience placements can be a way to access the local labour market and explore a talent pipeline that you might not have considered otherwise.
- **Staff development:** supervising and coaching students on work experience offers an excellent opportunity to develop employees' management capabilities, particularly for those who may not normally have any line management responsibilities.
- **A more engaged workforce:** providing work experience sends a positive message to the wider workforce about the values of your organisation, which can support efforts to build employee engagement.
- **Engagement in the local community:** investors, customers, consumers and service users have increasingly strong opinions about the ethical role employers can and should play in society. Work experience placements provide a valuable means of creating a positive image, in which the organisation helps to address social issues related to aspiration in the community.
- **Contribution to economic development in the local area:** by helping to tackle some of the issues around deprivation and youth unemployment.

HOW WORK EXPERIENCE WORKS FOR STUDENTS AND SOCIETY

Work experience can have a hugely positive impact on a student's employability and can play a significant role in attempts to reduce youth unemployment. It can:

- **Break the vicious circle** that many students find themselves in, where they can't get a job because of lack of experience and can't get experience because they can't find a job
- Provide students with an understanding of the structure and reality of **working life**, which is crucial if they are to secure and sustain employment
- **Provide feedback and coaching to enable the student to develop skills**, including those required in specific jobs and sectors
- Help the student to make **informed choices** about their futures and allow them to **learn more about specific industries, organisational cultures and job roles**
- Allow students to gain experience of **working with people**, enhancing their social and communication skills, and awareness of how to present themselves and behave in a work context
- Provide **opportunities to learn** about recruitment processes (such as how to do job interviews and how to apply for a job)
- Provide a **positive experience of the world of work** that builds the student's confidence and motivation
- Help students to **build their CVs** (for instance by providing some formal training) and support them in the **development of networks**.

INDUCTION

Students on work experience should receive an introduction to the workplace that will allow them to integrate better and also help them to learn about working life. Whether joining a large organisation or an SME, a student entering the world of work for the first time may find the workplace intimidating, as they will not know how the workplace functions and how they should behave. A full checklist of induction and health and safety requirements is included for employers to use in the student's work experience log book. The induction is an opportunity to get to know the student; this is where you can start building a good relationship, understand their previous experience, talk about the expectations on each side, identify areas for development, establish the student's goals and allow space for the student to ask questions. It should also include:

- An **introduction to your organisation** (including its history, products and services, culture and values), including how the company is structured and to **key people** who the student on work experience will have contact with
- A **tour of your facilities**, including work areas, where to get food from inside or outside your company, where the nearest toilets are, first aid facilities and where the fire exits are situated, including evacuation procedures; this should also include **health and safety information** (this is a legal requirement)
- A clear outline of what your **requirements and expectations** of the student are, including a discussion of the day-to-day duties that the student will be responsible for (such as projects that the student will be working on). This should also include opportunity to add in the skills or experience the student is keen to develop
- A **plan** or **schedule** for the student's first and possibly second week in the organisation, clearly outlining what they are doing each day (for example who to meet, and so on)
- **Allocating a mentor** to the student to allow them to ask questions in a more informal setting. This role is really important to support a student and it should be someone keen to do the role and with a friendly, supportive nature. For example, it could be a junior member of staff keen to develop management skills.

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT IN THE JOB

During their time on placement the student on work experience should be treated with exactly the same degree of professionalism and duty of care as regular employees. They should not be seen as 'visitors' to organisations.

WHAT TASKS SHOULD THEY DO?

To maximise the benefits of work experience for all involved, it is a good idea to give the student as much insight into the world of work as possible, otherwise they will not be exposed to any opportunities for professional development, nor will they be able to demonstrate their practical experience to potential future employers.

Good practice could be to offer them a 'mini-project' they can work on at points during the placement, which could relate to an area you are particularly keen to get young people's views on, or something they are interested in. Some of our students may have had limited exposure to working life and may have areas for skills development. The work experience is about supporting them in developing their skills to increase their opportunities in the labour market. Identifying some work-shadowing opportunities and where possible, assigning them a concrete task that they could work on with supervision, but with scope to use their ideas and creativity, are ways of giving the student a real flavour of the world of work. To supplement the tasks that you set, the student also has a work experience log book that they are required to complete through the duration of their placement.

HOW SHOULD I DEVISE A SUITABLE WORK PLACEMENT PLAN?

Work experience that works for everybody happens when there is a clear plan for the placement in place. This can be prepared in advance and adapted for each student you offer an opportunity to. Preparing to accommodate a student on work placement is key to its success and smooth running, so it is less resource-intensive for you and easy to manage. An effective way to devise a suitable work plan is to consult colleagues to find out if they have any specific projects they feel a student could contribute to and if they have some time to supervise and mentor the student. Remember that the student on work experience is there to learn, so it is important to keep them active and engaged throughout their placement to ensure that their motivation levels are kept up and they have a positive experience of the world of work and what it means to be part of a team. Having a concrete work plan will also help the student to effectively support the team without needing constant supervision.

HOW DO I PROVIDE LEARNING AND TRAINING THAT IS TRANSFERABLE?

The purpose of the placement is to enhance the student's employability and give them something meaningful to put on their CV. So the more learning and training you can provide that is easily transferable and recognisable for other employers, the more helpful this is to the student who needs to demonstrate their employability to potential employers or suitability for higher level education. It is also helpful to support the student in reflecting on the skills they have acquired and how these can be best translated into something employers are looking for, as many students struggle to relate their skills to what is required in the workplace.

SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Organisations should ensure there is a dedicated person who has time in their work schedule to supervise the student on work experience. This would be a good development opportunity for an employee who wants to develop their management capability.

HOW SHOULD YOU REVIEW THEIR PROGRESS?

We suggest that the most successful placements are those where supervisors are having regular conversations with the student, reflecting on progress and their attitude. These regular conversations are also an opportunity to consider any additional development activities (is there anything you could add, any specific task they could focus on?).

There may well be areas identified for development during the placement, or issues that arise for a student who may not have prior experience of the workplace. It is important to discuss and address any issues to maximise the student's learning from the placement. The Careers Team at Thomas Telford School are always available to support you with this, should you require it.

USING THE WORK EXPERIENCE LOG BOOK

Each student participating in work experience is given a log book by the Careers Team at Thomas Telford School. This Log book is a very important part of their work experience.

The aim of the log book is to give Students an opportunity to:

- Keep a record of the work they undertake on the placement
- Note any existing skills they develop, or new skills they learn
- Identify areas they would like to improve

The log book contains a 'daily diary' which the student can be encouraged to complete during quiet periods each day. The log book also provides an opportunity for you to formally provide the student with feedback on their placement with you.

Students should fill in entries on a regular basis to help them to keep track of the tasks/activities they have completed.

EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME TIMETABLE

Monday	<p><u>9.00-9.45am Introduction to IHC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome and Introductions - About yourself - Our Roles in IHC - Students Background and Interests <p><u>9.45-10.00am Morning Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>10.00-12.30pm Health and Safety Introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety Briefing - Basic First Aid - Hand Washing Techniques - Hazard Perceptions - General Health and Safety Overview <p><u>12.30-1.30pm Lunch Break (1 hour)</u></p> <p><u>1.30-2.45pm People Planner Introduction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to PP and why we use it; - Overview of the system and its functions; - My role within the company <p><u>2.45-3.00pm Afternoon Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>3.00-4.30pm Recruitment Compliance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief talk with Recruitment Team leader on function of team - Group exercise - Contacting applicants to see if they are still attending interview/ chase references <p><u>4.00-4.30pm First Day catch up</u></p>
Tuesday	<p><u>9.00-10.30am People Planner (in our house system, used for running branch)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow on from the recruitment process how worker compliance is looked after - New clients process – SLA's, rates and funders. - Setting up rota's - Printing and emailing rota's <p><u>10.30-10.45am Morning Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>10.45-12.30pm People Planner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timesheets - Payroll process <p><u>12.30-1.30pm Lunch Break (1 hour)</u></p> <p><u>1.30-3.15pm Telford Branch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run your own virtual branch of Interserve Healthcare - Be part of a real live branch - Work with People Planner - Problem solving real issues <p><u>3.15-3.30pm Afternoon Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>3.30-5.00pm Telford Branch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role play - Branch Manager - Branch Nurse - Branch Consultant
Wednesday	<p><u>9.00-9.45am Catch up</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Overview - What you are enjoying - Any problems <p><u>9.45-10.00am Morning Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>10.00-12.30pm Community Programmes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to Community Programmes - Rota management and classroom tasks surrounding this - Introducing lone worker gadgets and quick lesson on H&S and Risks

	<p><u>12.30-1.30pm Lunch Break (1 hour)</u></p> <p><u>1.30-2.45pm Marketing Department</u> - Introduction to Marketing - Roles within marketing - Social Media - Digital Marketing</p> <p><u>2.45-3.00pm Afternoon Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>3.00-4.00pm Meet with Managing Director – Q & A session.</u></p> <p><u>4.00-5.00pm Marketing Department</u> - Business Development in Marketing - What goes into a good Marketing Campaign - Team campaign brief</p>
Thursday	<p><u>9.00-10.30am Marketing Department</u> - Recap on campaigns - Split into teams - Teams create marketing campaign</p> <p><u>10.30-10.45am Morning Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>10.45-12.30pm Marketing Department</u> -Continuation of marketing campaigns -Pitching</p> <p><u>12.30-1.30pm Lunch Break (1 hour)</u></p> <p><u>1.30-2.15pm Meet with (Business Development Support Team Leader) Care at Home Department</u> -The duties of the BDST -What processes we follow and why</p> <p><u>2.15-3.00pm Skills Workshop</u> - C.V Writing - Do's and Don'ts</p> <p><u>3.00-3.15pm Afternoon Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>3.15-4.00pm Meet with Finance Team</u> - Introduction to Finance</p> <p><u>4.00-5.00pm Interview Skills Workshop Interview Skills</u> - Mock Interview - Feedback from their interview - Mini appraisal & week feedback</p>
Friday	<p><u>9.00-10.30am H.R Department</u> - Introduction to H.R Team</p> <p><u>10.30-10.45am Morning Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>10.45-12.30pm Learning and Development Department</u> - Dragon's Den style activity - Sales and Pitching</p> <p><u>12.30-1.30pm Lunch Break (1 Hour)</u></p> <p><u>1.30-3.00pm Governance Department</u> - Roles of the Regulators, CQC, CSSIW, CI - Our backgrounds, Role of the Governance Team & how we link directly to the Clinical Team - KLOE exercise - The roles of the Community Matron - Review of the Interserve Healthcare annual report</p> <p><u>3.00-3.15pm Afternoon Break (15 mins)</u></p> <p><u>3.15-4.00pm Final Catch up / sign off for the week</u></p>

FINAL FEEDBACK & REFERENCES

At the end of the work experience placement a meeting with the student is a useful opportunity to review how everything went, for both the student on work experience as well as the placement supervisor. We would encourage you to assess the success of the placement and provide feedback to both the student and the Careers Team and, if appropriate, offer further support to the student by agreeing to act as a referee and encouraging the student to stay in touch.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CONCLUDE A WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT?

As a work experience placement draws to a close, regardless of how long it has lasted, it is good practice to arrange a final review meeting with the student to discuss a number of issues. During the review, the student could be asked questions such as:

- What have you learned and how have you developed during this work experience?
- How well have you met your objectives?
- What are your strengths and areas for improvement/development?
- What have been your biggest/proudest achievements?
- What projects have you contributed to?
- In what ways are you better prepared for the jobs market after completing this work experience?

There are several things that you can relay back to the student as part of this discussion:

- How well do you think they have performed (in general and/or on specific projects)?
- What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- What areas of development do you suggest that they concentrate on in future jobs?

We also recommend asking them what feedback they have for your organisation in terms of how well the work experience was run and how this could be improved in future. Again the students' work experience log book can be a useful tool to base the final review around.

HOW CAN YOU ACT AS A REFEREE FOR THE STUDENT?

The provision of a reference can play an important part in reassuring potential future employers about the employability of a student, nevertheless we recognise that the process of reference-giving can vary between employers, with some preferring to confirm only that a person worked with them between dates. However, we ask placement supervisors to consider the potential importance to a student of providing a more detailed 'summary of experience' to both help them focus on their own key achievements and learning and also to use to help promote themselves to potential employers and higher education providers. This might outline what the student did during their time at your organisation and how they went about performing their tasks. This might include reference to their attitude to learning, reliability and attendance, as well as their interaction with work colleagues or customers.