

Why do Work Experience?

A Student Guide



1. Why do work experience?

Work Experience is an opportunity to spend a week with an employer of your choice. This is to help you decide what you want to do in the future. You will be treated like an employee and it will be like having a real job for a week (without pay!). This will help you when you are applying for a job as employers are all looking for experience.

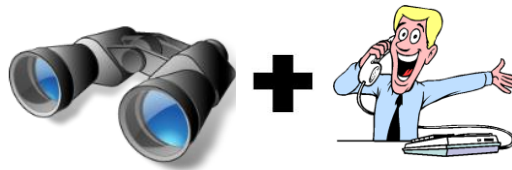
2. What to choose?

At the moment summer 2016 seems a long way off – and it is! But there are thousands of students, just like you, who are applying for work experience and if you don't act now you will miss out. In Yate and Chipping Sodbury alone there are three secondary schools. **That's roughly 500 of you all looking for work experience placements for next summer! Sometimes in the same week!**

You don't have to know what you want to do. If you're unsure, then choose a work experience that you think you will enjoy. It does give you the opportunity to try some things out, and find out whether you really could work in an office, or whether you really couldn't work with children!



3. Finding and applying



The best way to get a work experience placement is to use the phone. Start by asking whether they take work experience students. Write down a script if you're nervous. If the answer is yes, then you can ask if they would consider taking you, if they say no, then you are not wasting time sending them a letter. After they have agreed to take you, send the Work Experience form to them.

Some employers will want a letter of application. Send in the letter, but then phone to ask whether they have received it and keep chasing until they've made a decision. If you just send a letter and don't do any chasing you are unlikely to hear anything in reply. **Most companies will not reply to letters.**

Be careful when sending emails! Your first contact with a company by email should be formal and polite, like a letter. Dear so and so, etc. Remember you can't send external emails from your school account. Think about what your home email address is – *is it appropriate?*

See OSCAR for more help with applying.

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4. Payment

The School asks for £15 as a contribution towards the cost of running the work experience scheme.

Payment should be made via ParentPay. However, if you do not have access to the internet at home, then you can go to the Finance Office in school and ask for a barcode which you can take to a local PayPoint shop where you can pay in cash.

If there are any problems with payment, please come and talk to us in School. We want to help you go on your work experience and we are here to help you achieve this.

5. On work experience

Some important things to remember...

- **Dress** smartly, wear natural make-up, and pull your trousers up! We go into more detail nearer the time...
- **Mobile phones**... Yes you are used to having your mobile phone in your pocket or your bag and using it all day – YES we know you do! On work experience you will be expected to work hard and that doesn't include texting your friends whenever you feel like it – even if you can do it without looking! **Some placements will not allow you to have your phone on you for security reasons.**
- **Social media**, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc. You must be extremely careful about any comments you publically make about your work experience placement. It is easy for people to get the wrong impression.
- **Confidentiality** is important. You must not use social media to discuss your work experience, but you also must not tell your friends or family about confidential things in your workplace.
- **Safety**. We have a duty to make sure that you are safe on your work experience placement. This is one reason why we use a Health and Safety Company, but health and safety is just one aspect of being safe. We need you to let us know if you do not feel safe or anything makes you feel uncomfortable whilst on your work experience.
- **Transport**. The School cannot pay for your transport to your work experience placement. It is important that you test out where you are going and work out which bus or train can get you there in good time.
- **Sickness**. If you are not well during work experience week, please phone your placement provider **and** School.
- **Little Children**. We will give you a special training session if you are going to work with young children. You probably don't realise that you shouldn't pick up young children, be left alone with them, or sit them on your lap. Do not exchange mobile numbers with the children you come into contact with on work experience or take any photos of them.
- **What if I don't like it?** You can phone School at any time and tell us what you don't like about your work experience. However, if you don't like it on day one, please go back and try a bit more, **try not to just give up.**

“The earlier you start looking for a placement, the more choice you will have.”