



Student guide: how to find work experience

Monday 1st - Friday 5th July 2019

What?

Work experience is your chance to try out the workplace for one week. You won't be taught to do a particular job, but you will get to see work in action, do certain tasks, find out more and ask questions. You might feel a bit tired, as you'll be doing something different and the working hours might be different too. However, most students come back to school having had a really good experience of working life.

Why?

We think work experience is an important part of your school life. It can benefit you in many ways. You can use the week to:

- Test out job ideas
- Learn what you like (and don't like)
- Learn how things work in the workplace, for example, punctuality, dress code and time management.
- Develop skills you'll need at work
- Have something to talk about on a CV, application form or at interview
- Make yourself stand out
- Meet people who could help you in future.

In some cases, it might even result in the offer of an apprenticeship or opportunity of a part-time job. Even where it doesn't, past students have found it useful because of what they learn about work and about themselves.

Who?

We would like you to find your own placement, with the support of parents/carers and staff at school. We know that finding your own placement can develop the skills that will help you find your own job in the future. We also think that it is better if you choose where to go, how far you want to travel and what type of job sector you want to work in.

When? *Monday 1st – Friday 5th July 2019*

We would like you to arrange this placement by Christmas (and there'll be a prize draw for students who get the paperwork in on time by 21 December). You'll need to return one copy of the **work experience agreement** to the Careers Office as soon as you have had it signed by the employer; the employer keeps the other copy. **No paperwork means no work experience.**

Where?

The choice is yours. Some students stay in Sheffield, while others leave the city (if you're travelling outside the city, think about how you will get there or where you will stay). Think about where is right for you.

- Consider your interests in school and out of school and any jobs that might relate to those interests.
- Look out for businesses operating near where you live, think about what they do and whether you'd like to do work experience there.

- Think about jobs you've heard of that sound interesting to you.
- Jobs that can be dangerous and jobs where confidentiality is required (computer game design, demolition work, work with infectious diseases etc) can be difficult to arrange. If you're stuck, come and see us in the Careers Office where we can advise you on alternative options that will still be relevant to you.
- If you're looking at work experience that is likely to be very competitive (in a TV studio or as a football coach, for example), think about arranging a back-up placement just in case this doesn't work out.

If you need help deciding where you'd like to work, ask your form tutor or ask in the Careers Office at school.

How?

We know it can be daunting to approach employers directly, so here are our tips:

- Contact employers in a way that you feel comfortable with.
 - You can use email, phone, ask face-to-face, or send a letter and CV
 - If you don't hear back, you could try contacting them again another way
 - It always helps to find out the name of the person you're speaking to and the name of the person who sorts out work experience at the organisation.
- You might choose to use social media to make contact (but make sure you check your privacy settings and have a professional-looking profile, or they may turn you down).
- Always be polite.
- Be prepared that some people will say no; it's not necessarily personal. Maybe the place has been filled already or maybe they can't take young people in their workplace. Keep trying and don't give up.
- Try to be professional (know the dates of work experience – *1 – 5 July 2019*; check your spelling and grammar if writing or emailing; and don't turn up at a business to ask about work experience with a group of friends).
- Prepare what you're going to say beforehand. You could write a little script or use a template.
- You can ask your form tutor or in the Careers Office for a template with what to say, what to write in a letter/email, or how to write a CV.
- If they say yes, well done. Now make sure you sort out how you can get the paperwork filled in.

“Hello. I'm a student at Meadowhead School and I'm looking for work experience in July. Can you tell me who I'd need to talk to about this, please?”

Don't delay, start working on this today

If you can't find a placement, or you need more help to find one, please tell your form tutor or ask in the Careers Office at school outside lesson times.

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