

Best Practice Guide

to organising and managing work experience placements for schools and colleges



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Introduction

In the last few years published research (Wolf Review and Social Mobility Strategy) has suggested that greater consideration should be given to the wider impact work experience can have on student's successful transition into the world of work and the growing skills shortage in the labour market.

Revisions to guidelines for post 16 providers regarding work experience as part of study programmes and the revisions on statutory guidance for careers guidance in schools have helped to shape and influence education's approach.

In 2017 the government commissioned research into the current provision and experience of work-related learning activities in schools/colleges.

This evidence, along with other research has been used to help inform this guide.



1. Why use this guide?

This guide is intended to support education professionals in pre- or post-16 education establishments with responsibilities for organising and managing work experience placements for their students.

If you are new to work experience then you can find all you need to know about how to set up and manage a robust, structured and effective work experience programme with tips and hints to support you.

If you are already experienced then you will no doubt be familiar with some of the advice provided but we hope that having the information, all in one place, will be useful. You may also find some of the template documents really helpful in enhancing what you are already doing.

It is designed to help you navigate your way through the latest guidance and legal requirements, giving examples of good practice; as well as providing an overview of the benefits work experience can bring to **students, schools and employers**.

This guide is set out clearly for pre and post 16 providers and covers:

- Why work experience is important and the benefits
- How to set up a programme and get the most out of it
- Legal requirements for students on placement
- Further sources of advice and information / support

Norfolk County Council provides a work experience support and brokerage service for schools and colleges in Norfolk, for further information contact **work.experience@norfolk.gov.uk**

Other providers in the area offer a similar service and educational establishments may of course choose to use another approach. This guide remains impartial in its information and advice and will be reviewed and revised at the beginning of each academic year, when a change in legislation is imposed by government or in response to guidance issued by Ofsted or other relevant bodies.



2. Why work experience is important

Students need to be given the opportunity and support to succeed in the world of work. To demonstrate the strong work ethic valued by employers and to develop the skills and attributes employers look for such as accountability, creativity, good judgement, self-awareness and taking responsibility.

Increasing complexities and competitive nature of the labour market and the changing skills demands and recruitment practices from employers mean young people need to embrace the chances offered to them to show employers what they are capable of.

Looking for a way to make a real difference to the motivation and aspirations of all students whatever their circumstances then...

Work experience placements can be a great way to do this!

Pre-16

Research shows that the more memorable encounters a young person has with an employer within school, the less likely they are to become NEET (not in education, employment or training) and the more likely they are to achieve higher levels of pay during their working lives.

For **pre-16 students**, in addition to contact with employers through inspirational work-related activities in school or college, the government recommends that schools arrange first-hand experiences of workplaces for their students which can take place in Year 10 and 11.

Around 43% of employers say they have struggled to recruit because candidates lacked the required skills. These skills include both job-specific and employability skills as well as business awareness which are often under-developed in younger people. With employers drawing on a larger pool of candidates who have already been able to develop the skills and experience needed for the 21st century workplace, the novice, with little or no experience

can find it more difficult today to convince an employer to invest in them.

There is good evidence (Gatsby) that a work experience placement can have a huge impact on a pupil's understanding of the realities of work such as expected behaviour and the functions of a workplace as well as providing first-hand experience of the skills and personal qualities required in that sector. This can be of particular importance in broadening the horizons of those students who may have limited experiences of the world of work within their families and communities. Such experiences can also help in the exploration of career opportunities and can help to further inform future career planning.

Post-16

For **post-16 students** on study programmes, a work placement in line with their chosen vocational route or intended pathway will help them to gain greater insight into that particular sector or industry and guidelines for 16-19 work experience emphasises the importance of aiming for this. Placements are usually longer in duration compared to pre-16, offering the opportunity to acquire some of the specific skills required to do particular jobs in that related area.

What's the picture locally?

The proportion of employers offering work experience placements differs widely around the country.

What's happening nationally

The majority of schools or colleges offer work experience placements (90% to Years 10 and 11 and 91% to Years 12 and 13) ; however, placements are not always offered to all students within a cohort.

The average length of a placement for Years 10 and 11 is nationally 8 days and for students in Years 12 to 13 it is 12 days. Supported Internships (available to those aged 16-24 with a statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan) are more likely to be offered as separate days but around one quarter of schools offer a placement in a block with the average length being 30 days .

Students with additional needs and/vulnerabilities

A bespoke, or alternative approach to work experience may be a better option for some students. Schools, in discussion with the student and parents/carers, are best placed to identify the needs of the individual student and the support they may need to order to successfully undertake a placement. Schools should attempt to work around any potential barriers to work experience - according to Wolf , along with concentrating on the core academic skills of English and maths, work experience should also be a large focus of their study.

Schools may wish to engage a third-party placement provider to work alongside them to source an appropriate placement. Students who have been previously supported include those with **SEND, looked after children, those in alternative educational settings, those at risk of NEET, those with limited networks/access to employer contacts and those for whom a vocational pathway will be most appropriate/ relevant to their studies.**



3. What are the statutory requirements for work experience?

3.1 Pre-16

While there is no longer a mandatory requirement for schools to offer work experience placements to students in Key Stage 4, there is a **wealth of evidence** to suggest that schools that do offer a well-planned and structured programme for their students are enabling them to gain the skills and experiences needed to put them in an advantageous position for their transition into the world of work.

3.2 Post-16 study programmes

The curriculum change to 16-19 study programmes, introduced in 2013 as part of the raising of the education participation age in England, requires **schools and colleges to offer their post-16 pupils 'high quality and meaningful' work experience as an integral part of the of the qualification pathway**. Further changes to post-16 funding in September 2014 – with funding allocated per student rather than per qualification - aim to give schools and colleges greater freedom and flexibility to expand work experience for post-16 students. All students are expected to undertake work experience or some form of work-related training as part of their 'non-qualification activity'.



Statutory guidance states that these work experience activities must be planned, timetabled, organised and/or supervised by the institution and that they should relate to the career path the student is on. This is particularly relevant to those on vocational pathways although some sectors are more challenging when it comes to obtaining placements.

3.3 How Ofsted assesses work experience

Pre-16

Ofsted does not assess work experience directly for students in pre-16 establishments, however it does look to ensure that “all children and learners ... are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment”. Underpinning inspections is DfE statutory guidance which requires that all children should be prepared for success employment, that they should be fully-informed when making career decisions and that schools should offer high quality work experience that properly reflects individuals’ studies and strengths.

Schools which offer a planned programme of work-related learning, including work experience placements can feel assured that they are working to government guidance.

Post-16

Work experience is a compulsory part of **post-16** study programmes and is **inspected and reported on against the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework for FE and Skills**.

When setting up a programme, **post-16** establishments should be aware that part of **Ofsted’s** focus is to look at the work readiness of students and will be looking to assess if the work experience offered to students is purposeful and planned. Schools and colleges should expect to be able to provide evidence which demonstrates that the objectives of their work experience programme have been achieved. **Ofsted** will look for evidence of:

- How well the institution helped the student prepare for the work experience beforehand;
- The contribution made by the student to their placement;
- The benefit to the student from taking part;
- The ways in which the work experience element of a student’s study programme has helped them prepare for employment and contributed to their overall development (for example, how the experience of a real work environment has helped them to develop

vocational, employability and personal effectiveness skills such as punctuality);

- The detail of feedback received by the student following work experience;
- What the progression is for that student.

If a student is expected to progress on to an apprenticeship or employment and/or if work experience is a substantial part of their study programme, students should begin **external work experience** at the earliest opportunity to maximise the benefits. Work experience taking place within the realistic working environments of a provider is not considered to be a satisfactory placement, especially if work experience forms a large part of the student’s study programme.

Vocational vs academic

Ofsted largely focuses on work experience for those on vocational rather than academic pathways but the benefits of an **external work experience placement for students on academic pathways include improved success when applying to university** and a better grounding if they choose to switch to a vocational route. Whatever their expected progression pathway, schools and colleges should offer work experience to all students where resources allow.



4. The benefits of work experience...

A well thought through placement also enables students to 'test out' their career ideas early on by gaining an insight into a particular job, range of jobs or industry and get a feel for whether it's likely to suit them.

“When work experience is done well, it can make a significant difference to the motivation, aspirations, attainment and progression of students.”

Anthony Mann,
Work Experience: impact and delivery – insights from the evidence 2012

4.1 To students:

- Broaden their knowledge of jobs they hadn't considered
- Make links between the subjects they are studying in school and work
- Increase self-awareness around skills, strengths, likes and dislikes
- Gain an insight into employers' expectations, how a business works, the different pathways into jobs and the skills needed to succeed in the labour market
- Develop skills such as good time-keeping, team work, problem solving and communication
- Increase confidence and self-esteem and become more motivated do well in school thereby improving their attainment
- Create real connections with employers which could lead to further training or more permanent work with them
- Be challenged on any stereotypical ideas they may hold around work and careers
- Raise their aspirations including improving their social mobility
- Build up evidence which can be used when applying for work, an apprenticeship, higher education or school leaver programme, giving them an edge over those who haven't had such experiences
- When traditional formats of 1 or 2 weeks are not suitable for your students consider a bespoke, student-centred approach!

Positive outcomes

In the broader context of all employer engagement activities, an additional benefit for young people of contact with employers while at school or college is the correlation between the number of recalled activities and several positive outcomes. Research conducted by the Education & Employers Taskforce showed that not only was a young person less likely to become NEET, the more times they could recall having contact with an employer in school, they were also more likely to benefit from these activities by being more successful in applications to university and earning more in their future careers.

Case study:

Thorpe St Andrew Sixth Form

Thorpe St Andrew Sixth Form is a well-established post-16 school with around 370 students, the majority of whom are studying A levels. Last year, the school decided to introduce a work experience programme for its Year 13 students based on the premise that work experience is becoming more of a demand from universities, colleges, apprenticeship providers and employers.

Many sixth form students at Thorpe St Andrew already have paid employment but the school recognises the important benefits that relevant work experience can bring and introduced placements for Year 13 students in the first week of September.

The planned placements are designed to **bridge the gap between education and the world of work**. As well as enabling young people to develop relevant occupational skills and help instil the attitudes and behaviours expected at work, the placements can help young people to become aware of jobs they have not previously thought of, help inform career choices and offer them a chance to prove themselves to an employer. Moreover, the school recognises that work experience has become increasingly valuable when securing a place at university. More and more universities ask for some kind of work experience prior to applying to university and while the new programme is still in its infancy, in the first year, students have received more unconditional offers than ever before.

Alongside the Year 13 placements, the school continues to offer Year 11 students the opportunity to undertake a work experience placement during October half term for up to five days or after their GCSEs in June or July.

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Comments from SEND students at Fred Nicholson School, Dereham and employers following their work placements.

Students:

"It's really hard but I have applied for a part-time job in the holidays at the [holiday] park."

"I know now that working on a farm is what I really want to do when I leave college."

"I learnt how to get to work on time and that you have to go every day."

"[It was] a brilliant time... Everything – it was amazing!!"



Employers:

"[The student] was our first brave Work Experienter! [They were] helpful and became more confident with the public as time went on." Yaxham Waters Café

"Having [the student] as part of the Volunteering Matters Team was a positive experience for everyone involved – [they are] welcome back anytime!" Memorial Café

"[The student] has aspirations to go to ... college with a view to a career in agriculture. [They were] undaunted by being part of the farm team for the week and showed appropriate respect for the other workers. [They] answered all questions posed to [them] politely and clearly." Leicester House Farm

Bespoke approaches to work experience

Students with SEND particularly benefit from work experience placements but currently only one in five schools offer the opportunity to their SEND pupils. There are currently many barriers to achieving equality of employment for people with disabilities and the number of people with a learning disability in work has fallen from 7.1% in 2011/12 to 5.8% in 2015/2016 despite more than 60% wanting to and being able to be in work.

Some schools may find that additional resource demands such as extra teacher support and transport requirements make it unfeasible in the current climate to offer traditional-style placements to all SEND students but they could consider alternative programmes, perhaps spreading the hours spent in a workplace across a term or two. This approach may also work for students who have limited access to wider networks or employer contacts, looked after children, young carers and others who may require extra support.

Extended placements may also help to 're-engage' students who are losing or have lost interest in school and are at risk of being NEET by showing them a future that they may not have previously been able to envisage for themselves. This approach should be very much on a student by student basis as each individual's needs will be different.

Such placements can help raise the aspirations of students who will need additional support with the transition from education to employment and the experience can help pave the way for them to feel inspired to reach their full working potential, whatever that might be. But there is also a benefit to the employer and wider society: creating an opportunity to realise the potential in SEND young people and the perhaps previously unthought of value of committing to taking on a paid worker with a learning disability.

Mencap provides support for employers to provide work experience for people with learning disabilities of all ages – see section 12

4.2 To schools and colleges:

- A greater understanding of labour market trends, the local job market and changing demands from employers
- Staff are better informed and feel more confident in answering students' questions around work and careers
- Knowledge information and sharing across the whole school can be powerful
- A cohesive, planned approach generates early interest and excitement from younger students
- Improved progression outcomes as a result of increased student motivation
- Opens the door to ask employers to get involved in other employability activities e.g. employers speed networking events and mentoring
- Employers are more aware of which schools value interaction with the local business community. Research shows that some employers who offer work experience initially, go on to offer traineeships or apprenticeships to young people on placements with them.

4.3 To employers

Some employers are recognising the real benefits of having the opportunity to connect with young, raw talent and some set up a highly-structured work experience programme offering a variety of opportunities in order to engage with a potential future workforce. The NHS, for example, actively uses its work experience framework to recruit young people – especially 16 to 18 year olds – onto the different apprenticeships they offer.

The benefits to employers of taking a work experience student:

- It gives businesses and organisations access to a wider range of talent to draw from when recruiting and offers a 'low risk' approach to bringing younger people into the workforce.
- Young people can bring a new energy or fresh perspective to a business.
- Staff can benefit from the chance to plan work around and supervise a young person.
- It may challenge an employer's perceptions of the attitude and skills of young people.
- It can help to raise a company's profile.
- It offers the employer opportunities to engage positively with the local community.

When looking at the bigger picture, employers who say that they have found school leavers (16 year olds) to be poorly prepared most commonly give the reason of poor attitude (25%) or a perceived lack of working world or life experience (24%) . It's clear that increasing the opportunities for young people in education to gain first-hand experiences of workplaces and work culture – which can often lead to further opportunities – can only have a positive effect on the labour market.

Further advice for employers on taking on a work experience students can be found at 13.3 Support resources for employers at the end of this guide.

Pre-16

In spite of work experience being a non-statutory educational activity, the majority of schools in Norfolk offer work experience to their Key Stage 4/Year 10 students and recognise this as an important activity in young peoples' development. Typical arrangements are block placements of one or two weeks or extended placements of one day a week over a term, or in some instances an academic year. This can involve students from a whole cohort/year group or for a targeted or self-selecting group. Students from complex needs schools and the Short Stay School for Norfolk also participate in work experience. The number of schools where students participate has remained largely static over the last few years, any variance in students numbers is largely attributable to changes in year group sizes or changes in approach by schools.

The organisation and approaches by schools to this work varies. The responsibility for the

organisation of the schools work experience programme and student support lies with the school. The majority of schools elect to buy in the health and safety checking of employers' premises, relying on the expertise of professionals. Others may use traded services available to them through their membership of a multi-academy trust or suitably qualified and insured in-school staff.

Post-16

Participation patterns across Norfolk for post-16 students has revealed that most students currently participating in work experiences are studying technical and vocational courses in Norfolk's further education colleges where work experience is central to their course aims. Work experience participation by students in Norfolk's sixth forms is less well established resulting in no offer or provision of structured experiences of work as a formal part of the students' curriculum. Lack of curriculum time, cost, staff time and staff expertise to develop a network of employers to offer quality experiences are the most often cited reasons why work experiences are not offered to all students.

Work placements should be bespoke, to suit each students' individual needs. The pattern for work placements could be one day per week for a term, a longer block placement, or a rotation of shorter placements at different employers' premises, so students can experience different aspects of a business sector. Some students will need to spend a large proportion of their time with an employer to ensure that they develop the employability skills, attitudes and behaviours that are expected in the workplace to enable them to make a successful transition from study programme to paid employment.

4.4 Recognising the value of work experience

Norfolk County Council recognises the value that work experience can bring to students and is working towards supporting work experience in the county. Melvyn Ruff from the Education Partnership Service at Norfolk County Council states: "For employers like Proserv, work experience is about giving back to society and helping the future economy by preparing young people for the world of work. Having a work experience programme where young people can work on real projects – not just some of the more mundane tasks – means they get a true picture of what it is like to work in [your] industry and [employers], should see benefits as it's a two-way process."

"Work experience and inspiration activities provide a 'tangible sense of what different jobs and careers entail.'"

Careers Enterprise Company Cold Spots Report 2016

The number of employers offering placements and the number of students on work experience in Norfolk has remained largely static for the last few years.

The Careers and Enterprise Company's Mapping disengagement report shows that approx. 34% of employers in Norfolk offered work experience in the last 12 months, compared to 38% at national level. Norfolk employers say that 39% of 16 year old school leavers are well equipped for the world of work and 30% of 17-18 year olds recruited to a first-time job were rated as being poorly or very poorly prepared for work.

There is more to do...

5. Getting the most out of work experience for your students

What makes a good work experience opportunity?

Pre-16

For **pre-16** students especially, a work experience placement may be the first opportunity they get to immerse themselves in the day-to-day practices of a workplace. To maximise the benefits of the experience for these students, schools should consider the key features of a quality placement:

- An environment within a sector that the student has an interest in, allowing them to get a real feel for the work involved.
- Allows students to learn first-hand the functions, different roles and dynamics of a specific type of work environment.
- Provides some practical hands-on experience and a variety of experiences.
- The chance for the student to have a sense of achievement following the undertaking of a practical task.
- Following the placement, a clear understanding of which soft skills the student was able to develop and how the experience has impacted on their future career plans and aspirations.

Post-16

- In-line with any vocational pathway the student may be on.
- Provides practical, hands-on experience in a real workplace.
- Offers the opportunity to learn a job-specific skill or skills relevant to any vocational qualification if on this pathway.
- The opportunity to develop and apply any skills or knowledge learnt on their study programmes.

- An opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt - ideally drawing on critical thinking skills - and how this will impact on future choices.

Bespoke student groups

- Fits in with the needs of the students, such as only being able to manage one day or a few hours a week.
- An appropriate and accessible sector which can help to show the real opportunities that may be available to the student in the future.
- Offers an aspirational opportunity which may not ordinarily be within the traditional scope of placement type.

Top tips! Timing is crucial

- ✓ **Plan** (take a look at the suggestions below, the timeline and checklist)
- ✓ **Do** (make sure you prepare students and employers well, look at the sample lesson plans, template letters and information guides. Don't forget to prepare other influences – senior leaders in school/college and parents!)
- ✓ **Review and reflect** (monitor, evaluate and make changes to your processes and approaches ready for next time around, look at the evaluation templates and follow up templates)

Schools and colleges need to be savvy! With 98% of employers in Norfolk employing fewer than 25 people - and 88% of them employing fewer than 10.

Case study:

India Biocec, East Norfolk Sixth Form College

Students at East Norfolk Sixth Form College studying towards gaining their AAT Foundation Degree in accounting this academic year have benefitted from being able to access work-related learning support with a greater emphasis on work experience activities.

The College's expanded Careers & Employability Services team has been working at building stronger relationships with local employers, and an improved working relationship between the College and highly renowned and successful energy company Proserv, has resulted in AAT accounting student India Biocec gaining valuable work experience in its accounts department.

Following positive engagement and full attendance in her employability sessions and a close working relationship with the work-related learning team, India Biocec contacted Proserv herself to arrange suitable dates for her to be able to complete a week-long placement with the company.

Prior to starting the placement, India was extremely nervous but keen to get involved as she was fully aware of all of the benefits of work experience. Yvonne, her mentor at Proserv, praised India on her work ethic. After the placement was completed, Proserv was able to give the College feedback on India's performance, scoring her as 'excellent' in almost every aspect of her work.

The placement has allowed India to experience real-life work, making her feel more confident about starting a job when she leaves college. She experienced office life, and was able to use some of the knowledge she'd learnt on her AAT course. In her feedback following the placement, she gave Proserv a rating of 'excellent' and thanked the staff at both Proserv and East Norfolk Sixth Form College for giving her an outstanding opportunity.

2017

“ She is very enthusiastic and keen to learn all about the department and very pleasant and friendly. Her confidence will grow with experience. ”

Top Tips! Be different/be daring!

Here's a few things to think about:

- ✓ **Plan your placements** ...so students can take advantage of the great opportunities on offer (avoiding the late summer term can potentially be advantageous)
- ✓ **But be flexible** ...allowing students to access opportunities with employers via a competitive application processes
- ✓ **Be open minded** ...students who are matched with more than one employer gain an extra insight
- ✓ **Do different** ...e.g. ask employers if their supply chain employers/customers can support a placement so students can experience the product/process lifecycle
- ✓ The employer may have seasonal fluctuations meaning the summer period is busier and staff are pre-occupied with more pressing priorities.
- ✓ If they can only take one student at a time and if students are all only available over the

same few weeks, the competition for places increases.

- ✓ There may be better opportunities at other times of the year which lend themselves to being better quality perhaps because of the variety of the tasks on offer or the number of staff able to get involved.
- ✓ The employer may be more receptive to a student if they don't feel inundated with requests at the same time every year.
- ✓ Reflection is invaluable for everyone involved. Get students involved from the outset, instead of a logbook/record/diary you might ask them to write a blog, use an electronic voting system or app or a video diary to record their experiences.

Don't forget... if you work with an opportunities brokerage service to support some or all of your work in this area, discuss timings with them in advance so they can make sure they can achieve the best outcomes for all your students.

6. Setting up a programme

A structured, well-organised approach will help to ensure that an inspirational work experience programme operates efficiently and effectively and that each student gets the most out of their placement. Use the schools/colleges existing systems to best effect. If you use a third party then they will have systems for administering, monitoring and reporting work experience placements.

An example timeline for schools' work experience programme can be found in section 13.

Top Tips! Encourage and Support

- ✓ **Helping** them to identify their likes, dislikes and skills they need to develop further
- ✓ **Researching** further their existing career ideas and to look beyond
- ✓ **Talking** to a careers guidance adviser if they are struggling with choices or for ideas
- ✓ **Thinking** about the location of possible placements and transport options

Schools should be aware that 'lack of confidence' and 'fear of the unknown' can be a barrier for some students taking up a work placement and could consider the positive role that employer activities in school might have by creating interactions between student and employer before preparation for placements begins.

Most pre-16 students in Norfolk self-source their own placements with school and parental/carer support. For some students, this presents additional challenges if they have little or limited exposure to networks or are part of workless families.

The **Norfolk Work and Skills** guide - available in all Norfolk schools and to download from <https://helpyouchoose.org/content/advisers/resource-materials/publications> – can help students to research local opportunities and gain insight into trends and employer needs. A series of lesson plans to accompany this guide, and which can help students to explore different aspects of the world of work, is available for free to teaching staff from <https://helpyouchoose.org/content/advisers/resource-materials/teaching-materials>.

These websites and videos are useful when helping students to prepare for work experience:

www.plotr.co.uk

<https://helpyouchoose.org/content/advisers/resource-materials/future-workforce>

www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs

www.icanbea.org.uk

www.barclayslifeskills.com

And some Post-16 Top Tips!

- ✓ **Access** motivational placements in their preferred sector/field
- ✓ **Appropriately** challenge students to find stretching and demanding placements
- ✓ **Encourage** students to look further than immediate family and friend's networks

For students on technical **post-16** study programmes, opportunities need to be clearly aligned to their career aspirations. Not all students will be able to access motivational placements in their preferred sector areas/field of interest through their own existing networks and should be made aware of these expectations at the earliest opportunity so that they can seek additional help and support, if needed.

Some may opt to undertake a placement which is within their preferred industry but not sufficiently stretching or demanding. The chances are this may result in a missed opportunity for both the student and the employer.

Students should be strongly encouraged to look further than their immediate family and friend's networks for opportunities which will allow them to extend their experience the world of work.

Some of the barriers to take-up still exist with more students finding it difficult to fit in a placement around study (46%) .

SEND Top Tips! Encourage and Support

For students with additional needs, finding an employer who is able to accommodate more initial visits or contact from the school or student than they might typically expect may make for a smoother process. This may also include the need for a support worker to accompany the student while on placement.

Top Tips! Promoting for Success Promoting the work experience programme

Try a range of different approaches to maximise impact...consider

- ✓ **Assemblies** and PSHE for pre-16 students
- ✓ **Careers events**
- ✓ **Employer** networking events
- ✓ School/college **social media** and promotional channels
- ✓ Liaise with local **employer bodies**
- ✓ Asking **employers** to take part in promoting work experience in assemblies, careers events
- ✓ Asking **previous student cohorts** to share their experiences
- ✓ **Parents' evenings/briefing** materials will help the take-up and lead to more successful outcomes - ten factors for effective parental engagement in student progression and career perspectives can be found in the TeachFirst Access Toolkit 2016-17 .

Top Tips! Sourcing Placements

- ✓ **Start planning early** try to allow at least 6 months before the planned placement to allow enough time for students to research career ideas and approach businesses. The sample timeline and checklist has been designed with this in mind!

- ✓ Self-sourcing placements suitable for **some - not for all!**

Most schools in Norfolk ask younger students (Year 10s) to self-source their own placements; this can also be successful with post-16 students and is the recommended approach for most students on study programmes who tend to have greater maturity and life experience and are able to demonstrate a willingness when it comes to contacting employers.

Self-sourcing might include:

- ✓ Using family and friends networks (this will not be fruitful for all students)
- ✓ Direct approaches to local businesses (see 7.4)
Approaching employers directly)
- ✓ Use of websites that provide an interface between students and businesses offering opportunities. This could also include volunteering placements.
- ✓ Most schools in Norfolk ask their students to find their own placements. This approach can be really successful with **post-16s** who tend to have greater maturity and life experience
- ✓ **Think smart** - consider other options
- ✓ Using family and friends **networks**

Making use of family and social networks is the most frequently used method of sourcing placements whether the research is conducted by student or staff member. These contacts may be able to give a route into sectors which are more difficult to source placements for (see Potential issues when searching for work placements below) but this method can also

shine a light on the difficulties those students who don't have such networks to tap into will have. These students are more likely to need additional support from staff which might include helping to identify contacts and how to approach an employer to enquire about a placement. Teachers may find some of the videos from Norfolk County Council's Developing Norfolk's Future Workforce series useful when looking at this issue.

- ✓ Direct approaches to **businesses**
- ✓ **Websites** that provide an interface between students and businesses offering opportunities or a matching service. It's never too early to start the planning process! Try to allow at least six months before the planned placement to help support students and approach businesses. This will also allow time for students to research their career ideas as part of the preparation. The sample timeline and checklist has been designed with this in mind!

Other options for schools include:

- ✓ Maintaining an organic database of local companies, organisations and alumni.
- ✓ Inviting local employers to take part in 'business breakfasts' which can help to forge stronger relationships and highlight the importance of work-related learning opportunities for students
- ✓ Using a third party provider to source student placements.
- ✓ Using free providers of work placements (these may be limited) such as Barclays Lifeskills
- ✓ Building and developing links with local employers which can be tapped into, such as those who have taken part in previous activities in school or college.
- ✓ Providing students with a list of formal work experience programmes open to individual applications (for example BBC , Channel 4 , House of Commons , British Airways and other large local employers
- ✓ Choosing to work with an employer which offers a formal work experience programme across a longer period of time for some students (for example the NHS)



Case study: East Norfolk Sixth Form College

During 2015-16, East Norfolk Sixth Form College undertook a review of its Careers and Employability Services partially sparked by recently published Department for Education guidance for post-16 work experience.

Realising that its current approach to work experience was limited - tending to only attract students who were interested in applying for placements - the College decided to develop a more strategic, 'whole-college' approach. It did this by creating additional posts - a student services manager plus two work-related learning coaches - to make a team which could focus on work experience activities and build stronger relationships with local employers.

These additional roles meant that the work experience programme could become broader. As well as providing placement support and other work-related activities, employability skills learning was embedded into lessons, and, based on feedback from teachers, the number of specialist workshops was increased along with group work linking skills development to employer requirements. These workshops include helping students with CV writing or job applications.

Students are actively encouraged to carry out independent research into placements or careers and to widen their horizons and consider options that their upbringing may not have included. Every encounter with work-related learning is noted electronically for each student so that all staff can see and monitor a student's progress, offering support in areas that may need focus.

The College has established strong relationships with supportive local employers and this allows the work-related learning coaches to work closely with them, reinforcing the benefits of a work placement, not just for students but for the employers too. An initial conversation identifies the skills needed for the placement which is then matched to a specific student or course; this approach ensures that both student and employer gain maximum benefit.

Work experience is overwhelmingly relevant to the vast majority of students, many of whom come from significantly deprived areas within the Great Yarmouth wards and the fact that the College encourages students to seek work experience which is both suitable and relevant to them not only reinforces for them the benefits of work experience but provides employers with students who are motivated and ambitious. This academic year, like previously the College has also successfully been able to secure placements for students with new employers, building new working relationships that the College will look to expand upon.

2017



Top Tips! Overcoming Challenges

As mentioned above, some sectors are more challenging than others when it comes to sourcing and securing placements but there are also sometimes specific reasons as to why it's hard to obtain placements with some employers:

Health and safety concerns can be particularly difficult to source placements for in the manufacturing and construction industries but also for younger students in other sectors if the employer's insurance doesn't cover students aged under 16.

Pupil **safeguarding** and patient **confidentiality** can bring up issues when looking to secure work experience in a health setting. However, there may be alternative programmes (such as the NHS work experience programme) which offer a different style of work experience, or alternative settings such as day nurseries or care homes which may pose fewer risks.

The **capacity** for some businesses to take on a work experience student can be particularly difficult in the creative and media sector where most businesses are micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Again, it may be possible for alternative work-related experiences to take place.

The **size of the business** can sometimes cause difficulties. Finding the right person to deal with can be hard in larger companies and if they already have an established programme this is likely to mean competition for places.

Alternatively, smaller businesses may struggle to complete all the necessary paperwork required (such as health and safety audits) before a student can be taken on.

The **location** of some businesses can make securing a placement almost impossible in some cases, for example, generally, there are fewer engineering opportunities available in cities. Without suitable (or affordable) transport to get to a placement, students may find that taking work experience with some employers just isn't feasible.

The **ability of the student** can also make sourcing quality placements difficult. For those with their sights on careers requiring a high level of qualifications, such as medicine or law, a suitable placement may be hard to source; this can result in them taking placements in the same sector but where they will experience lower level roles. For others, their lack of maturity may mean that they're unable to meet the employer's expectations.

If schools choose to contract with a third party provider to source employer placements then some or all of these challenges will be discussed and solutions sought.

Out of county placements

Most students in Norfolk will find a placement within the county however, particularly for those with contacts, some may secure an employer over the county border or in another part of the country. If you're using WEX Norfolk or another work experience brokerage service, check beforehand the reach of the organisation in terms of health and safety checking.

Students may choose to undertake a placement outside the UK but schools should be aware that this is restricted to **post-16** students only (HSE guidance). Schools should contact HR Direct (Norfolk County Council) on 01603 222212 for further advice.

Securing a work placement

Schools/colleges should follow up on potential opportunities to make sure the employer is realistic about what they are being asked to do.

Remember a quality placement is a meaningful experience for the student and one which they can draw on for evidence as they apply for further studies at 6th form/college, university, an apprenticeship or work. If you have any doubts about the opportunity offered, investigate further until you are confident the placement is safe to go ahead and of a high quality.

Schools retain a duty of care for students whilst they are on placement and should take all steps possible to ensure the placement is safe and secure and appropriate for the student's needs, see section 7 The Legal bit! And section 8.5 briefing employers.

Approaching employers directly

Employers welcome a direct approach from students enquiring about opportunities rather than from their parents or carers acting on their behalf. No matter how well-meaning the latter approach may be, students should be encouraged to make contact themselves and in doing so, will take the first steps towards making a good impression.

The action of sourcing their own opportunities benefits students in other ways too. It helps them to develop or enhance existing skills and behaviours such as initiative, researching and resourcefulness. These are the types of skills employers are looking for in young people and are an early opportunity for them to demonstrate their capabilities. Some students may need additional support to complete this task effectively.



7. The legal bit!

As the member of staff responsible for organising work experience, you are responsible for ensuring that any student taking part in work experience is not exposed to any risks during their time on the placement. This includes any type of work experience a student takes part in, even if they have set it up themselves, even if it takes place outside of school time or it has been set up via a brokerage service.

Before a student is put in contact with the employer they have been matched with, the school or college has a duty to put in place checks around safeguarding, and health and safety. Please bear in mind the following advice from the HSE which says that:

“work placement arrangements are too often seen as over-bureaucratic and burdensome, putting off potential employers. The effectiveness of the employer’s risk management arrangements is what matters. Employers should already be managing the risks in their workplaces and are best placed to assess whether or not they need to do anything additional for a new young person joining them.

Schools and colleges, or those organising placements, should simply ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy themselves that those arrangements are in place”.

What you must do:

- ✓ **Check** the employer has an appropriate health and safety risk assessment
- ✓ **Check** the employer has up-to-date Employers’ Liability Compulsory Insurance covering students on work experience (some exemptions exist)
- ✓ **Check** the employer is aware of who to contact in school if they are concerned about the student’s welfare or protection at any point during the placement including Prevent duty
- ✓ **Conduct** Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on any relevant staff if necessary
- ✓ **Ensure** the employer has seen the guidance on working with young people



7.1 Health and safety checks

Students on placement with an employer are classed as employees for health and safety purposes. Risk assessments conducted for young people under 18 must take into account their age, their lack of maturity or experience, any health or behavioural issues disclosed or physical capabilities.

An employer's existing health and safety audit may already identify any risks to an individual and therefore measures to guard against them should already be in place. However, employers taking on a student for the first time may not have employed someone under the age of 18 before and will need to review any existing assessment or policy. Schools should satisfy themselves that new employers fully understand the risks associated with a student on placement.

If you contract with a third-party provider of work experience services then all necessary health and safety checks will be conducted on your behalf.

Some useful points to remember are:

- There are very few work activities a student cannot do due to health and safety law.
- You don't need to do checks all over again for a new student where an employer is known to you and has a good track record
- Employers with fewer than five employees are not required to have a written risk assessment
- For placements in a higher-risk environment such as construction, agriculture or manufacturing, an additional discussion should take place around the actual work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed. However, the actual work the student will be undertaking and the surroundings they are working in may not be themselves be considered high risk.

If students are on an employers premises out of county then you must still ensure these checks are completed.

Schools can find further guidance on HR Infospace www.hrinfospace.org.uk.

7.2 Employers' Liability Insurance

There is a legal requirement for employers to have Employers' Liability Insurance (ELI) which must cover students on work experience, although some exemptions exist (see www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience). Schools should be aware that placements should not be authorised without ELI (where it's required by law) and that public liability insurance is NOT sufficient. If employers already hold this insurance there is no need for them to get additional cover. If a student is being placed with a voluntary organisation which only has public liability insurance, they will need to obtain temporary ELI for the duration of the placement.

If you contract with a third party provider of work experience services then all necessary ELI checks will be conducted on your behalf.

7.3 Safeguarding

Any school organising work experience placements is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm and government statutory guidance on safeguarding in relation to work experience placements can be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (April 2014). Schools can find further guidance on HR Infospace www.hrinfospace.org.uk.

Schools should check the individual circumstances of the placement and ensure that they are satisfied that any necessary DBS checks on staff have been conducted (see 7.4 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks).

Parents and carers must be given a named contact for reporting or raising any queries or concerns they may have leading up to a students' placement. In most cases this will be the named Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school. Students must also receive clear advice and a point of contact in the school in case of any issues.

If there is a concern or an allegation made about an individual who has contact with a young person while on placement then Norfolk County Council's Children's Services LADO

(Local Authority Designated Officer) must be contacted immediately on 01603 223473.

7.4 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check of staff working with young people is not necessary in all circumstances and is no longer required by law for staff supervising young people aged 16 and 17 on work experience. It is reasonable for a school to request one is made for someone who has a designated responsibility for supervising a student if there is substantial one-to-one contact, particularly if the student is under 16, or is a vulnerable student for any reason (e.g. a student with special educational needs). It is not necessary for staff who are simply working alongside the student.

A check may, however, be advisable for a member of staff responsible for supervising a post-16 student if a placement is expected to exceed 15 days. Guidance states that an employer may also request that a DBS check takes place for a post-16 student themselves if the placement is within an industry which requires it (for example health care or early year sector) and the placement is for longer than 10 days. There is no legal entitlement for a student under 16 to undergo a DBS check.

In the case of a student or staff employee needing to undergo a DBS check, the school or college should take into account the period of time needed to complete and return an application (up to four weeks).

A pre-placement agreement form should be completed and signed by student, school, parent and employer.

Schools can find further guidance on HR Infospace www.hrinfospace.org.uk.

Other important information

Students must **not be paid** by the employer during their work experience placement, it is an educational experience and may invalidate insurance arrangements. Contributions by employers towards travel or meals during placement hours are, however, acceptable.

It's recommended that students **don't work for more than five days** in any consecutive seven-day period, with the number of hours worked to be agreed in advance with the employer. Hours worked should not be excessively long or unnecessarily unsocial hours and should not be more than 40 hours per week. Weekend working is permitted only with the student and parent or carer's agreement and should not include both a Saturday and Sunday in the same week.

For further guidance on the Working Time Directive please visit www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours

Students should be made aware of appropriate and acceptable use of social media from their personal accounts relating to the placement or employer both during and after it has finished.

Schools and colleges should signpost students to their own existing IT and social media policy on students' use of equipment and various social media platforms and should ensure students know to follow the guidelines set. Schools can also refer to Norfolk County Council guidance:

"Students have been informed about the appropriate and proportionate use of social media from their personal accounts in relation to their placement, both while they are on placement and also once the placement has finished. Individual school's IT and social media policies cover student's use of equipment and various social media platforms. Students should ensure that they follow the guidelines set. Some employers will regularly monitor social media both as part of their recruitment and selection policies and also as a routine element of their ongoing business marketing and communications activity. If employers have concerns relating to a student's use of social media while on placement they should contact the school directly."

For further guidance on the responsibilities and requirements around work experience and work-related learning in the 14-19 curriculum in Norfolk schools and colleges please refer to HR Infospace www.hrinfospace.org.uk.

8. Preparing for placement

8.1 Setting learning objectives

Everyone involved in the placement will benefit from the school establishing clear reasons for it taking place.

Please refer to the WEX Norfolk lesson plan series for suggestions of activities that can be delivered to students as part of their preparation for a work experience placement. Parents can be informed/updated on the schools/college's approach to work experience using the parents powerpoint presentation as a starting point.

For **pre-16 students and SEND**, the focus may be more on health and safety, and developing soft (employability) skills via an introduction to the working world.

For **post-16** placements, the aims may be quite specific, reflecting actual work-related skills expected to be learnt or experienced. Preparing students through employability activities such as CV writing or mock interview sessions may be more relevant to those on study programmes.

Irrespective of the students' age, learning objectives will help to set expectations and may include:

- Developing generic skills such as improving confidence or social skills, timekeeping, raising aspirations and increasing motivation.
- Understanding employability skills and how the skills learned in school can translate to the workplace such as good communication skills, problem solving, team work. This can also include gaining a better understanding of how businesses or workplaces work.
- CV writing and interview skills.
- Exploring and learning specific skills and tasks relevant to the student's current vocational pathway (**post-16** study programme).
- Understanding health and safety.

For **pre-16 students**, schools may find the **Norfolk Work and Skills lesson plans** a useful tool for helping students think about employability skills and wider labour market demands.

Objectives to be evaluated and reflected on after placement should be student-focused as individual need and experience will vary depending on the student. The method in which this is done should also be considered (see 11.1 Debriefing students).

8.2 Preparing students for post-placement

Plan now for what you expect each student to do or produce in terms of evaluating and sharing the placement experience once completed. Students should understand what intelligence or information they are expected to gather, how to collect it (such as asking members of staff with different roles about their work and what is expected of them) and how to identify the skills they need to develop. They should also understand why this is an important element of their experience. Providing them with a work experience log to fill in daily will help the student to focus on which activities in the workplace could provide valuable evidence for their future career progression.

It would be beneficial to the whole student population, not just the individual, if students produced diaries, blogs or results of surveys conducted in the workplace that can be shared across the school and with parents. These can also be drawn upon as part of the reflection and evaluation process once the placement is over.

Post-16 students should be able to undertake a more detailed analysis of their experiences and could be asked to complete a reflective account.

All students should be asked to evaluate their placement, their learning and their performance.

Before the placement starts – make sure

- Students have the signed agreement for the placement from the employer (and parental consent)
- All the legal requirements are confirmed as having been met
- Students make contact with the employer

to re-introduce themselves and to gather basic information (time to arrive on their first day, dress code, working hours and lunch arrangements)

- Familiarisation visits with employers have taken place for identified students (can help put them at ease with transport, the working environment and members of staff.)

8.3 Pre-placement agreement forms

Before a placement begins, a pre-placement form filled in by both student and employer and signed by the student's parents or carer will provide the details needed by all parties, such as names, contact numbers and any health conditions which need to be declared.

The student should be asked to complete and sign a form which includes some basic details about themselves, such as their school or college, date of birth and emergency contact number as well as a health declaration and agreement with employer around confidentiality, safety and security. The form should also include details from the employer about the placement such as address and phone number, the duties the student will be carrying out, working days and times, breaks and any clothing requirements, along with their Employer's Liability Insurance details. This may include a confidentiality clause completed by the student stating that they will not disclose information about the employer, their employees or business or copy electronic information.

In addition to the agreement form, a written placement plan should be drawn up, highlighting the objectives of the placement. Schools and colleges should ask the employer to provide any further information they feel might help the student to prepare for their placement.

8.4 Briefing students

As well as preparing students on how to get the most benefit for themselves out of their placement, schools and colleges must also brief students on the expectations upon them from both school and employer, the employer's

responsibilities and what role the school or college will play while they are out on placement.

This should include:

- ✓ Explaining the timeline and introducing any external agencies involved
- ✓ The employer's supervision arrangements (a named contact at the company or organisation) (See 8.3 pre-placement agreement form)
- ✓ The health and safety responsibilities of students and of employers including any paperwork
- ✓ Safeguarding arrangements
- ✓ An emergency contact number (member of school staff) who can be contacted if any concerns or incidents arise. This should cover early mornings, evenings and weekends or if a student has a placement which runs into a holiday period.
- ✓ Employer expectations or expected standards in the workplace, covering issues such as timekeeping, dress code, language, use of mobile phones and social media
- ✓ Any arrangements regarding visit(s) from teachers and any 'pastoral' support available during the placement
- ✓ What the school expects the student to record while on placement or write up once back at school
- ✓ Arrangements for debriefing and evaluating

Students should be made aware of the need for them to listen carefully, to follow instructions, to use any safety equipment provided, and to understand that failure to do so may not only have an impact on them but also on others.

An induction checklist completed by the employer (see 9. Supporting students while on placement) will not only ensure that a student is introduced to the work placement environment in a thorough and supported way on their first day, but will help the school in the evaluation process.

Some students may need extra support if confidence or the skills to prepare are lacking.



8.5 Briefing employers

Employers can play an important part in helping young people to develop themselves by building into the placement elements which can help to raise aspirations and encourage motivation. Employers can contribute to a successful work placement experience by:

- ✓ Ensuring it matches the aspirations of the learner as far as possible and tailoring activities where possible
- ✓ Planning for the student to experience as many different roles and functions as possible so that they have the opportunity to come across jobs they weren't previously aware of. Variety will also help to hold their interest and motivation.
- ✓ Demonstrating how the different roles and functions within the company or organisation link to the wider business community or other areas of work including what makes them successful.
- ✓ Giving the learner responsibility for a particular piece of work which they can realistically complete and which they feel is valued upon completion. Support must be provided where needed.
- ✓ Ensuring that the student is sufficiently challenged. This will vary depending on the individual needs of the student but prior discussion with the school or college can help to identify what the student is capable of and how autonomously they are able to work. A clear set of progressive tasks may provide motivation for the student and a sense of achievement.

- ✓ Taking an active part in the student's input into any diary or log they have been tasked with keeping
- ✓ Agreeing to write a short evaluation statement or reference for the student upon completion

The FairTrain good practice guide to work experience includes some useful pointers for employers on creating a successful placement for students. The leaflet 'Employers' guide to work experience' (Norfolk County Council) also explains the benefits of work experience for employers (see also 4.3 The benefits of work experience to employers), as well as giving details on the type of work students can and can't do, the assurances they need to put in place before a student starts and considerations regarding welfare and appropriate behaviour.

Schools can also help employers prepare by asking them to fill in an induction checklist (see 9. Supporting students while on placement).

Further support for employers can be found at: **www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/workinspiration/download-toolkit**

When the placement has come to an end, employers should be asked to complete an evaluation of the placement and the student's performance. It should also be good practice to encourage the student to ask the employer if they would write a testimony for them and/or act as a referee which will help to boost their CV.

8.6 Briefing parents

Parents and carers can play a large part in a successful placement and when briefing them, it's worth emphasising the important role they can play in supporting young people to get the most out of their work experience.

Briefing parents is a key activity and thought should be given about the most effective way/s to do this. You may want to consider a number of different ways to get the message across, such as a briefing session as part of a parents evening, parent mail, newsletter a parents only drop in session, an informal session for students and parents with input and support from students who've already been on placement, a networking event for employers to which you invite parents and students.

Parents and carers can assist in the smooth running of a student's placement by:

- ✓ Making sure they arrive on time after a good night's sleep
- ✓ Talking to them on a daily basis about their experiences
- ✓ Reminding them to keep a diary of what they've done that day and to record any useful information such as the names of any computer software used
- ✓ Helping them to stay positive if they aren't enjoying their placement
- ✓ Contacting the school or college's designated safeguarding lead immediately if they think they are experiencing any issues which need addressing



9. Supporting students while on placement

Your musts!

An induction checklist for employers is an example of good practice that schools may wish to consider adopting.

Schools **must** make suitable arrangements to visit or monitor pupils on a risk basis as they retain the duty of care for the pupil during the placement.

Schools **must** provide each student and employer with emergency contact details for a member of school staff who can be contacted should an incident occur or if concerns arise.

This includes early mornings, evenings and weekends, or if a student attends their placement at irregular hours.

Emergency contact details **must** also be available and maintained in situations where a placement continues after the end of the school term into a holiday period. This must be a named individual member of school/college staff who is effectively 'on-call' for student concerns and queries and to support employers and or parents.

10. If a placement falls through what next...

Even with careful organisation and planning, sometimes a placement is not able to go ahead. Having a back-up plan in place for occasions like this can give assurances that some form of work experience can go ahead, even if it isn't quite as hoped.

If using a work experience brokerage service, they may be able to find another placement depending on the notice given. Alternatively, it might be that an employer is able to take on an extra person alongside a placement that has already been arranged, although schools will need to carefully consider if placing more than one student with an employer at any one time may lead to the students becoming distracted.

Failing that, if a student is unable to find another opportunity, look to your school or college departments for a situation that offer some experience of work.

Where a student's placement falls through or is cut short, the student should be expected to attend school and suitable arrangements to supervise them will need to be made.

For **post-16** students on a vocational study programme, you may need to look at starting the process again for a different time frame.

11. Debriefing and evaluation

Debriefing is an important part of work experience as it allows for the student to consolidate or apply any learning and set goals for the near future. It also forms part of the evaluation process which will help to improve future planning.

11.1 Debriefing students

Once a student has completed their work placement, reflection and evaluation should take place as soon after the placement as possible. Maximising the effectiveness of the following up the experience is invaluable so timing is crucial.

Students should be encouraged to link what they've learnt on placement back to their subjects or study programme and any log or record of the placement that they made can be used to support this. Any learning objectives set can be measured.

Helping students to have realistic expectations about their forthcoming placement may reduce disappointment when things don't go as expected but there will also be situations where, for whatever reason, a placement doesn't meet their expectations. For some, reflecting on what didn't go so well can be a useful way of helping them to see their future more clearly or it might result in the student requesting a careers interview to talk about alternative options. Sometimes though, the student may be disappointed with the placement because they weren't offered enough of a variety of tasks, it wasn't challenging enough or they didn't feel they were given the opportunity to learn much. In such cases, student feedback may inform the school's own evaluation and placements with that particular employer may be handled slightly differently in the future.

A range of appropriate activities around the experiences of the student while on placement will help them to apply any learning from the placement and start thinking about which areas they need to develop further. Follow-up activities also enable the school to demonstrate the value they place on work-related learning and to highlight the importance of taking part.

In addition to a **thank you letter** or email to the employer and/or other members of staff involved, follow-up activities might include:

- **Group feedback and discussion**
- **Evidence collecting.** Encourage students to collect examples of learning during their placement such as any projects worked on, tasks completed or software packages used; include any feedback or references from members of staff, making the student aware that may be useful when applying for education, training or work in the future.
- **CV and application writing** students can use evidence recorded in their work placement log and other experiences to practice applying for work, training, further learning or other opportunities.
- **Sharing their experiences** with the rest of the school. This might be in the form of a report or blog shared on the school website, careers virtual learning environment, school newsletter or as a presentation to other students. Link to learning objectives or elements in English or other subjects. A checklist or 'what to expect' article for next year's cohort might also be a useful exercise and this could include any experiences which came as a shock to the student. This might also help inform the school of anything new to be added to student preparation for next year.
- **Reviewing career ideas.** Students may come back from placement with a broader knowledge of jobs in that sector – a chance for further exploration may result in them reviewing their career ideas.

11.2 Evaluation

Student evaluation

Feedback gathered from students can help schools and colleges to identify recurring issues which may need addressing within their programme as well as forming part of a record which can demonstrate effectiveness and positive outcomes for students.

Questions might include:

- Did you feel you had enough **information** to prepare you for your placement? Were there any aspects you wish you'd been aware of before you started it?
- How helpful was the **information** you received from the employer beforehand?
- Did you receive **an induction** on your first day which included a tour of the workplace, health and safety instructions and what you would be doing during your placement? How helpful was this?
- How did you find the **tasks** you did?
- Did you find keeping a work experience **log** helpful?
- Were there any aspects of your work experience placement that you **did not enjoy** or that you weren't happy with?
- Overall, did you find your work placement **useful**?
- Is there anything that you would **improve**?
- Has your work placement changed your mind in any way about your **career ideas**?
- How helpful did you find any **follow-up activities**?
- Do you feel you would keep in contact with your work placement **employer**?

School/college evaluation

Conducting an evaluation of your work experience programme on an annual basis will help to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the processes put in place are effective. It should include feedback from students, school staff involved in monitoring visits and administering the programme as well as employers and parents.

Evaluation will help schools and colleges to:

- Build on any successes.
- Make necessary adjustments to the administration and preparation of the programme.
- Demonstrate to Ofsted their commitment to student progression.
- Identify employers who are willing to participate in the future.
- Evidence work-related activities for Quality in Careers external accreditation.
- Assist the reporting back to the senior leadership team.
- Support the reporting on the work experience programme and its success to the governing body.
- Provide a means to help identify students who could support or contribute to the programme the following year.

Employer evaluation

Collecting feedback from employers will help to review processes and inform future planning. An employer form may be circulated to employees who had a large input in the placement and should include questions such as:

- How happy were you with the information you received from school prior to the placement?
- Did you feel the student was fully prepared for the placement?
- Were visits from staff during the placement helpful?
- Was the student able to communicate well with staff?
- Did you find the student's work experience log helpful?
- Is there anything that could have been done better?
- Will you offer work experience to a student/s again?



Parents evaluation

Asking parents for their thoughts and comments will help support the whole evaluation process. As key influencers of young people, parents should be encouraged to feedback any concerns during the process and also to provide constructive feedback at the end of the placement process. They are also an invaluable employer resource and may be able to support the programme by offering placements to students in the future!

Questions might include:

- How helpful was the information you received from school/college about the work experience programme?
- Do you feel the school helped your son/daughter to fully prepare before the placement started?
- What aspects of the placement did you discuss with your son/daughter, before & during the placement?
- Did you review and comment in your son/daughters' work experience log/record?
- What could we do to help improve the process from your perspective?
- Are you/your employer willing to offer a placement to a student?

12. Interested to find out more?

Then check out these sources of further reading / support

Policy documents and statutory guidance

Department for Education (2016). **'Keeping Children Safe in Education'**
(includes statutory guidance around safeguarding during work experience)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

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www.gov.uk/government/publications/opening-doors-breaking-barriers-a-strategy-for-social-mobility

Working Time Directive www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours

Young people at work (Health and Safety Executive) www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm

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www.gov.uk/government/publications/opening-doors-breaking-barriers-a-strategy-for-social-mobility

Guidance and support resources

Norfolk County Council resources

HR Infospace (HR service provided through Educator Solutions)

<https://www.hrinfospace.org.uk>

Norfolk Work and Skills guide and lesson plans

<https://helpyouchoose.org/content/advisers/resource-materials/publications>

Developing Norfolk's Future Workforce videos

<https://helpyouchoose.org/content/advisers/resource-materials/future-workforce>

WEX Norfolk lesson plans

Other resources/ organisations providing useful information

Careers and Enterprise Company

www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/school-activities/1-2-week-work-experience

Barclays Lifeskills www.barclayslifeskills.com

Inspiring the Future www.inspiringthefuture.org/

Fair Train www.fairtrain.org/types-of-work-experience/study-programmes

The CDI (Career Development Institute)

www.thecdi.net/write/Why_Does_Employer_Engagement_Matter_A_Toolkit_for_Managing_Employer_Activities_in_Schools_and_Colleges.pdf

Resources you may find useful to support employers

Employer guides to work experience UKCES/DBIS

www.gov.uk/government/collections/employer-guides-to-work-experience

CIPD (2014). **Making work experience work: tips for employers** www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/people/routes-work/work-experience-guide

Business in the Community (BITC) (2015). **Step by step guide to creating an inspiring work placement** www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/workinspiration/getting-started-guide-employers

Mencap www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/work-experience-week-information-employers

Mencap (2017) **Good for business: the benefits of employing people with a learning disability**
<https://bit.ly/2gMHl0v>

Fair Train www.fairtrain.org/types-of-work-experience/study-programmes

CIPD (2012) **Work Experience Placements That Work: A guide for employers**
www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/people/routes-work/placements-guide

13. Timeline

Who?	What?	When? Count down to placement start date
School	<p>Draft a project plan to include timeline, activities, resources inc staffing, monitoring requirements and evaluation</p> <p>Identify which students will be on external placement (extended and block) /those completing in-house placements/those undertaking supervised enterprise activities</p> <p>Seek agreement of manager/Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Attend any identified continuous professional development sessions for school staff</p> <p>Use social media to support own development & to link with potential employers e.g. twitter @WEXNorfolkCC</p>	Start date minus 6 months
School/third party provider	<p>Identify and engage third party provider to undertake health & safety employer checks (if not qualified to conduct own health & safety employer checks)</p> <p>Develop strategy and timeline for students requiring bespoke, brokered placements</p> <p>Start to identify possible employers to host placements e.g. review feedback from previously used employers, staff/employer connections, alumni network, governors, existing employer connections with mentoring/ ambassador programmes</p>	Start date minus 6 months
School/students	<p>Introduction to work experience for students; key activities and timeline, students complete self-assessment</p> <p>Consider student drop in sessions hosted by students who had successfully completed placements</p> <p>Consider appointing students as work experience ambassadors</p>	Start date minus 6 months
School/student/ employer	<p>Assembly/year group/form presentations from students/ employers on placement from the previous year</p> <p>Identify other activities students are involved in that could lead to placements e.g. careers events/fairs, employers networking events, lunchtime employer talks</p>	Start date minus 6 months

School	Parents' work experience consultation evening <i>see example</i> Follow up with parents including parents as employers to host placements, asking parents to request their own employer to host	Start date minus 6 months
School/students	Students identified as requiring additional input/support to begin 1:1 sessions	Start date minus 6 months
School	Issue work experience guidance to parents and placement consent forms to students/parents (see example)	Start date minus 12 weeks
Students	Placements to be secured by an agreed date	
Students	Students identified as requiring additional input/support to continue 1:1	Start date minus 12 weeks
School	Discussions with confirmed employers about what they are able to offer to students on placement	Start date minus 12 weeks
School/third party provider	Employer checks begin	Start date minus 12 weeks
Students / parents / employers	All pre-placement agreement forms to have been completed and signed. (see example)	Start date minus 10 weeks
Students/school	Once all checks have been conducted, and placement confirmed, students to make initial contact with employer Issue conformation letter to employer and employer guidance	Start date minus 8 weeks
School/students	Prepare students for placement Lesson plan 1 Why Work Experience? learning objectives, explain log books/diaries, CV writing	Start date minus 8 weeks
School/students	Prepare students for placement Lesson plan 2 Skills, skills, skills!	Start date minus 4 weeks
School/third party provider	Placement checks to be concluded.	Start date minus 3 weeks
School	Finalise monitoring plan	Start date minus 3 weeks
School / students	Prepare students for placement Lesson plan 3 What the Employer Expects brief students on health and safety, expected behaviour, how to make the most of it	Start date minus 2 weeks

Students	Make contact with employers to confirm what time to start and where to report, any dress code and lunch arrangements	Start date minus 2 weeks
School	Brief parents pre-placement (letter or email)	Start date minus 2 weeks
School / students	Prepare students for what will happen post-placement	Start date minus 1 week
Students	Placement	
School	Implement monitoring plan	During placement period
School / students	De-briefing activities Students revisit self-assessment and review own progress made Hand in log book/record Students and staff to discuss and identify next steps*	Within one week of placement
Students	Thank you letters/emails to employers (<i>suggested letter template</i>)	Within one or two weeks of placement
School	Evaluation (student and employer) and evidence gathering. Identify good practice, potential case studies and work experience ambassadors School to reflect on work experience programme, report to Senior Leadership Team & governors Feedback to third party provider (if using)	By end of following half term
School / students	Follow-up activities**	By end of following half term

* e.g. dos & don'ts list checklist for students for next year

** Follow-up activities for students who have been on placement the previous summer could link in with students preparing for placement that academic year. Might include a student/employer display, developing & delivering presentations about their own experiences, student/employer assembly talks

Work experience timeline

All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that the information in this publication was correct at time of going to press (September 2017)

Work placement guidelines for those working with young people are produced by the Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) Strategy Team, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, NR1 2DH • Tel: 0344 800 8022 **Consultant** Helen Janota, Archway Careers

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**If you need this information in large print,
or in an alternative version, please contact
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