

work experience information



Students Parents Employers Supervisors Teachers

A leaflet which sets out the main benefits of work experience for students and employers and the responsibilities of all those involved

WEI

Work
Experience
Information



London Central
Education Business Alliance

Aims, Objectives & Benefits

Work Experience is an important part of the curriculum for all school students. It brings a wide range of benefits for those that take part. This leaflet aims to set out the responsibilities of all the contributors to a successful and safe quality work experience.

Benefits for Students

- helps to develop interpersonal and employability skills
- involves working in a team and learning how to work with others
- increases motivation to do well at school
- encourages personal development
- helps students to see the relevance of school subjects
- helps identify personal strengths and areas for development
- provides opportunities for success in a new environment.

Benefits for Employers

- can help employers to motivate and develop the skills of all staff
- provides opportunities for staff to act as mentors, role models or supervisors
- helps employers to understand changes in educational courses and qualifications
- increases awareness of young people who have different backgrounds, cultures, abilities and needs
- provides opportunities to influence teachers to understand the needs of employers
- contributes to the development of young people and to the local community.

Preparing for the work placement

Initial Assessment

When the work experience organiser assesses the suitability of a placement the following issues should be addressed:

- health and safety and insurance
- supervision and risk assessment
- possible placement activities and a job description
- learning opportunities.

Preparation in school

The aims of the school-based preparation programme should be to:

- help students understand the difference between school and work
- develop their understanding of health and safety at work
- encourage them to be open to ideas and information they may use in the future
- develop action-planning skills in relation to learning, personal development and career choices
- explore how they can develop their personal and key skills.



Preparation by employers

Employers may find the following points useful when they are developing a suitable programme for the student:

- give the student appropriate tasks rather than make them watch others working
- make sure the activities are varied to make the experience interesting for the student
- plan times when the student will be able to talk to their supervisor about how things are going
- set aside sessions when the student will be able to gather information to complete their Work Experience Diary
- point out the skills students are using and develop through their work
- try to broaden student's horizons and raise their aspirations rather than fit them into stereotyped ideas of tasks that young people can do.

Pre-placement meeting

This is an important meeting that can help students and employers find out about each other. It helps the employer to appreciate the range of tasks the student can undertake and set learning objectives. The student is able to familiarise him/herself with the organisation and how to get there.

The meeting should be relaxed and cover the following points:

- dress code, hours, lunch arrangements etc
- the student's skills, interests and aspirations
- the tasks the student may be undertaking in the work situation
- whether the employer can contribute to any of the student's course work/assignments
- identifying the key risks of the work and what is in place to reduce or eliminate the risk of injury.

During the placement

Employers should organise an induction session. This will normally be undertaken on the first morning of the work experience and should include:

- a health and safety briefing covering workplace hazards, accident and emergency procedures and fire drill
- introduction to health and safety representatives, other staff and the organisation of the workplace
- issue of any protective clothing/uniform/passess required
- a tour of the building, pointing out facilities such as the canteen, washrooms, first-aiders and fire exits.

Employers should also:

- make sure there is an identified competent supervisor at the workplace who will take direct responsibility for the student during their placement and that it is appropriate that this person work with young persons
- set aside time for the student and their supervisor to discuss progress, perhaps on a twice-weekly basis.

Schools should:

- make best efforts to ensure a teacher from the student's school visits the placement to discuss progress with the student and the employer.



At the End of the Placement

Employers should:

- discuss what the student feels he or she has learnt from the placement
- give the student a final opportunity to ask about the organisation or a vocational area, career paths and employment opportunities
- complete any student evaluation/report that the school provides
- consider attending a debriefing/celebratory event at the school.

Schools should:

- gather information from the students, including health and safety aspects of the placement, and feed these back to the placement organiser
- hold debriefing sessions to help students get the most out of this unique learning experience.

Health and Safety

It is essential that the following points are addressed:

- organisations are only used if they demonstrate good health and safety practice, and have a written health and safety policy (if they have 5 or more employees)
- the workplace should be checked and approved by a trained person
- a formal agreement (WEA) has been reached and signed by the employer
- all concerned are aware that students on work experience have the same status, in health and safety law, as employees.



Employers' responsibilities

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks to all employees, including young workers, and do what is reasonably practicable to control those risks. The Regulations also require employers to assess risks to young people under 18, before they start work (or work experience). They must also now provide information to parents of compulsory school-age children about the risks and how the risk of injury is reduced or eliminated. This is the responsibility of the employer and does not necessarily have to be in writing. Employers may feel confident that the student will be able to pass on to their parents the risk assessment information given to them at their pre-work experience meeting, particularly if they have taken the sensible precaution of checking that the student understood! If there are concerns about these regulations, employers can contact the work experience organisers and ask for help.

In the case of accidents, employers must ensure all work experience 'relevant accidents' (or related diseases) are reported to the local education authority and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on Accident Report Forms AF1 (WE). These should be obtained from the Learning and Skills Council Safety Team and must be returned to them within 10 working days. If you require further guidance and information please contact the LSC Safety Team at Centre Point Tower, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DR.

Tel: 0845 019 4144 Fax: 020 7896 8686
E-mail: londoncentralinfo@lsc.gov.uk

Students' responsibilities

Before the work experience begins students will be told, by the employer, about the health and safety practices of the work they will be undertaking. This will include the most common risks of the workplace, and how they can protect themselves and others from injury. Students have a responsibility in law, and an obligation to the employer and the people they work with, to ensure that they pay attention to these safe practices. The employer will want

to be sure that students understand the risks, the ways of avoiding injury and that they will be able to explain these to their parents/carers.

It is most important that students let the employer know if they do not understand an instruction, any of the safety procedures, or if they do not feel confident that they can carry out the duties safely. If they have any special needs that may affect the ability to do the work, they should discuss this with their parents and the school. Students will need to practice how they will explain these special needs to the people they will be working with. This may involve, for example, discussing a hearing loss or some difficulty they may have with reading instructions. Letting the employer know will help them to ensure that the student has a successful and safe experience.

Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

If the young student has any medical or other special needs that may affect their work, these should be discussed with the employer and school before the placement begins. Students will normally be required to attend a pre-placement meeting with the employer before they start their work experience.

If a parent/carer has contact with an employer who may be able to offer a placement, they will need to inform the school as soon as possible to ensure that the health and safety and other checks can be made.

Insurance

Employers should include students in their Employers' Liability Insurance Policy. This will normally involve informing their insurer (usually once is sufficient) that they will be taking on work experience students. The school will be able to supply employers with a simple form to send to their insurers.

The local education authority or school should have taken out personal accident insurance to cover school students against injury caused by accident. Parents/carers may request full information about the level and extent of cover from the work experience organiser.

Further Information

Responsibilities identified in this information sheet are expanded in the following publications available on request from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Publications Centre, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Notts NG15 0DG

tel: 0845 602 2260 fax: 0845 603 3360

e-mail dfee@prologistics.co.uk web site: www.open.gov.uk/dfeehome.htm

DFEE publication – Work Experience – a guide for schools Ref: SPD/WES/01/02(rev)

DFEE publication – Work Experience – a guide for employers Ref: SPD/WES/01/1199(rev)

And

Managing Health and Safety on Work Experience – a guide for organisers Ref: HSG 199 for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 6FS
tel: 01787 881165 fax: 01787 313995 www.hsebooks.co.uk

Other useful websites:

www.youngworker.co.uk

www.thetridenttrust.org.uk

www.workexperience.co.uk



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