

WORK EXPERIENCE

Guide to finding a Self-Placement



Work experience is where you will spend time on an employer's premises undertaking tasks and duties as an employee, gaining valuable work skills to assist you in your future career path.

Below is information to help you look for your own placement.

This may be the first time you have had to apply for a job, but it will not be the last! If there is anything you do not understand, please ask your School Work Experience Co-ordinator.

When you are thinking about your work experience please think carefully about what you would like to do. If you are considering doing work experience in an industry that you think will be your career choice for the future, remember that a lot of students will be applying for the same placements, it is therefore important that you act quickly to give you a better chance of being accepted on the placement of your choice.

Please remember that employers do not have to offer you a placement, they are taking valuable time out of their working day to show you what it is like to be in the world of work.

It is not ideal to do your work experience with a 'school friend' this can cause distractions and not allow you to work to your own full potential.

There are lots of different ways in which you can look for a work placement, here are some suggestions below:

- The internet, use search engines such as Google to look for local businesses. Type in key words related to the area of work that you would like to work within. For example if you would like to work in a Hair Salon you could use words such as: Hair salon, Hair stylist, Hairdressers etc as businesses refer to themselves in various ways. If you would like to work in a garage environment then words such as MOT, servicing, tyres, exhausts, could all help to bring up more results when searching.
- Social media - lots of small businesses have a large presence on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok and Twitter) and these businesses are very active and responsive on their social media platforms, so you could get a quicker response from them. But please remember to keep your message polite and professional, you are messaging a business not your friend!
- Be alert - when out and about in your local area, have a look around you, what businesses can you see, new businesses pop up all of the time. If you feel confident enough, you could go in and ask them if they can offer you a work placement, if not, take note of the name of the business and when you get home you can look them up and make contact with them.
- Ask family and friends - people that you know might be able to suggest some businesses that you can try, they may also be happy for you to do your work experience with them in their business or at their place of work. But please only work with family if you are genuinely keen and interested in what they do, not because it is the easy option!

EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

It's important to understand that the duties you will undertake are likely to be that of a trainee and therefore you may be observing some tasks due to the nature of the job

Chemist Assistant

You will learn the role of a retail assistant. Work will involve working in a pharmacy undertaking a wide range of retail tasks such as merchandising, order, receipts, checking and display of goods, serving customers, use of cash register and any other tasks as requested.

General requirements: Student must be **enthusiastic, reliable** and **responsible**.

Child Care / Classroom Assistant

You will work with and help young children (babies in a nursery setting). You will work as requested by staff and could be in the nursery, infants or junior classes. Work includes hearing children read, project work, arts and crafts etc., and help with displays, assist at snack and meal times. Assist with indoor and outdoor play.

General requirements: Student must be **enthusiastic, reliable** and **responsible**.

Retail / Department Store Assistant

On this placement duties may include unloading goods, checking delivery notes, stock replenishment, filling shelves to maintain adequate displays, pricing and display of good, and serving customers, work shadow till operators cleaning and tidying and general shop duties. Along with other employees students might have random bag searches.

General requirements: Must have an **outgoing personality** and an ability to **use own initiative**.

Office Work – Solicitors / Accountants

Tasks on placement may include word processing, filing, photocopying, and dealing with the post and telephone enquiries, invoicing and ordering and general clerical duties. Students may assist with the extraction of details from reports, handle routine enquiries etc.

General requirements: **Keyboard skills** may prove an advantage. **Communication skills** would be useful.

Veterinary Assistant

Students on placement may be involved in the following tasks: assisting veterinary nurses with day to day tasks including, feeding and general care of inpatients, cleaning, restocking and administration, observe theatre nurses during procedures, cleaning and sterilising of theatre, instruments and equipment.

General requirements: Students should be **reliable** and **interested** in this type of work.

Hairdressing Assistant

Students on this placement will be making drinks for clients, general housekeeping duties. Observing hairdressers. Students may also be answering the telephone and shampooing

General requirements: Students should be **reliable, outgoing** and **interested** in this type of work

Mechanics Assistant

Observing and assisting technicians, passing hand tools and using as directed, assisting with MOT's and Servicing.

General requirements: Student must be **enthusiastic, reliable** and **responsible** and an **ability to use own initiative**. **Student must supply own PPE, e.g. Safety boots and overalls**

Look carefully at words in BOLD, these are very important qualities that employers are looking for.

Remember all information you hear or see whilst on placement is to be held in confidence and must not be shared directly with anyone or on any social networking sites.

Example text when contacting an employer via letter, email or message

Dear Mr. Other,

Re: Work Experience

I am writing to enquire whether you could take me for work experience from the _____ until the _____ .

I am ____ years old and am currently studying the following subjects at _____ High School (list the subjects you are studying).

I would like to do a work experience placement with your business because (give lots of reasons, talk about your qualities for example **enthusiastic, reliable, responsible, punctual** and your skills)

If you are willing to take me for work experience, please could you complete the enclosed self placement form and attach a copy of your employer's liability insurance and return it to me at the above address.

Alternatively you can contact me on _____ (telephone number) or contact the work experience co-ordinator at school Mrs. _____ on (number / school email).

Yours sincerely,

USEFUL TIPS FOR YOUR APPLICATION

- Think about the kind of job you want, try to establish if you have any career aims or objectives. You also need to think whether there are any organisations you would not work for.
- Do you have any hobbies, such as music, sport, horse riding etc, maybe you would like to do your work experience in that field as you already know it is of interest to you?
- Make an honest personal assessment of your abilities – this will help you to make sure that you are going to enjoy your work experience.
- Once you have prepared your message/email/letter check it carefully for spelling mistakes, is it business like in presentation, have you added everything you need to?
- You may need to contact lots of different businesses before you find one who says yes, it can sometimes feel frustrating, but don't give up!
- If you are unsure of any of the above, ask your school work experience co-ordinator, they are there to help you to do the best you can.

Lets talk about travel!

In an ideal World we would all like our workplace to be really close to home so that we do not have to travel too far to get to work. But in the World of work this isn't very likely, so you will most probably need to travel to get to your work placement. This could be by bus, train, tram, or you might be lucky and have a family member who can take you.

The further you are willing to travel will help to provide you with lots more employers and opportunities. So please take some time to consider how you can travel and how far.

It is very important that when you have got your self-placement form filled in and a copy of the company's Employers Liability Insurance Certificate as requested on the form, you must return it to school BEFORE the deadline date and hand it in to your School Work Experience Co-ordinator.

If you do not hand your form in on time you may not get to go to the placement of your choice.

GOOD LUCK IN THE SEARCH FOR A WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT