



# Introducing and Organising Work Experience

Work experience provides young people with the opportunity to learn about an occupation or industry by observation and participation. Students can build their knowledge, develop their skills and networks to help them to make informed decisions about their future study and career paths.

**It is the responsibility of the student to source and organise their placement. Students will be guided through the process, however they are responsible for the organisation and follow-up. Not only is the actual work experience invaluable, but the process of organising your own work experience is incredibly beneficial.**

**Work experience can provide:**

- insights into what a job involves
- structured, supervised, hands-on experience
- useful work skills that are recognised in the workplace
- confidence in your ability to learn and become competent at new tasks
- work/life skills, such as communicating effectively, or working in teams
- a chance to demonstrate how you can contribute in a work environment
- an understanding of the world of work
- a new found independence
- experiencing a new environment and people
- challenging yourself
- an opportunity to demonstrate commitment and reliability
- a new referee to add to your CV
- an employment opportunity

**Students will have the following responsibilities in organising work experience**

- approach a business about the possibility of undertaking work experience at their company
  - follow-up with prospective employers
  - return form promptly to school
  - communicate with your parents about work experience
  - ask if you need any help whatsoever
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# Finding and Choosing Work Experience

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## ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING:

*What am I interested in?*

*What might I like to do when I leave school?*

*What do I want to find out more about?*

Remember this does not have to be something that you definitely want to do when you leave school – it maybe something that you are interested in and want to investigate more such as nursing, engineering, veterinarian, hospitality.

### **Ways to find companies:**

- search for the type of company and area on the internet e.g. engineering in Stowmarket.
- research company websites online .
- ask friends or relatives.
- some companies have work experience programmes – contact their HR department (Human Resources Department).
- write or email the company an introductory letter or phone them (see examples on following pages).

### **What do I need to think about when choosing an employer?**

- Am I really interested in this?
- What sort of activities am I going to participate in?
- Do I need specific clothing?
- How am I going to get there every day?
- Did the company seem interested in having a work experience student?
- Some companies have application closing dates so you may need to apply early.

## How to Approach Prospective Employers?

Phone, email, letter or in person are the ways to approach employers.

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Keep these tips in mind:

- Make sure you have done your research before making contact.
- Know who you need to make contact with.
- Know about the business, know your dates.
- Where do you want to work within in the business?
- Are you happy to experience different departments?

You will need to find out who to address your correspondence to so make an initial phone call and find out who within the business deals with work experience placements, more often than not it is the Human Resource Department.

If you decide to email or send a letter, state that you will follow-up with a phone call in the following days.

If you do call, make sure to offer if there would be a more convenient time to talk, if they are too busy. Whoever you talk to, write down their name so you have a contact with who you can follow-up with.

A personal phone call at some point in the organisation is the way to go. An email may initially break the ice, but you should follow that up with a phone call a few days later.

The following pages have information about how to make those phone calls, or write emails and letters.

If you need help or want to practice a phone call, come and see Mrs Mylrea in the Inspirational Futures Centre.

**Due to COVID 19 restrictions and the impact on businesses, it is possible that some employers may not be able to offer traditional face to face work experience placements in 2023.**

**Therefore, it is very likely that you will have to contact several employers before you successfully find a placement.**

## Phone Calls

To maximise the success of the call, consider the time and day when you phone. For example, a restaurant will be busy between 11am – 3pm so avoid calling during these time. Be prepared to call more than once if needed as the person you need to speak to may not be available – don't give up after the first attempt.

You can't rehearse a whole conversation, but you can be prepared.

- Practice your introduction – don't rush, be clear, be concise, be engaging
- Why have you contacted them, why do you want to go there?
- Have a connection – you have read about their company, your parent knows someone there, a teacher/careers adviser recommended them etc.

<p>Hello [give their name] or I'm sorry, I didn't get your name? or I'm sorry, to whom am I speaking to?</p>	<p><i>Use their name. If they didn't give one, ask</i></p>
<p>My name is [give your name] and I am a Year 10 student at Stowmarket High School.</p>	<p><i>Be clear and speak slowly</i></p>
<p>I was given your details by [state who your contact is] or I read about your company in the local newspaper or I know [e.g. David Smith] in the [e.g. Marketing] department.</p>	<p><i>What is your connection? If you use someone's name, they must give you permission to mention them</i></p>
<p>I wondered if your company offer Year 10 work experience placements. I am looking for a placement for one of my school's allocated work experience weeks, commencing XXX.</p>	<p><i>Purpose of phone call</i></p>
<p>I am very interested in pursuing a future career in XXX and am looking to experience a range of opportunities within that area, especially XXX.</p>	<p><i>Give specific examples about the aspects of the business i.e. advertising, graphic design, marketing etc</i></p>
<p>Would you prefer I ring back at a more convenient time, I could also call in and talk to you about the possible placement at a mutually convenient time.</p>	<p><i>Be polite and respectful</i></p>
<p>Thank you for your time today and for the information you have given me.</p>	<p><i>Finish the conversation by thanking them for their time.</i></p>

Make sure you write down people's names, especially the person who is agreeing to your placement – you have to ring them back!

If you are offered a placement, ensure you arrange how and when you will get the Work Experience application form to them for completion.

## Example Email - Requesting a Work Experience Placement

<p>To: [email address]</p> <p>Subject: Possible Work Experience Placement for Stowmarket High School School student</p> <p>Dear [contact person e.g. Mrs Mace]</p> <p>My name is [your name] and I am a Year 10 student at Stowmarket High School.</p> <p>I would like to enquire about the possibility of a work experience placement at [give name of company]. I am very interested in [e.g. library and information services] and would like to investigate all that the [e.g. library] has to offer.</p> <p>I have already volunteered at the library during the summer holidays and I thoroughly enjoyed my time there. I am particularly interested in [give an example].</p> <p>My hobbies and interests are [refer to anything that will help your application] and I am a member of [e.g. Army Cadets, Guides].</p> <p>I am more than happy to provide a CV and my school's Work Experience Co-ordinator, Mrs Mylrea will be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning the placement.</p> <p>The school's designated work experience dates are Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and I am looking for a placement for one of these days.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to consider my request for Work Experience. I attach the link to the Work Experience application form for completion should you be able to offer me a placement.</p> <p>I'll be in touch with you again in a few days if I don't hear from you in the meantime.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>[your name] [your email address] [your phone number]</p>	<p><i>Contact person's email address</i></p> <p><i>Make sure you know the name of the person you are emailing</i></p> <p><i>Introduce yourself and where you go to school, and the purpose of your email</i></p> <p><i>Make sure you express a genuine interest for your chosen company and area of work, which should coincide with your career ambitions</i></p> <p><i>Give information about any experiences you have had, or your interests and subjects that you study</i></p> <p><i>Mention some of your skills and qualities</i></p> <p><i>Let them know how they can ask questions</i></p> <p><i>State the weeks of work experience</i></p> <p><i>Thank them for their time and that you will follow up with a phone call</i></p> <p><i>End with your name, email address and phone number</i></p>
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## Example Letter - Requesting a Work Experience Placement

<p style="text-align: right;">[Your Name] [Your Address] [Your Postcode]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Date]</p> <p>[Contact Person] [Position] [Company Name] [Address] [Postcode]</p> <p>Dear [contact person e.g. Mr Smith] or Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I am a Year 10 student from Stowmarket High School, studying GCSE's in English, Maths and Science alongside my chosen subjects [list options subjects].</p> <p>I would like to enquire about a potential work experience placement at [company name], which I will be available to carry out for five days on the weeks commencing XXX.</p> <p>I would like to work at [company name] because [give reasons for pursuing the placement].</p> <p>I'm [relevant skills and attributes e.g. reliable, friendly and trustworthy] which can be shown in my [real life examples that demonstrate your skills e.g. paper round, babysitting].</p> <p>My hobbies and interests are [refer to anything that will help your application] and I am a member of [e.g. Army Cadets, Guides].</p> <p>As an enthusiastic student with a keen interest in what your organisation does, as well as a passion to progress within this industry, I would be very grateful to be considered for an opportunity at [name of company].</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to consider my request for Work Experience. I enclose the Work Experience application form for completion should you be able to offer me a placement.</p> <p>I'll be in touch with you again in a few days if I don't hear from you in the meantime.</p>	<p><i>Make sure you give your contact details</i></p> <p><i>Know who you are writing to</i></p> <p><i>Address the name of the person you are writing to</i></p> <p><i>Introduce yourself, where you go to school and the purpose of the email</i></p> <p><i>State the dates</i></p> <p><i>Make sure you express a genuine interest for your chosen company and area of work, which should coincide with your career ambitions</i></p> <p><i>Mention some of your skills and qualities and give real-life examples to back each of them up</i></p> <p><i>Also mention your hobbies and interests and explain the value they add to your application</i></p> <p><i>Thank them for their time and that you will follow-up with a phone call</i></p>
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<p>Yours sincerely [if you know the name of the contact]  Yours faithfully [if using Sir/Madam]</p> <p>[Your signature]  [Print your name underneath your signature]</p>	<p><i>Leave enough space for your signature</i></p>
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### **Don't forget:**

- Presentation is very important
- Double check your spellings, especially things that don't show up on spell check e.g. names and addresses
- Ask someone to check your letter before you send it

Always double-check to make sure you've got the right address and name, and don't forget to customise it for each organisation you send your letter to. Because (unsurprisingly), work experience letters addressed to the wrong person won't impress any employer.

As it's likely that many local organisations receive many work experience requests, you'll need to place emphasis on your enthusiasm if you want to land your perfect placement.

To really stand out, show you've done your research, and express an interest in the company's recent developments and successes – you can find this out on their company website.

### **What to do next:**

Once you have sent your email/letter, there is nothing to do but wait. However, make a diary note to follow up with the company after a few days e.g. a week. Be prepared for some companies to say no – some will be unequipped to handle work experience placements, others may be too busy. This is not uncommon and is nothing personal. It's also common for a company simply not to reply.

Although it's not very pleasant, getting no response is something to prepare for. You can follow up with a call after waiting a reasonable amount of time but be ready to speak to someone at length about yourself, and be equally ready for them to tell you that they cannot take you on.

### **Struggling to find a placement? Got any questions?**

If you need some advice to secure your own placement or if you have any questions about work experience, please contact Mrs Mylrea on [m.mylrea@stowhigh.com](mailto:m.mylrea@stowhigh.com) or pop upto the Inspirational Futures Centre on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

