

# What you need to know about Work Experience

## A guide for students



## What is work experience?

- A placement in a company for you to gain experience of being at work.
- A placement in a company for you to gain experience and skills required for a particular industry.
- It can be done as one or two weeks as a block or half or a day a week over a few weeks.
- You can do work experience as part of Year 10 and 11 or when in the sixth form. Increasingly a lot of universities put work experience into their degree programmes.

## Why do work experience?

- Opportunity to gain skills for work, which are so important when looking for a job or apprenticeship.
- Opportunity to experience the world of work and try out skills that are needed in the workplace.
- It can help with career plans.
- It can look good on a CV and for interviews.
- It can be a great challenge and help build confidence and motivation.
- It is vital for some careers.

## How to find a placement

- Get yourself a folder to keep all your work experience documentation in.
- Draft a letter and CV and get someone to check it before you send it. Highlight your skills and career plans. First impressions matter and the world of work is competitive.
- Information on how to create letters and CV's are on our website [www.ckcareer-online.org.uk](http://www.ckcareer-online.org.uk)
- Make a list of the companies you would like to work for - check out their website and Facebook page.
- Contact the company to discuss a work placement and offer to send your CV and letter.
- If you get an application form, fill it in and return it to the company by the deadline and have it checked before you send it.

## Interviews

- You may be asked to go for an interview - prepare well, dress appropriately and take along any certificates you may have (remember those first impressions!).  
Questions you may be asked:
  - Tell me about yourself - what do you like, what don't you like and what do you do in your spare time?
  - What do you want to gain out of work experience?
  - What is your career plan - so far?
- You should prepare answers before the interview.

## Once you have the placement

- Make sure you confirm details with the company.
- Work out your travel arrangements, clothes and what you will do for lunch.
- Make sure you have any specific items such as safety boots.
- Be sure you have all the documents for the placement and that you understand them.
- Your school or college will prepare you on topics such as behaviour at work, health and safety and getting the most from your placement.

## Top tips for interviews and placements...

- Be on time.
- Be neat, tidy and clean.
- Smile and look confident - even though you are probably nervous.
- Make eye contact and be polite to others in the workplace.
- Work hard, do your best and let your supervisor know when you have completed a task.
- Listen carefully to instructions and ask questions if you don't understand.
- Only use equipment that you have permission to use.
- Have some goals that you want to achieve on placement and ensure you tell your supervisor.
- Switch your mobile phone off in working hours.
- Fill in your journal and take your documents to the placement.
- Keep a diary of the tasks you do and skills you learn.
- Remember not to discuss confidential information or post comments or pictures on social media sites.

## After the placement

- Ensure you get a reference from the employer.
- Ask about potential opportunities for the future if it is the sort of work that you would like.
- Ask about apprenticeship opportunities if you want to follow this career route.
- Make sure you add your work experience onto your CV and applications for education, university and work.



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