

WORK EXPERIENCE EMPLOYER TOOLKIT



RIVERSIDES
EVERY STUDENT MATTERS



Introduction

This toolkit is designed to help you create and establish a meaningful and impactful work experience programme within your organisation, thus both inspiring and educating young people.

We believe that work experience should be an enriching and rewarding journey - not just for students but also for the employers who are instrumental for their first steps into the world of work.

Key Terminology

WEX

An abbreviation for work experience.

NEET

An abbreviation for Not in Employment, Education or Training.

SEND

An abbreviation for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

ELI

An abbreviation for Employer's Liability Insurance.

HOST

A host is the term we use for an employer that is the main contact and supervisor supporting a student on their work experience.

QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

A risk assessment (low-high) that we conduct with all employers hosting work experience to ensure it is safe, suitable and valuable.

PLACEMENT DESCRIPTION (PD)

A document with key information about the student's work experience including dates, main contact details, timings, dress code and risks to be aware of.

YEAR 10

The school year group including 14-15 year old students.

YEAR 12

The school year group including 16-17 year old students.

YEAR 13

The school year group including 17-18 year old students.

SAFEGUARDING

Our responsibility for preventing anything that might affect young people's safety and welfare.

Why Host Work Experience?

Work experience is an important way for young people to gain practical insights into the working world. They acquire transferable skills, network with professionals and connect their academic learning to professional applications, all of which prepares them for further study and future careers.

Benefits for Young People

Understanding the Workplace:

Work experience gives young people an insight into the working world, which many know very little about. It provides the opportunity to develop and start demonstrating the attitudes and behaviours necessary in a professional environment, thus preparing them for entering a real job.

Broadening Horizons:

Time spent with an employer can be invaluable in broadening young people's knowledge of sectors and different roles. It can help inform and shape their career decisions and offer them a potential step into a career they might not otherwise have access to.

Benefits for Employers

Staff Development:

Offering work experience opportunities to young people enables employers to access a wider range of talents, unique skills and fresh insights that young people have to bring, with the potential of employing them longer term. It can add to any workforce development plans and be a great opportunity for existing staff to supervise and mentor young people, helping to develop their management and other professional and personal skills.

Positive Image:

By providing a young person with a work experience placement, not only will you enhance your community profile, but it will give your organisation the opportunity to shape the future workforce, drive innovation and contribute to a thriving local economy.

Responsibilities as a Host

Youth Careers Collective recognises the right of every individual to stay safe while accessing our work experience opportunities. We work with partners to facilitate high quality, meaningful and safe work experience placements and take our responsibilities for safeguarding and equality & diversity very seriously.

Safeguarding Concerns and Reporting Procedures

Safeguarding is about ensuring the protection of children and young people wherever possible, and dealing sensitively and appropriately with the situation should any incident arise which places a child at risk or in which a child has suffered abuse.

What does this mean for me as a host?

Personal Information: If personal information about students is collected prior/during or after the work experience placement, it is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998. Hosts should be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations. They should not give their personal contact details to young people, including their mobile telephone number or email address. They should also not communicate with students on social networks, including LinkedIn.

Behaviour: While it is important to reassure a young person who may be nervous working in an unfamiliar setting, you should avoid being over familiar. Never permit 'horseplay' which may cause embarrassment, fear or be misunderstood.

Contact, Environment and DBS checks: As a work experience host you and/or colleagues must never be alone or in an isolated or closed environment with a young person unless the placement agreement specifies that arrangement. This includes being in transit with a young person if making site/client visits. Occasions should NOT arise when you need to touch a young person. Handshakes are acceptable, particularly when introducing them to colleagues.

Expectations

We ask you as a work experience host to certify that you agree:

- To provide a safe, meaningful and engaging placement to meet the needs of the young person.
- To manage accidents and emergencies in an appropriate manner, as outlined by YCC.
- To abide by YCC's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion policy.
- To maintain our safeguarding ground rules as listed previously.
- To provide the young person with an induction to welcome them and keep them safe in your organisation.
- To manage absences and behaviour issues in an appropriate manner, as outlined by YCC.
- To maintain working hours in line with legal regulations.
- All young people regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Work Experience Checklist?

When?	Details	Action Required	Date Supplied/ Completed
Before the placement	Have you provided your employer's liability insurance?	Copy of certificate supplied to YCC or the following details: name of insurer, policy number and expiry date.	
	Have you had a quality assurance call with YCC?	To discuss: • placement practical details, incl. hours, dress code • risk assessment • compliance with health and safety law	
	Have you considered how you can make this work experience inclusive and accessible for young people with additional needs?	Inform YCC of reasonable adjustments, including details of activities that can be tailored to meet the needs of young people.	
	Have you planned a work experience schedule and who will supervise each day?	Create work experience schedule which includes: tasks, opportunities for shadowing, learning outcomes and clarifies who will be responsible for the student each day?	
During the placement	Please keep us aware of any absences or issues, as we are here to support you!		
After the placement	Keeping student records - company GDPR/Data Protection Policy	Ensure you keep student data confidential as per GDPR and delete data at this point.	
	Have you given YCC feedback about the student and placement process?	A link to provide feedback will be provided to you, please complete this.	

Placement Induction

Students should receive an induction on or before their first day. Please bear in mind the young person's inexperience when planning the induction. You may wish to use the following induction checklist to help you plan this:

Induction Checklist:

Activity	Completed?
An overview of the organisation	
Guided tour of the workplace	
Introduction to staff, including the host	
A discussion about the purpose of their role and their job description	
Clarification on working hours, including start and finish times, breaks and lunch times, and signing or clocking-in process if relevant	
Rules and regulations for use of the phones, the internet and emails	
Location of canteen/break facilities, washing facilities and toilets	
Health and Safety notices/policy procedures	
Person responsible for first aid and accident reporting procedure	
Assembly points, emergency exits, fire points / fire extinguishers	
Prohibited areas and off-limits equipment such as machinery	
Issue of protective clothing	
Task-based training, e.g. how to answer the phone, use equipment etc	
Contact details of person for any other health risks concerns e.g. sickness, personal wellbeing or safety in the workplace	

Activity Ideas: By Skill



- Invite the student to join meetings. Encourage them to think of some questions beforehand, participate or take minutes and follow up after the meeting to check their level of understanding
- Ask the students to take minutes during a meeting



- Interview members of staff and ask them about their role
- Host to interview student
- Answer and field phone calls
- Challenge the student to speak to a new staff member each day
- Ask the student to give a verbal reflection at the end of each day



- Research competitors in the sector
- Write a list of 'problems' that may arise in the workplace and consider how these can be overcome
- Find out about different support and advice services available at the place of work
- Create a 'how to' guide to support someone with a problem they have



- Social media content production tasks, such as vox pop videos of members of staff
- Draft/send professional emails or letters
- Create a work-experience booklet for the next student



- Reflect at the end of each day on any challenges that came up and how to work on them
- Give student broad guidelines instead of step-by-step directions so they can attempt to adapt their approach to the task
- Shadow different team members and identify/make notes on how they adapt their working style



- Assign student a project and ask them how they will breakdown and order tasks in order of priority
- Ask student to organise things needed for a meeting, event or shift before it begins
- Scenario practice - plan for "what ifs", ask student to prepare a back up plan



- Organising a team building activity
- Group research tasks
- Be involved in team meetings/briefings
- Give students opportunities to share their ideas to a group
- Give students a named 'role' in a group task
- Ask students to reflect on how well they have worked in a team during their WEX



- Presentation tasks
- Give feedback on a resource or product in a presentation
- Give the student a choice of tasks to lead

Top Tips For Hosting

Be Welcoming

- ✓ Create a welcoming environment - ensure that students feel included and valued in the workplace
- ✓ Assign a mentor or buddy - designate someone approachable to guide the student

Set Realistic Goals

- ✓ Balancing support with independence, allowing students to challenge themselves within a supportive environment
- ✓ Identify clear aims and objectives of what the student should learn and accomplish

Be Patient & Passionate

- ✓ Expect the unexpected! Working with young people can often throw up curveballs and challenges; it's essential to remain open to adapting
- ✓ Demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for your role (your positive attitude will be infectious)

Ensure Clarity

- ✓ Give clear instructions - be clear in your communication so that you can be sure the student can understand your instruction
- ✓ Create a structured yet flexible plan for their time

Avoid Assumptions

- ✓ Every student is different - don't stereotype or assume what a student may enjoy or struggle with until you meet with them and learn from them

Always Celebrate

- ✓ Acknowledge and celebrate successes, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement can boost confidence and encourage students to continue putting in their best effort

Encourage Self Advocacy

- ✓ Encourage students to communicate their needs and preferences. They may already have strategies that work well for them
- ✓ Offer meaningful tasks - involve them in projects where they can learn and contribute

Stay Connected

- ✓ If appropriate, write a brief reference or provide a certificate of completion
- ✓ If they showed potential, keep them in mind for future opportunities

Student Management and Workplace Conduct

Can the young person ever be left unsupervised?

While working, young people should always be near their supervisor or team, so they can ask for help if needed. Students can take their lunch break unsupervised, but you should go over expectations about where they can go at the beginning of the week and the length of their lunch break. They should inform someone when they leave so that you know when to expect them back.

What if the student struggles with tasks?

Students learn best by observing tasks before being expected to perform them. Some students may need it broken down or fully demonstrated. Ask the student what part of the task they find difficult, to see if you or a colleague can offer further support. Ensure your instructions are clear and that the student understands. Be patient and provide positive encouragement.

Consider adapting the tasks and offering them the opportunity to complete things independently. If the issue continues, please contact YCC and we can discuss next steps.

What do I do if the student is really shy or quiet?

Students may feel shy in a new professional environment, so it's important to create a supportive atmosphere. Welcome them warmly, ask how they're feeling, provide a thorough induction with a tour and team introductions, and encourage open communication. Start with simple tasks to build confidence, avoid putting them on the spot, and offer positive reinforcement to highlight their strengths.

What should I do if the student has not turned up or informs me they have to leave unexpectedly?

You should notify YCC immediately if a student has not arrived at their placement. YCC will handle the matter accordingly. This is the same if they inform you about an unscheduled appointment or must leave due to an emergency.

What if a student's actions are deemed unacceptable in the workplace?

Your induction and ongoing feedback should set expectations, but it is also your responsibility to contact YCC as soon as possible to discuss the situation if you remain unhappy. Rest assured, all concerns will be handled in a professional and efficient manner. Please do not ask students to leave if you have not spoken to a member of our team first.

Workplace Preparation and Engagement

Am I allowed to take photos of the student on their placement?

Consent for photos must be requested and explicitly granted.

If the student is under 16, you must request consent through your YCC contact. If the student is over 16, documented consent must be requested from your YCC contact or the student.

Employers must adhere to safeguarding policies. If photo consent is given, it is important you avoid including any identifying details (e.g., full name, location) alongside the photo, especially if shared for marketing purposes. Please note, consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Is the employer expected to provide feedback at the end of the work experience?

Yes. You will be sent an online feedback form, typically after the work experience week. It should take you 10 minutes to complete. The feedback you provide helps us to improve our programme. We will obtain student feedback following the placement. Therefore, if you require feedback, please feel free to contact us.

During the week, what can I do to assist the student further?

Many students have been provided with a work experience log or YCC resource pack that includes top tips for a successful work experience, a Skills Builder assessment tool for identifying key skills they can work towards improving and a daily reflection log. Please encourage them to complete this whilst they are with you.

What preparation has the student received before attending the work experience placement?

This includes liaising with career leads to match students to the most suitable placement, conducting an in-person pre-work experience workshop to best prepare them and to ensure they understand employer expectations. We also provide students with a comprehensive resource pack containing lots of helpful tips for a successful work experience placement.

