



**ayrshirechamber**  
of commerce and industry

# Work Experience Your Guide



# What is Work Experience?

The term "Work Experience" means different things to different people and in different contexts. Generally speaking it refers to a limited period of time that an individual spends with an employer during which they have the opportunity to learn directly about working life and the working environment. Some work experience placements offer young people the chance to try their hand at particular tasks, others simply provide an opportunity to watch and learn.

For employers, placements are an opportunity to get involved with the wider community, to spot new talent, and to assess an individual's potential. They also play a part in developing the industry's future skills base diversity.

Work Experience offers students of today the opportunity to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. Students at school can become familiar with the skills and attitudes needed by modern businesses and recognise the demands for working life are undergoing rapid and constant change.

# Additional Support Needs

Additional Support Needs pupils deserve a chance too but I hear you ask "Why should I? What is the point, and will I benefit from it? What use would a placement be to them?" A lot of questions that I'm sure you will have asked yourself.

Additional Support students are often a hidden part of our community and work experience gives both the pupils and people from the local community a chance to interact and also illustrates how students with additional support needs can function in a work placement with the appropriate support. Pupils may benefit attending for a shorter timescale or with a support teacher which allows a closer communication between all involved.

Employers have said it helps raise awareness, trains staff in ways of communication but most importantly they realise how dedicated and loyal support needs pupils are. The self satisfaction for all involved is an uplifting, worthwhile experience.

# Ayrshire Chamber's Role

Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry co-ordinate the Work Experience Programme and we aim to work together with local businesses to try and provide opportunities for Work Experience for all young people within schools in Ayrshire.

The placements which you give are of great value therefore we have developed a brief guide to Work Experience and hope you find it useful.



# Good Practice

Work Experience is a learning activity. It is essential to agree specific learning objectives for the individual at the outset and never rely on individuals on work experience placements to fulfil real jobs which are necessary to the organisation or to a production.

The starting point for organising a work experience placement is to identify exactly what opportunity you are offering. This means deciding:

- Which department or production the placement will be with.
- The job role(s) that the individual will gain an understanding of.
- Typical activities they will be involved in.
- What knowledge or skills they can expect to develop during the placement.
- What skills, experience and personal attributes you expect individuals to bring to the placement. (You should think carefully as to how to phrase these credentials in order to avoid any discriminatory language, particularly on the grounds of age).

# Managing Placement

Individuals on all types of work experience placements are inexperienced and need support and supervision. Identify a member of staff who has some time and is prepared to take responsibility for overseeing the person's activities and to whom they can turn to for advice and support.

## Induction

On the first day of the placement you should provide a comprehensive induction covering practical issues such as health and safety. The nominated supervisor/mentor will usually be the most appropriate person to carry out the induction.

## Hours of Attendance

Limiting attendance to 40 hours a week (including meal breaks) is sensible from both insurance and health and safety perspectives. It is also in line with the spirit of the Working Time Regulations 1998. Regular rest breaks should also be given.

## Insurance

Employers must ensure that they have adequate and up-to-date Employers Liability & Public Liability Insurance in place prior to the placement commencing.



## Health & Safety

Health and Safety are important considerations in the arrangements for work placements. Carry out a risk assessment in advance of any placement and brief individuals about health and safety issues on their first day, this can be done as part of their induction. Should you need assistance guidelines can be obtained at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) Prior to the placement commencing Ayrshire Chamber will visit to ensure all relevant documentation is in place and H&S risk assessments have been carried out.

You are also responsible for providing appropriate training for all activities that individuals are asked to undertake which have health and safety implications. Individuals on work experience placements may therefore require the same health and safety that you would provide to a new member of staff.

## Confidentiality

It is reasonable for placement providers to ask individuals on work experience placements to agree to maintain confidence as to information relating to the business (or its customers, clients, suppliers etc) that comes to their knowledge during the placement.

## Support During Placement

If at any time during the placement you feel you have something you want to ask or share with us about the pupil or just need a bit of support please do not hesitate to contact either Helen Laverie or Suzanne Murdoch, Business Liaison Officers at Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry on 01292 678666. Alternatively you can email us [Hlaverie@ayrshire-chamber.org](mailto:Hlaverie@ayrshire-chamber.org) or [Smurdoch@ayrshire-chamber.org](mailto:Smurdoch@ayrshire-chamber.org).



The Chamber has an e-newsletter and magazine and we are always looking for good news articles with regards to Work Experience. If you would like to feature in either of these please get in touch with us to obtain the credit you deserve.



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