

Work Experience Placements - Guidance for Managers

General Information

If you are contacted by an individual or their parent/school/college regarding a work experience placement within your department you should consider whether or not you have the capacity to take an individual on the dates requested and also what programme of activities they could undertake during their time with you before agreeing to any placements. It is also helpful to agree any placements with your Head of School or Department before responding to the individual's request.

Once it is established that the department is able to take a work experience placement, you should reply direct to the individual and advise them that you are willing to offer them a placement. If they have not already sent a CV and statement outlining why they wish to undertake a placement in your specific area, then you should ask them to do so.

The manager supervising the placement should arrange to complete any High School paperwork associated with the placement; this is generally entitled Self Generated Placement Form. This information will be required by Norfolk County Council (via its appointed agency) who co-ordinate all Norfolk School placements. There are separate arrangements for 'Out of County' Placements and you should speak to HR if you are approached by someone from a School outside of Norfolk.

As part of the process, health and safety risk assessments for the placement must be undertaken and staff who are to be responsible for the day to day supervision of students should be made aware of the students likely lack of knowledge and experience in a work situation; students will need closer supervision than an adult new member of staff. It should be noted that the majority of school work experience placements involve Year 10 or Year 12 pupils.

However, managers should note that if individuals **aged 16 or over** wish to undertake work experience placements, the University will be required to demonstrate their entitlement to work in the UK prior to commencing the placement.

Please see details on the HR website of the original documents which must be seen and copied prior to placement.

Background Information

Work experience placements have been a regular feature in a number of departments, and are an important way for the University to establish links with local Schools. Placements are beneficial to the students taking part as part of their broader education and development, and promote the University as a potential employer and place of study across the city and the region. These notes are intended to provide managers who may be involved in organising work experience placements with the necessary guidance to ensure that the conduct of the placement is both compliant with current legislation, and of maximum benefit to all involved.

What Constitutes Work Experience?

Work experience may be defined as: a placement on University premises in which a student carries out a particular task, duty or range of activities more or less as would an employee, but with a greater emphasis being placed on the learning aspects of the experience. Activities

should be 'hands-on' where possible, and as such are distinct from job-shadowing which is primarily an observational activity.

How Does The University Benefit?

Work experience is beneficial to both students and employers. Some of the benefits that can be derived from a period of work experience are:

- Influence the choice of study for prospective students;
- Influence the quality and career choices of future employees;
- Raising the profile of the University as an employer/educational institution.

Work Experience

As a member of staff accepting a student on work experience, you are responsible for ensuring that any student is not exposed to any risks during their time on the placement.

Before a student undertakes a placement their school or college has a duty to put in place checks around safeguarding, and health and safety. Please bear in mind the following advice from the HSE which says that work placement arrangements are too often seen as over-bureaucratic and burdensome, putting off potential employers. The effectiveness of the employer's risk management arrangements is what matters.

Employers should already be managing the risks in their workplaces and are best placed to assess whether or not they need to do anything additional for a new young person joining them. Schools and colleges, or those organising placements, should simply ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy themselves that those arrangements are in place. What you must do:

- ✓ Check the employer has an appropriate health and safety risk assessment
- ✓ Check the employer has up-to-date Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance covering students on work experience (some exemptions exist)
- ✓ Check the employer is aware of who to contact in school if they are concerned about the student's welfare or protection at any point during the placement including Prevent duty
- ✓ Conduct Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on any relevant staff if necessary (see section later in document)
- ✓ Ensure the employer has seen the guidance on working with young people

Health and safety checks

Students on placement with an employer are classed as employees for health and safety purposes. Risk assessments conducted for young people under 18 must take into account their age, their lack of maturity or experience, any health or behavioural issues disclosed or physical capabilities. An employer's existing health and safety audit may already identify any risks to an individual and therefore measures to guard against them should already be in place. However, employers taking on a student for the first time may not have employed someone under the age of 18 before and will need to review any existing assessment or policy. If students are on an employers premises out of county then you must still ensure these checks are completed.

Employers' Liability Insurance

There is a legal requirement for employers to have Employers' Liability Insurance (ELI) which must cover students on work experience, although some exemptions exist (see www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience).

Safeguarding

Any school organising work experience placements is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm and government statutory guidance on safeguarding in relation to work experience placements can be found in 'Keeping Children Safe

in Education' (April 2014). Schools should check the individual circumstances of the placement and ensure that they are satisfied that any necessary DBS checks on staff have been conducted

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check of staff working with young people is not necessary in all circumstances and is no longer required by law for staff supervising young people aged 16 and 17 on work experience. It is reasonable for a school to request that one is undertaken for someone who has a designated responsibility for supervising a student if there is substantial one-to-one contact, particularly if the student is under 16, or is a vulnerable student for any reason (e.g. a student with special educational needs). It is not necessary for staff who are simply working alongside the student.

A check may, however, be advisable for a member of staff responsible for supervising a post-16 student if a placement is expected to exceed 15 days. Guidance states that an employer may also request that a DBS check takes place for a post-16 student themselves if the placement is within an industry which requires it (for example health care or early year sector) and the placement is for longer than 10 days.

There is no legal entitlement for a student under 16 to undergo a DBS check. In the case of a student or staff employee needing to undergo a DBS check, the school or college should take into account the period of time needed to complete and return an application (up to four weeks). A pre-placement agreement form should be completed and signed by student, school, parent and employer.

Other important information

Students must not be paid by the employer during their work experience placement, it is an educational experience and may invalidate insurance arrangements. Contributions by employers towards travel or meals during placement hours are, however, acceptable if this forms part of the employers policy. It is recommended that students don't work for more than five days in any consecutive seven day period, with the number of hours worked to be agreed in advance with the employer.

Hours worked should not be excessively long or unnecessarily unsocial hours and should not be more than 40 hours per week. Weekend working is permitted only with the student and parent or carer's agreement and should not include both a Saturday and Sunday in the same week.

Students should be made aware of appropriate and acceptable use of social media from their personal accounts relating to the placement or employer both during and after it has finished. Schools and colleges should signpost students to their own existing IT and social media policy on students' use of equipment and various social media platforms and should ensure students know to follow the guidelines set.

Schools can also refer to Norfolk County Council guidance: "Students have been informed about the appropriate and proportionate use of social media from their personal accounts in relation to their placement, both while they are on placement and also once the placement has finished. Individual school's IT and social media policies cover student's use of equipment and various social media platforms. Students should ensure that they follow the guidelines set. Some employers will regularly monitor social media both as part of their recruitment and selection policies and also as a routine element of their ongoing business marketing and communications activity. If employers have concerns relating to a student's use of social media while on placement they should contact the school directly."

What Should Managers Do Next?

It is likely that the majority of placements will result from a request being received either from individual students or their parents, or from local schools and colleges. In the first instance, having read the following information, you should respond directly to the individual to confirm whether or not you are able to offer a placement. If work experience is to be successful then the following areas need to be fully considered:

Aims and objectives	Planning of duties	Preparation and briefing
Induction and Health & Safety	Debriefing and evaluation	

The Aims and Objectives

These may be specific to the work being undertaken such as gaining experience of basic accounting procedures, or generic, for example to gain experience of working in an office environment.

Planning

Planning and preparation should begin well in advance and a brief written placement plan/job description should be included in the Self-Generated Placement Form. This document will be required by Norfolk County Council who co-ordinate all Norfolk School placements. The duties and responsibilities of the role to be undertaken should be linked directly to the aims and objectives of the placement. In order to achieve this it may be necessary for the student to spend time in more than one role during the period of their placement.

Preparation and Briefing

Before beginning the placement the student will be required to write to the department in which they have an interest, i.e. Nursery, Sportspark, Science Department, outlining their reasons for wanting to undertake the particular work experience placement. They are also asked to submit a brief *curriculum vitae* and, once they have received written confirmation of a placement, they must make arrangements to undertake a pre-placement interview with the manager/department offering the placement.

Induction and Health & Safety

As for all employees there should be a thorough induction process on the first morning of attendance. This is of particular importance for work experience placements where legislation requires that special attention is paid to Health and Safety, and also because for the student, the experience of being in the workplace will be a new one. This may mean that on short placements a considerable amount of the available time will be spent on briefings, introductions and familiarisation, but this should be accepted as necessary to ensure the success of the placement as a whole.

Debriefing and Evaluation

Most schools or colleges require a written report to be completed by the placement manager and discussed with the pupil before they leave. Schools will also make arrangements to visit the pupil while they are on placement. There is also a need to carry out an internal evaluation to identify how future placements could be improved.

Organisational Information

Hours of Work

Work experience placements are subject to the same legislation as employees where working hours are concerned so should be treated equally. They should not work more than 8 hours a day and should not work more than 5 days out of 7. The normal University working hours for the majority of placements will be 0900 to 1700 hours Monday to Friday, although these may vary slightly.

Payments

Work experience placements are an educational activity and there should be no payment for any work performed.

Insurance

In general terms from an insurance perspective, students on a placement within the University will be considered as employees. As such any damage that results from the placement will be covered by the University's liability insurance policies provided that the incident in question is the legal responsibility of the University. As the placement manager you must ensure that you notify the UEA Insurance team of the following:

- Date of placement
- Full Name of Student
- Date of Birth
- School Attended

Schools and Colleges request evidence of insurance provision when the placement is initially requested and you should include the details on the Self-Generated Placement Forms which the student will give to you once the placement is agreed.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety is a vital consideration in the planning and conduct of a work experience placement. Students taking part in a placement may have little or no experience of being in a workplace of any kind. As such they may be considerably less risk aware and may require more detailed instruction and closer supervision than a new adult member of staff.

It is essential that a risk assessment is conducted prior to the placement, and that any potential risks, along with the measures in place to reduce or eliminate them, are identified. You should retain the completed risk assessment and provide a copy to the student. Norfolk County Council (or their representative) will also undertake period work place assessments across the University. Health and Safety should be thoroughly covered during the induction of the student.

In addition, if the student has any medical or behavioural considerations then these must be highlighted by either the student's parents (or carers) or the school/college, as these must be taken into account. Further guidance on relevant Health and Safety issues, including risk assessments, may be obtained from the Director of University Safety Services. In addition, further information and advice is available in the HSE publication *Young People at Work: A Guide for Employers*, or from the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/risks/index.htm>

Summary

The information above is intended to provide guidance to managers who may be approached to take a student on work experience.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any potential placement, please contact the Human Resources Office: email d.whalen@uea.ac.uk or telephone extension 2733.