



February 2014



MAKING WORK EXPERIENCE WORK TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Today's young people, tomorrow's workforce



WORK



WORKFORCE



WORKPLACE

Championing better work and working lives

The CIPD's purpose is to **champion better work and working lives** by improving practices in people and organisation development, for the benefit of individuals, businesses, economies and society. Our research work plays a critical role – providing the content and credibility for us to drive practice, raise standards and offer advice, guidance and practical support to the profession. Our research also informs our advocacy and engagement with policy-makers and other opinion-formers on behalf of the profession we represent.

To increase our impact, in service of our purpose, we're focusing our research agenda on three core themes: the future of **work**, the diverse and changing nature of the **workforce**, and the culture and organisation of the **workplace**.

WORK

Our focus on work includes what work is and where, when and how work takes place, as well as trends and changes in skills and job needs, changing career patterns, global mobility, technological developments and new ways of working.



WORKFORCE

Our focus on the workforce includes demographics, generational shifts, attitudes and expectations, the changing skills base and trends in learning and education.

WORKPLACE

Our focus on the workplace includes how organisations are evolving and adapting, understanding of culture, trust and engagement, and how people are best organised, developed, managed, motivated and rewarded to perform at their best.

About us

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. We have over 130,000 members internationally – working in HR, learning and development, people management and consulting across private businesses and organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. We are an independent and not-for-profit organisation, guided in our work by the evidence and the front-line experience of our members.

THE BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience is vital to young people at school, college and as they enter the labour market. It helps **young people** to make the transition from education into working life by giving them:

- first-hand experience of the workplace and an insight into jobs and sectors
- increased confidence and employability skills
- experience to build their CVs and access to networks
- an understanding of how recruitment works
- insight into how their skills and abilities translate to the workplace.

For **employers**, offering work experience is beneficial for a number of reasons:

- **Recruitment opportunities and building talent pipelines:** work experience placements enable employers to access a wider range of talent while also making a useful contribution to strategic talent management and workforce planning.
- **Fresh ideas:** young people offer new ideas and ways of thinking, reflecting the interests and needs of the next generation of customers and consumers.
- **Staff development:** offering work experience placements can provide opportunities for existing staff to supervise and mentor a young person, therefore helping to develop their management and other professional and personal skills.
- **More engaged workforce:** providing work experience sends a positive message to the wider workforce about the values of the organisation.
- **Engagement with the local community** helps boost local economic development and can also lead to increased brand loyalty and profile, and in turn to greater profits.



WHY DOES WORK EXPERIENCE MATTER?

'I just wanted to know what working life was really like.'

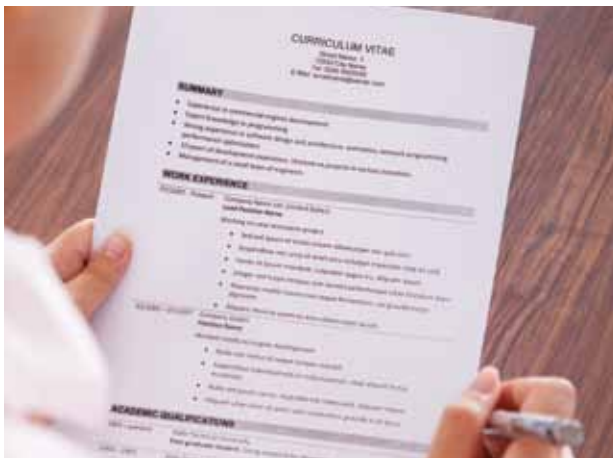
Shoyaine (20 years old)

Young people are among the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market because they lack the experience of the workplace and the job-specific skills that employers ask for. Work experience is something employers value, alongside attitude, almost more than qualifications.

Over the last generation there have been unprecedented changes with traditional jobs and industries disappearing and being replaced by a more varied landscape in an increasingly global economy. Also, with the increase in the cost of higher education, the financial penalties for making the wrong career decisions are higher than ever before. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of careers information in schools, particularly in schools in disadvantaged areas which may not have access to parental and alumni networks.

Work experience can help to challenge employer perceptions of young people's skills and attitudes, give young people access to networks and help them to make more informed career choices. Research by the Education and Employers Taskforce, *It's Who You Meet* (2012), shows that the more contact young people have with employers, the better their chances of finding themselves in employment. This is a win-win situation for everyone:

- **Employers get the skills they need.**
- **Young people gain access to the labour market.**
- **Society can avoid the negative consequences and long-term scarring of high youth unemployment.**



Boots: work experience placements as a strategy to create the right pharmacy workforce of the future

Boots run a regular work experience placement programme which aims to help students studying pharmacy understand how they can use the knowledge and skills they've developed to drive the pharmaceutical profession forward in the community and meet the needs of the changing healthcare sector. Depending on the year of study, the Summer Placement Programme is either a two-week unpaid or five-week paid experience undertaken during the summer holidays with study days designed to complement their undergraduate learning. This contrasts with the annual programme for young people aged 14 to 19 at their Nottingham Head Office aimed at inspiring young people to consider a career in retail and giving a wide exposure to areas such as human resources, information technology, marketing and buying. Work experience opportunities are also available at local stores throughout the UK.

Work experience is the most popular way for employers to bring young people into their organisation, as they can help employers to 'try before they buy': a majority of employers (85%) that take on young people on work experience and other schemes use these as a recruitment channel and offer employment opportunities to young people afterwards.

However, if you are in doubt about what you need to do to set up a successful programme or want to improve your current offer, follow these basic guidelines for offering good-quality work experience placements.



1 WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Before introducing a work experience placement scheme, it's important to be aware of the basics:

NO DBS (FORMERLY CRB) IS REQUIRED FOR STAFF SUPERVISING YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16–17

The Disclosure and Barring Service, or DBS (formerly CRB), check is not compulsory for staff supervising participants aged 16–17. In the case of work experience, a DBS check will only be required if an employee's specific job purpose includes looking after under-16 work experience students. Employers have the right to refuse requests by the education provider that checks are carried out for those aged 16–17.

For more information, visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERS PEOPLE ON WORK EXPERIENCE

Individuals on work experience are now covered by the employer's existing employers' liability insurance policy, provided your insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers. Find out more at www.abi.org.uk

EMPLOYERS CAN USE EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENTS AND MANAGEMENT OF RISKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Furthermore, if employers have fewer than five employees they are not required to have a written risk assessment.

However, if you have not taken on a young person in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, it's important to take care to identify the particular **needs of the individual** and **review risk assessments** before they start.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES MADE SIMPLE

In the past work placement arrangements have sometimes been seen as over-bureaucratic. However, the Health and Safety Executive recently reviewed their guidance to make it easier and less burdensome for employers keen to offer work experience placements.

There are very few work activities a young person cannot do due to health and safety law. However, it's important to remember that as an employer, you have primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student and should be managing any significant risks. But it's easy to do this, by:

- explaining the risks and how they are controlled when inducting any individual undertaking work experience, checking that they understand what they have been told and know how to raise health and safety concerns
- relying on past or pooled experience when thinking about health and safety
- keeping checks in proportion to the environment the young person will be working in – for further advice on health and safety, visit www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm

PAY AND DURATION OF PLACEMENT

Young people can be taken on by an organisation in a number of different ways. However, generally speaking, if an employer takes on a young person who is of compulsory school age for a short-term work experience placement, they do not need to pay them for their time.

However, it is important that an employer understands the employment status and entitlement, including the right to the National Minimum Wage (NMW), that apply to each individual in their organisation. What matters is whether the agreement or arrangement an individual has with an employer makes them a ‘worker’ or an ‘employee’ for NMW purposes. Therefore, it’s important to be clear about what you’re offering those on a work experience placement to ensure it adheres to entitlement guidelines.

For more information about the entitlements of employees and workers, and on the employment status of specific entitlements of **Apprentices**, those undertaking **work experience** placements, young people on **Traineeships**, **interns**, **agency workers** and **volunteers**, visit www.acas.org.uk or www.gov.uk



WORK EXPERIENCE – WHAT ARE THEY ENTITLED TO?

Type	Explanation	Entitlement
Work experience	Someone who spends a limited time with an employer to learn directly about work and the working environment by watching and learning	Often aimed at students of compulsory school age, therefore not entitled to NMW or have employment rights as a worker
Internship	Interns are usually graduates or undergraduates who go through a selection process in a more formal structured programme. Students are often required to do internships as part of a further or higher education course.	May be entitled to the National Minimum Wage as they can count as an employee or worker if they do regular work for an employer or are promised a contract for future work. Students who are required to do an internship for less than one year as part of a further or higher education course will not normally be entitled to the National Minimum Wage.
Volunteering	Volunteers are those who carry out unpaid work for a charity, voluntary organisation or a fundraising body. Volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development, and usually will have a role description rather than a job description.	Volunteers are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage as they do not get paid other than travel or lunch expenses, and therefore will not be classed as a worker. Volunteers also have no fixed hours and are free to come and go as they please. Volunteers do not have a contract of employment but often have a volunteering agreement.

(This grid was produced using Acas guidance. For more information please visit www.acas.org.uk)

Finally, work experience generally is for someone who spends a **limited time** with an organisation. The average duration of a work experience programme is around two weeks; however, the nature, length and arrangements for work experience vary greatly.

For information and guidance on the National Minimum Wage for organisations who offer work experience, visit www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-work-experience-and-internships

2 SELECTING CANDIDATES: HOW TO GET THE BEST YOUNG PEOPLE FROM A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS

Taking on young people for work experience placements can help an employer tap into a wider talent pool and reach individuals from diverse social backgrounds. Follow our top tips to improving the diversity of your work experience candidates:

- **Contact your local school or college directly to discuss a work experience arrangement.**
- **Be proactive and 'reach out' to education providers** – more employers are increasing their 'outreach' activity, including attending careers fairs, open evenings and school events, as well as hosting assemblies which give them a chance to talk about their industry.

'Our school had good links with local employers, and they had a list of businesses we could go to. Without this list I would have been lost!'

Husayn (23 years old)

- **Avoid recruiting by 'who you know' alone** – relying on existing networks and word-of-mouth means groups outside existing networks never hear of opportunities.
- When choosing who receives a placement, **be flexible when considering qualifying criteria**, including educational attainment, grades and pre-existing work experience.

Working in partnership with local schools and charities

Many employers work with local schools or charities to tap into a wider talent pool and offer work experience to local young people that would most benefit from these.

Stafford and Rural Homes, for example, work with local schools to provide work experience for school children from predominantly deprived areas/schools within the county. They also work with local universities to provide work experience opportunities for undergraduates and have developed relationships with local schools, colleges and university, regularly attending and supporting career fairs.

KFC work in partnership with Barnardo's to offer work experience placements for NEETs. They have developed a four-week placement for users of Barnardo's Employment, Training and Skills services, with a focus on building self-esteem and confidence, working as part of a fun and friendly team, but also providing exposure to the more commercial aspects of business. During four weeks the young adult will have the opportunity to work in all aspects of the restaurant, including customer service if they feel comfortable, but with the continued support and guidance of another team member to ensure that they reach their main goal of building confidence and self-esteem.

3 INDUCTION: INTRODUCING A YOUNG PERSON TO THE WORKPLACE

'Even before I started my work experience, my employer for the two weeks sent me a welcome pack, with information in it like what I should wear and what my hours were. It was really useful.'

Shoyaine (20 years old)

Young people on work experience should receive an induction to the workplace that will help them to integrate quickly and learn about working life. Whether joining a large organisation or an SME, a young person entering the world of work for the first time may not know how it functions and how they should behave. The induction is an opportunity to:

- **get to know the young person**
- **understand their previous experience**
- **talk about the expectations on each side**
- **establish the young person's goals**
- **provide space for the young person to ask questions.**

Therefore, a good induction should include:

- **an introduction to the organisation**, including how the company is structured, and the key people who the individual on work experience will have contact with
- **a tour of the facilities**, including where to get food from inside or outside your building, where the nearest toilets are, first aid facilities and where the fire exits are situated (and any evacuation procedures) as well as health and safety information they need to know (this is a legal requirement)
- **a clear outline of what they will be doing during their time with you** – this should also include room to add in the skills or experience the young person is keen to develop
- **a plan or schedule for the individual's first and possibly second week in the organisation**, clearly outlining what they are doing each day (for example, where they will be in the building and who to meet, and so on).

You could also consider asking the young person to send in a CV before they start so you can find out more about them and help them to feel they're experiencing the real working world.

'It would be great if we could feel like we're going for a "real job" with an application process. It would really help them learn about me, but would also really improve my skills.'

Ellie (17 years old)

4 DEVISING TASKS AND CREATING A WORK PLAN

'I don't feel I did any work or tasks during my work experience. I wasn't even making tea for anyone; I was just making it for myself. I drank a lot of tea!'

Tiana (22 years old)

It is important to give the young person a variety of tasks and if possible rotate them between departments so they get a good insight into the workplace. At EDF Energy, work experience placements involve 'trying' a variety of different roles and tasks in different areas of the business, working with different members of staff, for example, working with the community manager to find new ways of fundraising.

Another way of maximising the young person's exposure to the business is by arranging lunch with different team members each day – from all levels of the organisation.

Pimlico Plumbers

Pimlico Plumbers offer ten-day work placements to young people who have a keen interest in taking up an Apprenticeship and career in a skilled trade. Their placements offer the chance to work with some of the industry's top engineers and give young people an understanding of what it is like to be a tradesperson in a real-life working environment.

The Prince's Trust works closely with Pimlico Plumbers on their World of Work project. The aim of the World of Work tour is to allow young people the opportunity to visit organisations, including Pimlico Plumbers, for a day to see if they have an interest in a work placement or Apprenticeship in that industry. Next, mini interviews are set up with the young people who wish to continue with the organisation and they are placed in relevant departments. Over the last two years, Pimlico Plumbers have engaged with over 120 young people through the World of Work project. One of the first young people to successfully come through the programme is now working as an office administrator and completing an Apprenticeship. He acts as an ambassador for the project and as a buddy with the young people on work placements.

Pimlico Plumbers have employed 12 young people as a consequence of the project, in both trade- and office-based roles. They are currently working towards NVQ Level II achievements.

5 SUPPORTING THE YOUNG PERSON: SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Organisations should ensure there is a **dedicated person(s)** with ring-fenced time in their work schedule to supervise the young person on work experience. This would be a good development opportunity for an employee who wants to develop their management capability. In addition, where possible a separate **mentor** or **coach** should be appointed to support the young person more informally.

Offering quality, supportive work experience is simple if you follow some basic guidelines.

- Be clear about how the young person will be **supported, supervised and mentored** during work experience.
- **Assign a 'buddy'** – this role is key to supporting a young person, therefore a buddy should be someone keen to do the role and who has a friendly, supportive manner.
- Ensure the young person is introduced to the **structure of working life**. If it helps, plan a **schedule** to help them see what they'll be doing each day. For example, new young starters at Barclays create a daily timetable with their supervisor to help them understand what they will be involved in and when and where to do assigned tasks.



6 AT THE END OF THE PLACEMENT: REFERENCE, FEEDBACK AND MOCK INTERVIEWS

At the end of the work experience placement a meeting with the young person should take place to review how everything went, for both the person on work experience as well as the employer. Some students may have a log or diary which they must fill in during, and at the end of, their time with an employer. If there's space to write a comment or feedback, offer to do so.

We recommend that you assess the success of the placement and, if appropriate, offer further support to the individual by agreeing to act as a referee and encouraging the young person to stay in touch. At EDF Energy, for example, students are asked to pretend to apply for their dream job, and then write their CV and covering letter to match this. EDF's Recruitment Co-ordinator will then look through them and give feedback.

Staying in touch: after the placement

George at Asda offer work experience for 16–19-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds. This eight-week programme, developed with the youth charity Fashion Awareness Direct (FAD), includes workshops with some of the biggest brands on the high street (for example Top Shop), mentoring, industry visits and competitions designed to stretch participants. At the end of the programme the shortlisted finalists spend the summer making their garment collection to showcase at a fashion show. George's programme continues to support participants long after it finishes, with ongoing design projects within George or additional training programmes with FAD.

WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO? PRACTICAL STEPS AND TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Employers and schools both have a role to play in building the transition from education into the world of work. An understanding of the world of work should be built into the delivery of education. Research shows that state schools and colleges are keen to work more closely with employers. As an employer you can:

- **Contact your local school or college directly.**
- **Contact your local business and education partnership**, who can broker the first step for you and put you in touch with your local school or college, or arrange activities for you to get involved in.

You can also take part in:

- **Inspiring the Future** – where employees provide ‘career insight’. This initiative matches volunteers with state schools and colleges. Professionals volunteer to go into schools to talk about the job they do, the education or training route they took and the careers in their sector, or to deliver CV and interview workshops. It’s a free service being rolled out in the UK for employers of all sizes and sectors, and for staff at all levels, from Apprentices and graduate recruits to CEOs. Register for free on the secure website: www.inspiringthefuture.org (please tick the ‘heard about it via the CIPD’ box).
- **Business in the Community** offers the **Work Inspiration** programme. For more information, visit: www.bitc.org.uk/workplace/talent_skills/work_inspiration
- **Career Academies** offer volunteering opportunities. Visit: www.careeracademies.org.uk/pages/employers.html

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OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROVIDING QUALITY WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

- *Work Experience Placements that Work: A guide for employers*, CIPD (April 2012), www.cipd.co.uk/workexperience
- *Not Just Making Tea: Reinventing work experience*, UKCES (February 2014), www.ukces.org.uk/ourwork/youthemployment/notjustmakingtea
- *Making Work Experience Work*, CIPD, Education and Employers Taskforce and UKCES (April 2012), www.cipd.co.uk/workexperience
- *Work Experience: Impact and delivery – insights from the evidence*, Education and Employers Taskforce (April 2012), www.educationandemployers.org

FOR GUIDANCE ON WORK EXPERIENCE AND ENTITLEMENT TO THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills website: www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-work-experience-and-internships
- National Minimum Wage Worker Checklist: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-minimum-wage-worker-checklist
- Acas website: volunteers, work experience and internships www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3603

FOR INFORMATION ON WORK EXPERIENCE HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

- Health and Safety Executive website: www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/index.htm

FOR INFORMATION ON THE CIPD'S LEARNING TO WORK PROGRAMME

- Top tips on recruiting, managing and developing young people and guidance on work experience, internships and apprenticeships, visit: www.cipd.co.uk/learningtowork

TO ENGAGE WITH SCHOOLS

- www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/inspiring-future.aspx

THIS BOOKLET DRAWS ON THE FOLLOWING

- *Work Experience Placements That Work: A guide for employers*, CIPD (April 2012), www.cipd.co.uk/workexperience
- *Making Work Experience Work*, CIPD, Education and Employers Taskforce and UKCES (April 2012), www.cipd.co.uk/workexperience
- Submissions to the CIPD *People Management Awards* 2013



**Today's young people,
tomorrow's workforce**

Learning to Work is an action-focused programme led by the CIPD to promote the role of employers in reducing youth unemployment. It falls within the CIPD charity objective to **champion better work and working lives**.

The overall aim of the Learning to Work programme is to promote the business case for investing in the future workforce and increase the number of opportunities available for young people to engage with the world of work. We encourage HR professionals and employers to recognise and champion their role as key players in tackling youth unemployment by taking part in and promoting youth volunteering schemes, offering a wider range of access routes into their organisations and making their recruitment and management practices youth-friendly. We also lobby policy-makers to ensure that the education system is doing enough to prepare people for the workplace and, via our HR volunteers, directly promote employability skills among young people.

cipd.co.uk/learningtowork



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