

Introduction to Work Experience

Why go on Work Experience?
What's in it for me?



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“I want to be an engineer, so I’ve managed to get a placement in a construction company.”

“I want to find out what it is like to go to work, how to get on with people of all ages.”

“Working in a florist gave me a real insight into the creative skills you need for floristry.”

What do you think is the best reason?

Most students think that Work Experience is only about trying out a job that they think they want to do in the future. However, it is about so much more than this.

Work Experience is about learning new skills and new ideas to do with the world of work

It is important that you go on a placement that you are interested in. However, it is better not to restrict yourself just to a job that you think you want to do in the future.

When you apply for a job, college or training place, people are far more interested in the skills and attitudes that you have developed through Work Experience, rather than where you actually went. For example, the ability to work as part of a team or to be able to communicate your ideas both in writing and in speech, is far more important to a university tutor recruiting law students, than the fact that you had your Work Experience in a solicitor’s office.

Most employers are interested in general skills and qualities such as the ability to:

- use your initiative, organise and manage yourself well
- get on with people, work as part of a team and communicate with others
- be able and willing to learn new things
- be enthusiastic, hard working and loyal

Some of these skills are called **Employability Skills**. Employers sometimes refer to these as ‘transferable skills’ because they are skills that you continue to develop in different jobs throughout your working career. **Employability Skills** are the most important things that you need to develop in order to succeed at work in the future.

Having a **positive attitude** to Work Experience will ensure you make a very good start to your working life.

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Work in the 21st century demands highly skilled and flexible employees. You can benefit from Work Experience in many ways.

You will have the opportunity to:

- Gain an insight into the world of work
- Apply skills developed in school to 'real life' work
- Develop your **Employability Skills**
- Develop your confidence and personal attributes

Taking part in Work Experience can have many benefits:

- Allows you to understand about the world of work
- Offers experience of travelling to work
- Allows you to see how businesses work
- Helps you to identify areas of personal weakness in your **Employability Skills**
- Allows you to meet and talk to other people
- Helps you to recognise the advantages and disadvantages of a particular job
- Could lead to a part-time job
- Helps you to understand the importance of your school work
- Gives you a realistic insight into a sector of industry
- Helps you to decide what to do in the future
- Provides you with an opportunity to collect information for your personal portfolio
- Provides potential references for future employment

