

Guidance for Providing Work Experience Placements		
Policy...	Code of Practice...	Guidance✓ Procedure...
Organisation-wide✓		Local...
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee		
Chair Dr Derek Millard-Healy	Date October 2023	Review date 2026
The purpose of presenting this documents to the University Health and Safety Committee Standard 3 year re-fresh... Changes in practice and/or legislation... New Guidance ✓		

1. Introduction

Work experience introduces young people to the work environment and can be a valuable part of their education. This guidance gives advice to departments providing work experience placements for young persons at the University. Please note, such placements are organised directly with departments and not centrally through Human Resources.

Placements may be arranged either via the young person's school or college, a third party provider or directly with the University (e.g. through a friend or family member).

Work experience is defined as a placement on university premises where a person carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks or duties, more or less as an employee would, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience (normally for one or two weeks).

Work experience placements can:

- Provide young people with an understanding of the world of work
- Assist young people in deciding what type of career they might want in the future
- Improve the personal development of young people
- Improve the key skills and employability of young people
- Provide a major link between the school, employers and the local community

2. Scope

This guidance applies across the organisation.

3. Organisation of work experience placements

Placements are usually arranged between the school (or agency) and the department providing work placements.

It should be the aim of the college/institute/department to provide a positive introduction to work and an organised timetable/programme for the period of the work placement.

Students on work experience are classed as employees for the period of the placement under the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990 and so are covered by the University's insurance. We recommend that you ensure the student has an official letter of engagement before starting their placement. This letter should also include a confidentiality clause if they are likely to be dealing with work of a sensitive nature.

Students are eligible for work experience if they are in their last two years of compulsory education or taking post-16 courses. Students are typically aged between 15 and 17 years old.

Most placements last between one and two weeks but extended work experience may be requested in some cases.

Students will often have to complete a log of their placement and departments will be asked to provide a summary of the skills and performance of the student which may be used to complement their CV.

Students will need to have their placement confirmed three months before the start date. As placements usually take place during July, confirmation is required at the beginning of April.

4. Responsibilities

All staff should be aware of this guidance. However, it is the responsibility of each College, Institute and Directorate to ensure that their employees involved in providing work experience - its planning, authorisation, monitoring and administration - are fully conversant in the principles and arrangements highlighted herein.

4.1 Individual(s) responsible for organising the work associated with the work experience placement and day-to-day supervision of the work experience student

- a) Must have adequately risk assessed and planned for the work experience placement.
- b) Ensure compliance with this guidance and any related policies/documents.
- c) Must not expose the work experience student to any unnecessary risks;
- d) Provide their Supervisor/Line Manager with up to date contact and next of kin details;
- e) Must ensure that the student is supervised at all times while on campus and that the university Safeguarding policy is followed.

4.2 Line Managers and Academic Supervisors.

- a) Ensuring staff and students are made aware of this guidance and the associated systems and procedures in place to support safe and compliant work experience.
- b) Monitoring work experience requests in their area of responsibility
- c) Contributing to (where necessary) and reviewing risk assessments to ensure they give appropriate consideration to the foreseeable range of hazards likely to be encountered during the work placement and identify suitable control measures to minimise the risk from these hazards.

4.3 Head of Department/ Director of Institutes/ Director of Services

- a) Ensuring managers/ academic supervisors and staff are made aware of this guidance and the associated systems and procedures in place to support work placements.
- b) Putting in place arrangements to resource suitable control measures to support safe, sustainable and compliant work experience opportunities.

4.4 Health, Safety and Environment Team

The Health, safety and Environment team (HSET) are in place to provide advice and guidance on safety related matters. The HSET can be contacted via email (healthandsafety@brunel.ac.uk) and, if required, should be consulted a minimum of 15 working days before any planned work experience placements.

5 Process

The initial contact is normally a letter from the student requesting a placement. This letter is often a template given to the student to use.

When a placement is arranged, the school will sometimes send a letter thanking the placement provider and giving further information about the student, including any relevant medical or personal information. This is usually done via the school, so do not use the letter to judge the students' literacy. The Head of Department will need to sign a form accepting that the department is taking the work experience student.

The department will be required to carry out a risk assessment by law to reduce the possibility of the young person having an accident (see Health and Safety Office work experience guidance). A copy of the risk assessment must be given to the student. The department needs to provide the students' parents or carers with a copy of the department's risk assessment or any control measure taken. As part of the department's risk assessment, consideration will need to be given to whether any Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are necessary (see Safeguarding policy section below).

Prior to the placement starting a meeting may be useful to identify the targets the student hopes to achieve, an explanation of the Work Experience Logbook or any other evidence recording form.

The school carries out an exit interview with the student to assess if targets have been achieved.

Unofficial placements

Students often have placements with a department through connections with staff via family or friends. These unofficial placements will not be subject to the same school related process outlined here (confirmation 3 months in advance; placement logs), but all other aspects apply – particularly risk assessment. However, it is still essential in these cases that the receiving department complies with the University's Safeguarding policy.

6 Safeguarding

The University aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Therefore, all work experience placements must comply with the University's [Safeguarding Policy](#).

One of the cornerstones of the policy is the need to undertake a risk assessment, which would cover both generic health and safety and safeguarding issues.

Attention is also drawn to the University's legal requirements in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). It is a criminal offence to knowingly employ an individual barred by the DBS to work in regulated activity with children (under 18) and adults in vulnerable situations. For working with children, this will generally be unsupervised teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising, on a frequent (one a week or more) or intensive (4 or more days in a 30 day period). In the majority of cases supervision of young people on a short-term work experience placement will not fall within this definition of regulated activity.

If there is a query as to whether a DBS check is required, please contact Human Resources.

Further information about the process for obtaining a DBS check can be found on the University Secretary's web pages

7 Induction

The young person will have a very limited experience of working. Some may have Saturday or evening jobs but for many this will be their first experience of working – even opening and distributing post can be a new 'skill'. It is useful to provide 'buddy' for the placement period who will be their supervisor and coach. Check the 'buddy' is fully briefed about the student before they are introduced to each other. In some cases a DBS check may need to be carried out on the 'buddy' (see [Safeguarding policy](#)).

Prepare a shortened version of your normal induction for staff giving information they need to get started.

Encourage the work experience student to ask questions whenever they are in doubt about anything. They may well be shy and reluctant to ask which can lead to mistakes and knock the student's self-confidence. Introduce work space, refreshments and work breaks, toilets, where to put personal items (handbags, coats etc).

The young person on a work experience placement has responsibilities that must be outlined to them on induction. The responsibilities of the young person include:

- Following the rules and procedures outlined in their induction training;
- Not to do anything that would endanger their own or other's safety (e.g. use equipment that the student has not been trained to use, or access unauthorised areas);
- Immediately reporting accidents and near misses to their supervisor;
- To ask their supervisor for help if there is anything they are unsure of or do not understand.

Give them a short "job description" of the tasks they will cover during their placement – try and itemise the days they will carry out specific tasks if this is relevant. Assess their knowledge of office tasks (if any) and adjust the "job description" if necessary eg more IT skills than anticipated. Highlight important information from the Health, Safety and Environment Team e.g. fire drills, first aid and accident reporting as appropriate.

Give them any useful documents:

- a map of the campus/building if they have to "run errands" from one department to another – give them a short tour around the building if appropriate.
- A short list of contacts and telephone numbers of people they are likely to have to phone.
- Introduce them to the key people so (a) they do not feel isolated and (b) they are known to other staff.

8 Risk Assessment

The University has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, students and visitors. It is therefore essential that all responsible parties give appropriate due diligence to writing and authorising risk assessments for work experience placements.

The risk assessment should be seen as an essential planning tool that aims to address potential events which may negatively impact individuals, property and/or the environment. The individual writing the risk assessment should be competent to do so and/or seek competent advice and guidance from a local health and safety coordinator, or the Health, Safety and Environment Team. The risk assessment should sufficiently address a range of hazards and needs commensurate with the risk level, including (but not limited to):-

- Any specific health or other needs of the placement student (mobility needs, allergies, relevant medical needs – asthma, epilepsy etc).

- Location of the work experience
- Planned arrangements for induction
- An overview of the specific work to be undertaken and any training that will be given, you should also include activities the student will not be undertaking (e.g. manual handling, personal data entry etc.)
- Safeguarding measures that will be in place, (including DBS clearance where necessary) – this would need to include supervision and management of the student throughout the work experience. (e.g. where will they be met at the start of every day? And where will they be dropped off at the end of every day? Also consider supervision during breaks and toilet access.

The approver, and/or senior management, have the authority to withdraw approval if the situation changes between the time of approval and arrival of the student.

Young peoples are not allowed to be exposed to

- Work that cannot be adapted to meet any physical or mental limitations they may have including exposure to potentially distressing scenes or situations
- Substances which are toxic or cause cancer
- Certain microbiological and biological agents
- Radiation
- Extreme heat or cold, noise or vibration.
- Situations where their lack of knowledge or experience could cause physical or mental injury
- Live electrical systems

Further advice on Risk assessment and suitable proformas can be found here: [Risk Assessment \(brunel.ac.uk\)](#)

9 Related Documents, Policies and Webpages:

- [Health, Safety and Environment \(brunel.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding at Brunel | Brunel University London](#)