

A Step by Step Guide

How to find a

Work Experience Placement

Work experience placements are valuable opportunities that give you insight into the working world, help develop your skills, and can guide your future career choices. This guide outlines how to effectively search for and secure a placement.

Step 1 Decide what you are interested in

Before you begin your search, think about:

- What kind of work interests you (e.g. healthcare, media, construction, law)?
- What skills you want to develop.
- Whether you want to try something related to your future career or explore a new area.

Make a list of industries or job roles that appeal to you.

Step 2. Research potential employers

Start identifying companies, organisations, or individuals that might offer work experience. You can:

- Search online for local businesses or organisations in your chosen area.
- Check company websites under sections like “Careers,” “Opportunities,” or “Work Experience.”
- Use platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, or local job boards.
- Ask friends, family, teachers, or school career advisors for suggestions or contacts.

Create a list of possible employers with contact details.

Step 3. Prepare a CV and Cover Letter

Even for unpaid placements, a short CV and a professional cover letter show you are serious. Your CV should include:

- Your name and contact details.
- Education and subjects studied.
- Any relevant skills, hobbies, or achievements.
- A short personal statement about your interests.

Your cover letter should:

- Introduce yourself and explain why you're interested in work experience.
- Mention why you chose their company specifically.
- State what you hope to learn and how you'll contribute.

Keep both documents clear, neat, and well-formatted.

Step 4 Make contact

You can approach employers in several ways:

- Email: Send your CV and cover letter. Be polite, professional, and check spelling.
- Phone: Call to ask if they offer placements and who to contact. Be confident but respectful. *(See A Step by Step Guide 'How to make a phone call to ask for a Work Experience Placement')*
- In person: Visit local businesses to ask directly, especially in trades or retail.

Keep a record of who you have contacted and when.

Step 5. Using Email to Apply

- **Why Email Is Important**

Email is one of the most common and professional ways to contact employers. It creates a first impression — so it needs to be clear, polite, and well written.

- **How to Start an Email**

Start your email formally and address the person by name if you know it. For example:

- If you know the person's name:
 - Dear Mr Smith,
 - Dear Ms Khan,
- If you don't know who to write to:
 - Dear Sir or Madam,

Avoid casual greetings like "Hey" or "Hiya."

NEVER WRITE 'Hi Mrs'

- **Writing the Email**

Keep the message polite and professional. Here's a simple structure:

- **Email Example:**

Subject Line: *Work Experience Placement Enquiry*

Dear Ms Johnson,

My name is [Your Name], and I am a Year (add in Year group) student at [Your School Name]. I am writing to enquire about the possibility of completing a work experience placement at your company.

I am very interested in [mention the field, e.g., graphic design], and I would love the opportunity to learn more about the industry by spending time with your team. I have attached my CV and cover letter for your consideration.

Please let me know if there are any opportunities available. I would be very grateful for your time and any advice you may be able to offer.

Kind regards,
[Your Full Name]

- **Check Grammar and Spelling**

Always proofread your email before sending it. Mistakes can make you seem careless. Use a spellchecker, or ask someone (like a teacher or parent) to read it over.

- Use correct punctuation and capital letters.
- Avoid text language or emojis.
- Make sure names and job titles are spelt correctly.

Step 6. Make contact in other ways too

Besides email, you can:

- Call the company: Ask if they accept work experience students and who to contact.
- Visit in person: This works well for local shops, trades, or smaller businesses. Be polite, bring a copy of your CV, and explain why you're there.

Step 7. Be persistent and follow up

You may not hear back right away. After a week or two, send a polite follow-up email or make a phone call to check if they've considered your request.

Don't get discouraged—many people get placements only after trying multiple places.

Step 8. Use your school resources

Check any links to local employers posted in Google Classrooms

Step 9. Consider virtual placements (Year 12 only)

If in-person options are limited, some organisations offer virtual work experience. These can still provide valuable insights and skills. Check platforms like:

- Springpod
- Speakers for Schools
- Forage

Step 10. Be ready for an interview or meeting

Some employers may ask to meet you before agreeing. Prepare by:

- Learning a bit about the company.
- Thinking about what you want to get out of the placement.
- Being ready to explain why you're interested.

Dress neatly and be on time, whether the meeting is in person or online.

Final Tips

- Start early – placements can fill up quickly.
- Be open-minded – any experience is useful, even if it's not your first choice.
- Be professional – good manners, punctuality, and a positive attitude make a big difference.