

Work Experience Notes

Finding a work experience placement this year will likely be more challenging than previous years due to Covid: with many businesses still recovering and reluctant to take on work experience students. Also be aware that most other schools in the area (including Exeter) have the same work experience week. It is therefore important to start applying for placements as soon as possible. It is also advisable to be flexible and not stick too rigidly to one job path.

Some students find choosing and finding a work experience placement easy:

- they know what they want to do,
- there are lots of opportunities for what they wish to do,
- they don't mind what they do and go somewhere convenient,
- they have connections with businesses through parents, friends or relatives,
- they start looking very early
- or they are just plain lucky.

Unfortunately, this does not apply to everyone. Finding a placement can be a daunting task taking time and effort and it can seem easier to just try and ignore it and hope it goes away. In reality, it is far easier to put the time and effort in now and get it sorted than to leave it to the last minute. You are also more likely to get a placement of your choice which will hopefully result in a worthwhile, enjoyable week.

In order to make finding a placement more manageable try and narrow down your search area by:

- location,
- the type of organisation (large or small),
- the type of work (indoor or outdoor, manual or office) or
- what job sector (architecture, education, engineering etc.).

Too much choice is almost harder to deal with than too little.

Remember that this is about work experience – interacting with adults, working a full day, dealing with customers – so developing learning and employability skills. Even the process of writing the application letter, sending emails, applying over the phone or in person, being accepted or rejected are all valuable experiences for the future. Whatever happens you will gain from this experience.

It helps to think outside the box.

- Accountancy, IT and lawyers– try large organisations with accounts, IT and legal departments.
- Photography – try a company that develops/prints photos or sells cameras.
- Medical – try pharmacists.
- Architecture – try planning departments, chartered surveyors, or large building companies who may have in house architects.

The internet is a great way to investigate similar jobs or jobs that are part of a chain of businesses that are associated with the sector you are interested in.

It is well worth asking your parents, relatives and friend of the family if they have placements available but try not to go somewhere too familiar as you will not gain the full benefits from the work experience week process.

In many cases you will have to apply to a number of placements. Please do this at the same time. You can politely decline an offer if you get more than one but if you wait for each reply and possible rejection (and there could well be a few) you will be wasting time (it is amazing how quickly next year comes around) and places elsewhere will go. Included in this booklet is a sample template for an application letter (I will also email out an electronic copy). As soon as possible, either personalise the template or write your own letter and save it somewhere safe. This can be used as the basis for all application letters. Once this is done it is straight forward to apply to multiple organisations. Ensure that, along with holding all the normal information needed in an application letter, they also show some of your own individuality (not always easy but try). If e-mailing companies please attach the letter as well.

Please read the information in this booklet on “Advice on Applying to Organisations”.

If you are finding it difficult for whatever reason please come and see me in the Pastoral office sooner rather than later. I am generally available at registration, Tuesday P5, break and lunch times. When you leave education finding a job is not necessarily going to be easy and finding work experience is no different, but if we work together and start now hopefully it can be done relatively painlessly and in plenty of time. Don't forget your tutors are also there to help you as well as your teachers if you are interested in careers within their subjects.

Please use the “Work Experience Questionnaire and Advice” in this booklet to help you.

Along with the questionnaire please use the CSW website to use their search engine that lists companies who have taken work experience students in the past. The website address is <https://devon.learnaboutwork.org/index.asp> the student login in is –

- School – Uffculme School (from the drop down)
- Name – Uffculme Student
- PIN – 5172

This website will help to you to see what type of organisations are out there and what are in your area. You can contact the

Work Experience Questionnaire and Advice

What type of work?	What would you like to do when you have finished your education?	
	What are you interested in now?	
	What subjects are you good at in school? What academic/vocational courses are you thinking of studying after you leave Uffculme?	
	What clubs do you belong to in and out of school?	
	Would you prefer to be in an office type placement (accountants, admin) or a more active placement (riding stables, plumbing)?	
	Think of the jobs where your family, friends, parents and neighbours work. Do any of these jobs interest you?	
	What jobs do you not want to do? This really helps to narrow down your focus and so make the task of finding a placement seem less daunting.	

Due to Health and Safety and insurance some jobs may not be suitable for work experience e.g. roofing, some building firms, and some manufacturing firms. Others will be able to offer placements, but it may be as an observer rather than hands on e.g. The RD&E. When asking for a placement make sure you get an idea of what you will be able to do so you know before you start. This also applies when seeking a placement with such firms as solicitors and doctors. These types of practices have to be careful of confidentiality with their clients/patients so are limited in the jobs they can let you handle.

Where can you travel to?	Where do your parents/family/friends of the family travel to each day? Can they drop you off at your placement? (You will need to ensure that the work times match) Narrowing down where you can travel may limit your opportunities but, in many ways, makes the search easier as you can focus on placements in those areas only.	
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	If you catch a bus/train, where can you look for placements? (Don't forget cost of tickets)	
	If you have a bike, where could you cycle to? (Or walk)	
Working hours:-	Are there restrictions on the times/hours that you can work? (Be aware that most jobs will have different hours to school. Ensure you find out what hours you will be expected to work and check that you can still get there and back each day.)	

Some placements may not be able to offer a placement in the correct week. Unfortunately, due to the school time lost due to Covid and lockdowns, we can not authorise a work experience placement in any other week except the actual work experience week. You can choose to take a placement during the school holidays if the opportunity arises.

Where to look for possible placements?	If searching by type of business -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSW website database (see information attached) • Search engines such as Google • Look in the Yellow Pages • Look at Yell.com • Ask friends, family and neighbours • Ask Mrs Cross (work experience co-ordinator at school) • Ask Mrs Trump (careers advisor at school – careers office near reception) • Ask a similar business for suggestions
	If searching by area:-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • Search engines – search businesses in a specific area • Drive/walk round the area

If an opportunity arises for you to do your placement away from home please organise it asap so that the necessary Health and Safety can be completed in time as may have to be completed by an outside agency. This will incur an extra cost of £50 if the placement is outside the CSW area (see map attached), ask Mrs Cross.

What to do next?	Having problems finding a placement?	Talk to Mrs Cross Talk to your tutor Talk to your parents
	Have you found some placements you are interested in?	Please see “Advice on Applying to Organisations” attached. Then a) Write a letter – Either send or email the letter. If no reply after a week ring to check they received the letter b) Visit the placement to ask for work experience or just to introduce yourself if you have already contacted them c) Phone to ask for a placement (Writing is best but the other options are acceptable, choose which suits you. If you have not secured a placement and it is getting near to the work experience date then phoning/visiting will be the only option)
	Got a placement?	Fill in as much as you and your parents can of the 3 Way Work Experience Agreement form and the Health Declaration Form attached. Then get the employer to fill out their parts and then hand them into your tutor asap. You may want or be asked to visit the placement to introduce yourself.
Advantages of organising your placement asap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More placements available (other schools have their work experience the same week and some job sectors are highly sought after such as vets and sports centres) • Once you have your placement and have handed in the correct forms hopefully you will not have to think about work experience again until a few weeks before the placement. • If you don't find a placement in good time you will find that your tutor, Mrs Cross and Mr Roberts will be talking to you regularly. • While the placement date is still months away writing a letter to the possible placements is the best/preferred method of contact but if finding a placement is left too late phoning or visiting will be the only option. 	

Student notes: