

HOW TO FIND

A PLACEMENT



Finding work experience can be a tricky business.

Short of typing “find me work experience” into Google, where can you look for that elusive work experience placement?

Don’t despair just yet! We’ve got a whole range of great ideas for students who are short of work experience inspiration.

It may not be easy but with perseverance you will succeed. After the decision of the types of placements you might like to go to then you need to start to think about what you want to do. Or more importantly what you wouldn’t want to do.

Employers are busy so be prepared to send a couple of emails/ letters and follow up with a phone call.

Think about all the people you know, i.e. family friends, neighbours, aunts, uncles, and acquaintances, and see if anyone knows anyone working in the industry you want to work in. Ask them to help you find work experience. Even if their own company might not offer work experience; they might be able to put you in contact with someone else.

Research large companies on their websites as they might already have details of the work experience programmes they offer. If this is the case, they will probably have an application form for you to fill in or will provide contact details for the people in charge of work experience applications. If not, try emailing their general email address or the personnel address.

There is a database available to the school which will provide employers who have been used in the past. A warning: these have not committed to taking anyone but can be approached and asked if they can support the placement dates you are going out on. The information on here is only as good as the last student that was there so if you find employers that no longer take students or contact details that have changed please let us know so we can update the information accordingly. It is a good way to start to think about what you might like to do



Do your research.

Where would you like to complete your Work Experience?

WHY do you want to do that? Is it something you're good at, enjoy doing, looks rewarding, paid well?

An employer wants to employ enthusiastic staff. If you can't explain why you want to experience something somewhere, you might be looking at the wrong thing.

You can research different careers and even specific jobs and companies simply using Google. If you think you want to be an engineer, just ask Google. What does an engineer do?



TALK TO PEOPLE

Talk to people.

Once you've done your research and you've had a really good think about a job you would like to experience, you need to find an employer who will give you that week's experience.

To find this employer you need to talk to people. Ask your careers advisor, talk to your teacher, talk to friends and family. Explain why you want to experience that job (you know this because you've done your research) and see if they can recommend someone to you.

Then talk to them. Pick up the phone, knock on the door but talk. Employers love meeting enthusiastic people and one of the skills they are looking for is communication skills. Start by showing them you have this by talking to them.



Use technology.

It's not always possible to talk to someone, they might be busy, in a meeting or just not available when you are. Now is the time to use technology, your smartphone in your pocket is ideal.

Search for a company email address, send them an email. WARNING – is your email address suitable to send to an employer? You might think “red_hot_rascal@hotmail” is funny but an employer will delete that email as soon as they see it.

Use social media to contact employers. Lots of companies use social media so you could contact them that way. WARNING – is your social media profile smart? If it's covered in pictures of you and your mates at the weekend, clean it up! Employers check your profile before they will talk to anyone. Don't fall over at this first hurdle



Don't give up

Getting a job is hard. Getting a work experience placement is hard. Some employers will say they can't support you. Don't give up! This is what getting a job is really like, you will have to keep on trying, stay positive and persevere. If you get rejections, ask the employer why. They might be able to give you some tips that will help future applications.



Effort equals Reward

The harder you try the more you will get. No research, an unrehearsed phone call, an email with spelling mistakes are all a recipe for a rejection. Put in the effort and submit excellent applications to employers you really want to have a work experience with and you will get a brilliant experience that will help you to see if that is the right career for you.