



Work Experience Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') recognises that as part of the community it has a role to fulfil in terms of the provision of work experience through its local schools and colleges. This can be done by providing a structured programme which can generate maximum benefit for both the student/young person and the Council.

We encourage work experience placements and acknowledge the benefits that a work experience person can bring, such as enthusiasm, extra human resource to help to complete projects and improved ties with the local community.

Similarly, a work experience person benefits from their placement with the Council by gaining valuable career experience and enhancing their CV.

The Work Experience Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') does not form part of any contracts of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

The Policy applies specifically to students of school age (in their last two years of compulsory schooling) and those undertaking post-16 courses at schools or colleges. The main features of these placements are:

- placements take place on the employer's premises
- the vast majority of pre-16 placements last for one week
- students under compulsory school leaving age may only take part in placements arranged as part of their education by their school or governing body.

The Council is also committed to offering work experience opportunities to students/young persons in and leaving care to support them in harnessing their potential and providing them with this experience.

This Policy does not cover apprenticeships which are managed under separate arrangements.

What is Work Experience?

Work experience can be defined as: a placement on employer's premises in which a student/young person carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.

'Work shadowing' may also form part of the experience, allowing close observation of jobs which for reasons of complexity and/or safety cannot be actively undertaken by the student/young person.

The success of a placement relies upon the effective partnership between the Council, the work experience organiser, the school and the student/care provider and the young person. Outcomes for the student/young people might include:

- learning to work on their own and as part of a team
- developing self-reliance, flexibility and self confidence
- developing key skills: communication, IT, problem solving and the management of self-learning
- developing an understanding of different vocational and occupational skills, which may help to determine their career choice
- improving attainment by making learning more relevant

Responsibility

The HR Team will be responsible for co-ordinating work placements with schools/colleges/care providers, and the department(s) where the student/young person will be placed. Therefore, in the first instance HR must be contacted before a student/young person is placed within the Council.

Head of Talent and Development at Publica, our HR support service, will work with specialist education, employment and training officers from care providers to identify opportunities to ensure they reach young people in or leaving care.

The necessary support will be provided to students/young people when they take up these opportunities, which may take the form of some reasonable adjustments.

Schools and colleges / Care providers

Applications from schools/colleges/care providers will be received positively and will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the Council's ability to accommodate such a placement. There may be occasions where a student/young person wishes to undertake specific work experience i.e. in one section for the duration of their placement. It is the responsibility of the school to inform the HR team of any preferences for the placement(s). However, the student/young person will have the opportunity to let us know during their placement interview.

The school/college will contact HR, and an interview will be set up with the prospective student/young person and HR or the line manager who will act as the placement's supervisor/host for the duration of their work experience (Appendix A). The student/young person will be asked to fill in and bring along a pre-experience work form (Appendix B). HR will confirm the placement in writing to the school/care provider and a letter will be sent to the student/young person with a timetable for their placement (Appendix C & D).

Student/young person Feedback

At the end of each placement they will be asked to provide feedback on their experience with the Council. This feedback is valuable in helping the Council improve future placements and ensure they remain meaningful and supportive. They will be provided with a link to an online feedback form (via [Microsoft Forms](#)) to complete at the end of their placement.

Types of placements

Placements can be either:

- a work-shadowing placement of up to one week's duration, where the individual observes the work undertaken by employees but does not perform any work for the benefit of the Council, except for doing some work for illustrative or learning purposes; or
- a work experience placement, where the individual is expected to perform some work or provide some assistance to the Council or to its employees.

Method of placement

The HR Team will liaise with any departments that wish to offer work experience opportunities to coordinate a list of available work experience placements.

It will be the responsibility of each department to identify the likely commencement date and duration of each work experience placement and to notify the HR team. The duration of each work experience placement will be a matter for HR team to confirm, no single placement will usually be for more than 1 week in duration.

Induction and supervision

The supervisor/host will arrange for an induction for the work experience person on the first day of the assignment, during which they will be given essential information about the workplace and a tour of the building. This will include providing the work experience placement with the *Work Experience Handbook* and the supervisor/host will go through the Induction Checklist (Appendix E).

The HR team and supervisor/host will be made aware of any visits from representatives of the school and of the telephone number of a contact at the school in case of accident or emergency.

The assigned supervisor/host will be responsible for supervising people on work experience. They must be aware of safeguarding responsibilities and act in line with the Council's safeguarding policies and procedures. Supervisors/hosts should also refer to the Child Protection Guidance for Placement Providers (Appendix F) for practical advice on supporting students/young people appropriately during placements.

Tasks

The line manager acting as the assigned supervisor/host for the work experience placement and HR will ensure that the work experience person is given work that is commensurate with their skills and abilities.

The work may cover a range of tasks and may be in one department or in different departments over their time with the Council. Should there be insufficient work available in the department the relevant line manager will make reasonable efforts to find the work experience person suitable alternative work within the Council by liaising with the HR team and other line managers.

Hours

The number of hours worked will be agreed in advance by the Council, school/college, parents/guardians and students/the young person. The hours will be clearly stated on their work experience programme and covered through induction. Unless there are strong reasons to the contrary, it is recommended that students/young

people should not be asked to work more than a standard 7 ½ hour day. The Working Time Regulations (1998) also apply to students, and they should not be asked to work for more than five consecutive days out of seven, and must have a minimum of a 30 minute lunch break.

Payment

Work experience is part of the student's education, and the Council will make no payment for work performed, whether to the students/young people, the school or the educational/care institution arranging the placement.

Disciplinary and Capability Issues

Our disciplinary, grievance and capability procedures do not apply to work experience placements.

Where the relevant line manager has reason to believe that there are minor issues concerning the work experience person's capability or conduct, they will raise it informally with the work experience person. Where, in the opinion of the line manager, the capability or conduct issues are serious, the matter should be brought to the attention of the HR team.

Nevertheless, line managers and other employees should observe basic principles of fairness in dealing with any issues of capability or conduct that may arise.

In cases of capability, individuals should be informed of any shortcomings in their performance and given the chance to improve. In cases of misconduct, the line manager must have reasonable grounds for believing that the individual has been guilty of misconduct and should give them the opportunity to give any explanation/mitigation.

We reserve the right to terminate a placement immediately, should the work experience person be guilty of serious misconduct or any negligence resulting in loss or damage to the Council.

Health and Safety

We must ensure that all those who are on work experience or work-shadowing placements have the same basic training on matters of health and safety as other workers. The Council will also comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Working Time Regulations 1998, and safeguarding legislation relevant to young people under 18.

As part of a work experience placement, it is essential that:

- students/young people are properly prepared and briefed on the hazards of the workplace and the control measures provided to reduce or eliminate risk or injury, before they start work.
- workplace supervisors/hosts and other employees know exactly what is expected of them and aware of their responsibilities.
- the schools/colleges are clear about their responsibilities in arranging placements for students/young people and introducing them to general health and safety at work issues, prior to their placement.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply to all young people under 18. Risk assessments will need to be carried out for each placement before they arrive, and the measures put in place to control them. Please refer to the [Risk Assessment Guidance document](#) and complete a [Risk Assessment Template](#) on the portal. In addition, once they are in place specific assessments on their workstation must be undertaken. When students/young people are below compulsory school leaving age the Council must provide their parents/guardians with key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures introduced to minimise, or ideally eliminate any significant risks. This information will normally be passed on through the student's school/care provider.

Any problems with the placement should be discussed with HR and the school will then be notified. In particular, in the case of any accident involving a student/young person, a report giving full details should be made, without delay to the Safety Adviser.

Insurance

The Council provides Employers and Public Liability Insurance which covers all students/young people undertaking any work experience with the Council.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Council is committed to ensuring work experience opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of background, and will make reasonable adjustments to support students/young people with additional needs.

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Private and Confidential

Via Email

Name

Address 1

Address 2

Postcode

Date



Work Experience Placement Interview

Dear **{Name}**

I am pleased to confirm that we have arranged a work experience placement for you for **{Insert dates from – to}**.

We would like to meet you before you begin your placement so that you gain the most from this experience. Please therefore ask for **{Insert name}** at **{Insert time}** at our **{Insert place}** Offices, (please find a map enclosed).

I have enclosed a form which I would like you to complete and bring with you as this will help us to get to know each other in a little more detail before you begin the placement.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if there is anything that you are not sure about.

Yours sincerely

{Insert name}

{Insert title}

cc Work experience host or nominated employee involved on this interview



Pre Work Experience Placement Form

This form is for you to complete before commencing your work experience placement with the Council. It is designed for you to let us know about yourself including your career interests so that we can try to make your placement with us as rewarding and enjoyable as possible. We cannot guarantee placement in a particular area, as it is dependent on service needs. **Please bring this with you when you come to meet us at your interview.**

Name				
School/College/Care				
Dates of Placement	From		To	

Interests / Hobbies:

Career Interests:

My reasons for wanting to be placed at West Oxfordshire District Council:

Are there any areas of work that you are particularly interested in?

What objectives would you like to achieve by the end of your placement?



Appendix C

Name

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Address 4

Postcode

Work Experience Placement {Insert dates from – to}

Dear **{Name}**

I am pleased to confirm that we have arranged a work experience placement for you during the dates above. Your placement with the Council will involve you working in **one OR a number of different service areas**. This will enable you to gain an insight of how these service areas are run individually and provide you with an overview of the variety of work carried out by the Council as a whole.

On your first day please report to **{Insert name}** at **{Insert time}** at our Woodgreen Offices (please find a map enclosed). They will be your central point of contact for the duration of your time with us, therefore please note their telephone number is **{Insert number}** should contact need to be made in the case of an emergency. They will provide you with an induction on arrival so that you understand your programme fully for the week(s) ahead. Please find enclosed a detailed timetable for your placement.

We kindly ask that you complete a short online feedback form after your placement to help us improve future opportunities, using [this link](#).

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if there is anything that you are not sure about. We look forward to welcoming you to West Oxfordshire District Council and hope that you find your work experience both enjoyable and useful.

Yours sincerely

{Insert name}

{Insert title}

cc Work experience placement supervisor/host involved on this placement



Work Experience Timetable

Name		Dates	From: To:
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Please complete the Work Experience Feedback Form at the end of your placement by clicking [HERE](#) or by scanning the QR code above.

Date	Time	Service Area	Content	Supervisor/Host

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Work experience guidance notes and checklist

Name:		Host Name:	
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Standards and expectations - while work experience students should be treated the same as all other employees to give them a true experience of the working environment, they may not be aware of certain 'normal' standards of working practice. Please have patience with students.

Training/supervision - level of tasks and previous experience will depend on the age of the student – please explain tasks fully before leaving a student to work alone. Whether currently at school, school leaver or undergraduate, you may find that your student is more/less capable than you expected, so be flexible when explaining things.

Keeping in touch – students may not be used to working alone, make sure they know who their key contacts are – especially if their host is called away, make sure they know who they can call if they are late/cannot get into work/are ill etc.

Please refer to the following checklist during your hosting period with the student:

Activity	Date actioned
Discuss building access arrangements, signing in at reception, passes, entrances and exits (including when main reception is closed if they arrive before 9am/leave after 5pm)	
Discuss the Pre Work Experience Placement Form sent with their Welcome Letter. If possible, <i>adapt placement to suit the student – if they're interested in another area, can you arrange for them to meet with someone from that department for ½ hr to discuss their role?</i>	
Print off Handbook and explain they should take it with them to each hosting department. Give them time to read through it and go through the timetable.	

Activity	Date actioned
Ensure you have their emergency contact details and any medical info that you need to be aware of during their placement and note this at the end of this form.	
Introduction to colleagues - discuss their roles and responsibilities, Show them to their workstation, if applicable	
Tour of the building and location of different departments.	
Toilets	
Local facilities/amenities	
Fire exits and muster points – refer to SAFE Emergency Evacuation process	
Catering arrangements – what are their plans for lunch? Ensure they have at least 30 minutes	
Parking & cycle arrangements - optional	
Smoking facilities - optional	
Printer locations	
Notice boards	
Meeting room locations - optional	
Advise them of any particular security arrangements that apply	
Show a brief overview of the Portal - News, WOW	
<p>Show them a copy of employee Health & Safety Handbook, incorporating the H&S Policy Statement on page 3/the portal.</p> <p>Allow time for them to read the booklet and ask questions.</p> <p><i>A person might be unfamiliar with ‘obvious’ risks and the hosting manager should consider the need for tailored training/closer supervision.</i></p>	

Activity	Date actioned
Discuss the requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE), if relevant and arrange for the necessary items to be ordered as soon as possible. Discuss when it is to be worn and how to return it	
Introduction to the Council and explain how employees make valuable contribution to the Council and its values.	
At the end of each day, have a catch up to discuss their day and experience.	
End of work experience feedback form (at end of Handbook) – we would encourage you to discuss this with the student on their penultimate/last day with you.	
Please note anything HR needs to know that may affect the placement, i.e. medication etc below:	
Emergency Contact Information (include name, phone number, their relation to you and a teacher's name to contact):	
	Teacher Information:

For the Student/Young person in placement to complete:

I have had all the above areas explained to me and I fully understand my responsibilities whilst at the Council.

I understand that any knowledge and information gained whilst on placement must remain strictly confidential at all times.

Student/young person Signature	
Date	

Child Protection Guidance for Placement Providers

Work Experience Scheme

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council' is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people undertaking work experience. The following guidance sets out practical measures for supervisors/hosts/managers and employees to help ensure placements provide a safe, supportive, and professional environment for students. This guidance should be read alongside the Council's Safeguarding Policy and other relevant procedures.

- **Touch:** There may be occasions when you need to touch a young person (e.g. When you are guiding them in carrying out a technical operation) but these should be kept to a minimum.
- **Behaviour:** Whilst it is important to reassure a young person who may be nervous in a new placement and reliant on your guidance, you should avoid being over familiar. Never permit 'horseplay' which may cause embarrassment or fear.
- **Environment:** Where possible avoid being on your own in an isolated or closed environment with a young person.
- **Travel:** Ensure that there is a known destination and check-in times with a third party in situations where a young person will be travelling alone with an adult during the placement. It is also a good idea to make available a mobile phone (or equivalent) in such situations.
- **Mentor:** Those placed immediately in charge of young people should be competent in their work-role, mature in their attitudes, and yet, at the same time, be at ease with them.
- **Disclosure:** Occasionally young people may disclose confidential information to a work colleague that gives rise to concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such situations you should speak to your line manager and share your concern with an appropriate representative of the education provider (usually this will be a school's work experience co-ordinator or the head teacher).
- **Disqualification:** You are reminded that you are required under law to protect children from harm and that any employees are required, under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, to declare that they are disqualified from working with children.