

Work Experience – Why, How and Where?

Why do work experience?

Work Experience gives you confidence and the opportunity to gain useful skills and experience through working with a range of people from different backgrounds. If you have ever wondered where your skills fit in the workplace, a work placement is where it will all start to all make sense.

Work Experience is important whether you stay on in education or apply for paid employment. It demonstrates to employers and university admissions tutors that you have considered future plans, started to identify your own unique skills and are able to **relate them to the job role or academic course you are applying for**. They will expect tangible proof of your interests and abilities - a work placement will allow you to write or speak believably about the genuine experiences or insights you have gained.

I've no idea what I want to do - how do I decide where to apply?

1. Identify your skills

To identify your unique strengths and try to match them to a career, start by thinking about your skills – the things you have done which you are proud of, or that your friends say you are good at. Watch this **short clip** and read **10 Skills you might not know you have** if you need some extra ideas.

Look at the list below of the Top Ten Skills employers are looking and decide which you feel you could evidence or, through work experience, start to develop.

Problem solving
Creativity
Team Working
Decision making
Negotiation

Critical Thinking (analysis, evaluation, reflection)
People & Time Management
Emotional Intelligence
Customer Service focused
Flexibility and Resilience

Not sure how some of them might relate to you? Try this **Transferable Skills Translation**.

2. Identify a career sector, job role, or match via your favourite school subject

Don't worry if you do not have a definite career in mind or are unsure what sort of company or organisation to apply to, there are several ways to get inspiration. You can search by:

Your favourite subject
Career Sector
A – Z jobs listing



Work Experience – Why, How and Where? (cont)

3. Use your own networks and research skills

Once you have identified a work sector or an individual role you are interested in exploring, consult your own family and friends' networks for any contacts they may have in those areas. In addition, conduct extensive online research to identify local companies in that sector which might offer you a placement.

4. Individual help

If you would like one to one help with your search for work experience, or if you need further inspiration or support before contacting a prospective employer, make an appointment with Mrs Farrar via Careers Reception or email m.farrar@staidans.co.uk

Different types of work experience opportunity

Work Placement	usually a one week period, arranged via school or your own personal contacts.
Volunteering	often a once a week or regular commitment for a specified period – as above.
Extra-Curricular Activities	after school or out of school clubs ie: sports, dance, scouting/guiding etc, to gain evidence of leadership, teamwork and communication skills.
Part Time Work	after school/weekend/holiday jobs in hospitality, retail or customer service etc.
Mentoring or Coaching	use your special talents and expertise to coach younger children in sports, music, languages, maths etc.
Virtual Work Experience	good quality virtual opportunities now available across a variety of sectors.
Virtual Careers Profiles	meet the professionals – digital links to a wide variety of job roles , outlined by the people that do them.

Paperwork and Preparation before your Work Placement

Once you have secured your placement you need to fill out a [Voluntary Work Placement Form](#) and hand it in to Careers. To ensure you make the best impression in the short time you are working for the company, watch this short [BBC Bitesize clip](#) for some top tips.

Remember....

Please contact the Careers Department at Careersstaff@staidans.co.uk if you would like individual help, advice or guidance on any work-related subject - work experience, CV drafting, job application, interview practice etc – we are happy to help.