



DORSET CAREERS HUB WORK EXPERIENCE TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

This toolkit helps demystify and give you confidence to manage your own work experience programmes. It addresses key concerns and serves to remove unnecessary barriers, including over-interpretation of the law. The process is simpler than you think, and we aim to reassure you that the risks are negligible. We will offer CPD and drop-in sessions to guide you through the process.

The benefits and impact of work experience clearly outweigh the perceived barriers, and with this resource and a dedicated champion, you can support your students to find their next best step.



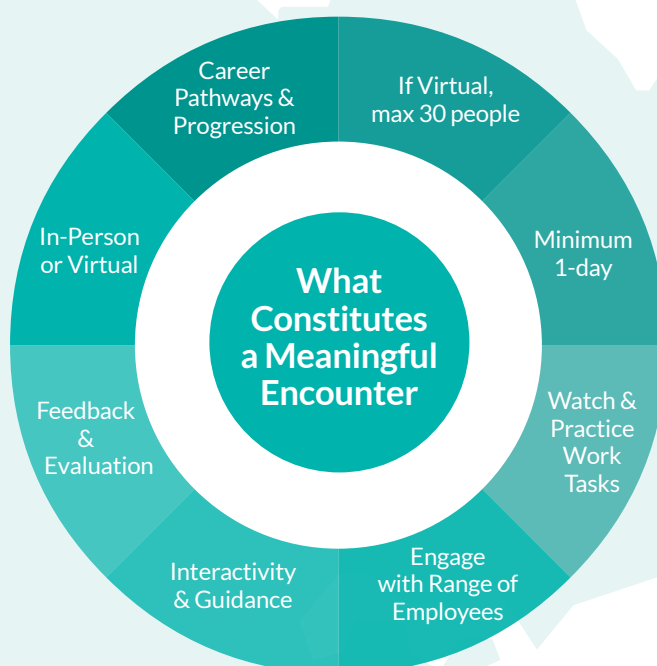
GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

The latest DfE guidance from 2021 states that schools should ensure that all students at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to take part in experiences of the workplace and that mechanisms should be in place to ensure that work experience is being effectively delivered through Key Stage 5 study plans. Conducting work experience is critical to achieving Gatsby Benchmark 6. Statutory guidance to schools and colleges notes that schools 'should' deliver seven 'experiences of the workplace' during the 11-18 phases of education.

There is good reason behind this. Introducing students to the workplace can help them choose future careers, understand the work environment, prepare for employment, raise aspirations and increase self-confidence.

CHALLENGES

- Work placement arrangements are too often seen as complicated, bureaucratic and time consuming, putting off potential employers.
- H&S and safeguarding compliance is often mis-interpreted by all parties, causing a major, but removable barrier.
- The pandemic has brought fresh challenges with many companies and industry sectors reducing the number of placements they used to offer due to economic and logistical factors.
- The 'work from home' movement will continue to have a negative impact on the volume of in-person work placements available.
- Some parents and carers have become anxious about their young person being in unfamiliar surroundings.
- In Dorset the service offered and relied upon by one main provider has significantly reduced in output and quality and is forcing institutions to make alternative plans and use internal resources to plug the gap.



HSE & RISK ASSESSMENTS

In June 2013, the government simplified the rules regarding health and safety guidance for those taking part in work experience, by confirming that the insurance industry now treats students as employees, so that they are covered by existing Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance policies provided the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers.



The Facts

- The school does not need to assess every workplace.
- You only need an H&S consultant in high-risk environments.
- You must see and verify the company's current employers' liability certificate.
- For a low-risk environment, such as an office or shop, with everyday risks that will mostly be familiar to the student, simply speaking with any new employer to confirm this should be enough. This can be part of the wider conversation on placement arrangements.
- For environments with less familiar, or obvious higher risks - e.g. in manufacturing, construction, near water etc - talk to the employer to find out what the student will be doing and ask for a risk assessment document that confirms the employer has arrangements for managing risks. This will need to include induction, training, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment that might be needed.
- It is vital that you keep checks in proportion to the environment.
- Do not seek additional paperwork for assurance purposes.
- Although the placement might be in a higher-risk environment, the work the student is doing and the surroundings they are working in may not be, for example it could be in a separate office area.

MANAGING THE PROCESS

Who?

- Appoint a leader to champion the project, an administrator or dedicated WEX coordinator.
- Ensure they are passionate about the cause, fully supports the programme and sees the benefits.
- Include an individual who has SLT backing, feels confident to liaise with all staff within the school and senior stakeholders.
- Ensure they have adequate time outside of normal duties to manage the project.
- Do not use your Careers Leader to oversee the project, their time needs to be dedicated to their Level 6 (or above) responsibilities.

Responsibilities

- Define the ask in line with your Careers Leader and SLT.
- Set up a database or Bookings Management System (BMS) and separate inbox for business continuity.
- Store and organise contacts, track activity, record placements.
- Identify and timetable dates for WEX, remain flexible.
- Develop internal and external marketing campaigns.
- Schedule proactive outreach activities to local businesses and network with target cohorts.
- Handle enquiries and sign-up employers.
- Manage student application process.
- Organise briefing sessions students, staff, parents and employer and stakeholders where appropriate.
- Liaise with the learner and the employer to confirm details and manage expectations.
- Collect and verify relevant documentation in line with checklist.
- Check that induction and supervisory arrangements are adequate.
- Manage evaluation and feedback from all parties.
- Create repeat opportunities via ongoing employer engagement.





SUMMARY

- DfE statutory guidance states you must provide 'experiences of the workplace'.
- You don't need an H&S Consultant to do a workplace risk assessment.
- Employers' liability insurance covers your students on placement.
- You need a dedicated administrator to manage the project in-house.
- The project manager should be passionate, proactive and have time.
- You need a database or BMS to store company and placement info.
- Devise a good comms & marketing plan to target all sources of WEX.
- Target businesses, suppliers, alumni, parents, friends, family and neighbours.
- In the absence of opportunities, be creative – one size does not fit all.
- WEX raises aspirations, increases confidence and improves outcomes.



**If you would like any more information
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