



Department
for Education

Post-16 work experience as a part of 16-19 Study Programmes

**For all post-16 education and training
providers**

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Summary

About this departmental advice

This is non-statutory advice from the Department for Education to help schools, colleges and other training providers deliver work experience as a part of 16-19 study programmes and traineeships for 16-23 year olds. It brings together existing guidance on the provision of post-16 work experience from the EFA, Ofsted and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Evidence from the evaluation of the Work Experience Pilot^[1] published on 4 October 2013 has also been referenced.

Funding reforms which allow schools and colleges to tailor provision to students' study and employment goals were introduced from September 2013.

Expiry or review date

This advice which applies to the 2013/14 academic year will be reviewed in 2014 following an evaluation of the first year of 16-19 study programmes and a separate evaluation of traineeships for 16-23 year olds.

Who is this advice for?

This advice is for anyone involved in the planning or delivery of 16-19 study programmes and in particular the work experience element including curriculum planners, teachers, trainers and coordinators. It is also relevant to organisations delivering traineeships for those aged 16-23.

Key points

This advice covers:

High quality work experience

How work experience will be funded through study programmes

Inspection and accountability

Planning work experience into study programmes

Health and safety requirements for employers and providers

^[1] 25 FE colleges took part in an 18 month pilot that ended in July 2013, to trial different approaches to delivering work experience for 16-19 year olds in preparation for the expansion of work experience through 16-19 study programmes. The full evaluation of the pilot has been published alongside this document.

Introduction

Background

Professor Alison Wolf, in her [Review of Vocational Education \(2011\)](#) recommended that study programmes be introduced to offer students breadth and depth, without limiting their options for future study or work. The Department consulted on proposals for study programmes and in July 2012 published its [response and its plans for implementation](#).

Professor Wolf suggested that in order to enhance their employability skills, all young people should be able to gain real experience and knowledge of the workplace.

16-19 study programmes

16-19 study programmes were introduced from September 2013, supported by changes to post-16 funding. All students aged 16-19, whether doing academic or vocational studies or a mix of both are now expected to follow a study programme tailored to their prior attainment by age 16 and future career aspirations.

Students will spend most of their time studying for one or more substantial qualifications, undertaking a traineeship or, for those not yet ready to take a substantial qualification, doing substantial work experience. Students who did not achieve a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics by age 16 will be expected to continue to work towards achieving these qualifications.

Changes to funding for 16-19 year olds mean that in post-16 education, work experience counts as 'non-qualification activity' and will be funded on the same basis as qualifications. This will give education providers the freedom and flexibility needed to expand their work experience provision.

Rationale: providing work experience opportunities to 16-19 year olds

A meaningful work placement can provide valuable experience of the work environment and help students decide on future careers or study options and demonstrate their potential to future employers or universities. 16-19 year olds will benefit more from work experience than students at key stage 4 because at 16 they are better placed to begin preparation for progression into employment or higher education.

High quality work experience

Work experience takes place in the workplace and allows young people to experience what it is like to undertake a job supervised by staff who already work in the environment.

In her review of vocational education Professor Wolf described the unique role that time spent with an employer can have in helping young people develop employability skills and the value that employers place on this when they are assessing young people for employment in the future.

To achieve high quality work experience it should be tailored to suit the prior attainment of each student and their career aspiration. It may also form a requirement of the 'substantial qualification' element of their study programme or the main learning aim for students who are not taking substantial qualifications at Level 2 or 3. In this latter case work experience would be recorded as the core aim in the student's individualised learner record¹.

Education providers will want to assess the individual needs of their students and arrange suitably relevant and stretching work experience for them. Annex 1 provides a step-by-step guide informed by the evaluation of the Work Experience Pilot to help providers deliver high quality work experience.

Traineeships and supported internships

From August 2013, [traineeships](#) for young people aged 16-23 have been introduced, targeting students who are not yet ready to enter the job market but who are committed to securing an apprenticeship or other employment. Traineeships for 16-19 year olds will be a strand of 16-19 study programmes. Traineeships will last a maximum of six months and the core content will be work preparation training, English and maths and a high quality external work placement. Providers and employers will have the freedom to bring these elements together in the best way to engage and support individual trainees. The work placement will last between 6 weeks and 5 months, as part of an integrated training programme.

Another strand of study programmes, the [supported internships programme](#), is designed to support young people with complex needs who need a higher level of support to access employment. Supported Internships are for young people with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or, in the future, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). They will provide a structured study programme, based at an employer's premises,

¹ See point 62 on page 17 of Overview of the 16 to 19 Funding Formula – June 2013
<https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20review%20june%2013%20v4.pdf>

which will be tailored to the individual needs of the young person and will equip them with the skills they need for the workplace. This will include on-the-job training, backed by expert 'job coaches', to support interns and employers, and the give the opportunity to study for relevant qualifications – where appropriate.

Simulated working environments

Training provided within a simulated working environment is not the same as work experience because it does not take place within a real workplace. Both can be of value to students' work-based learning and form a valuable part of a student's study programme, so long as each is recognised for what it is. Training in a simulated work environment is not work experience. Training in a simulated work environment should support progression into realistic work experience and external work experience, which itself can support progression ultimately into work. Providers should ensure that wherever possible all young people spend time in a real, external workplace.

The EFA, in its funding guidance, does not differentiate between work experience and simulated work environments but makes clear that these activities should be planned, timetabled, organised and/or supervised by the institution². This guidance will be reviewed annually to reflect developments in work experience provision and increased number of placements in external work environments.

If delivering a traineeship for 16-23 year olds the work experience element must be in an external workplace setting. Work placements in a simulated working environment in a traineeship may well form a helpful part of work preparation training, but will not count as work placements for the purpose of the traineeship.

Enterprise education in 16-19 study programmes

The new EFA funding flexibilities also provide an opportunity for providers to promote enterprise and entrepreneurial skills as part of the students' non-qualification activities to enhance further their employability prospects. Good examples include:

- Workplace visits – for groups of students interested in particular sectors.
- Enterprise projects - local employers set real business briefs for students to solve and students can be asked to present their findings back to the employer after a set period. This type of activity encourages team working, leadership, good communication, working to deadlines, problem solving and requires an understanding of business finance.

² See point 52 on page 16 of Overview of the 16 to 19 Funding Formula – June 2013
<https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20review%20june%2013%20v4.pdf>

- Mentoring – employers providing one-to-one encouragement and support to students.
- Work shadowing – giving students the opportunity to observe staff in real working environments.
- Employer workshops/talks – employer led discussions with students about the realities of work, and the employment and training environment.

Funding work experience for 16-23 year olds

Work experience is funded on the same basis as any other education or training. For 16 to 18 year olds the EFA guidance³ sets out what counts towards the definition of funded planned hours that:

- are directly relevant to the student's study programme;
- are planned, explicit in the student's learning plan or timetable, supervised and/or organised by a member of staff; and
- take place normally within the institution's normal working pattern; this includes out of hours working if the sector demands it e.g. retail, hospitality, agriculture;
- in the case of traineeships, the work experience element must not be in a simulated work environment.

Hours that will count towards the study programme will be categorised as either:

- planned qualification hours – the total time the student will spend studying qualifications;
- planned non-qualification hours – the total time the student will spend on other activity such as, work-related learning, employability skills, enrichment activities, volunteering, and pastoral activity. As a subset of this planned non-qualification activity, providers will be required to indicate which hours band⁴ the work experience falls into on the ILR – only that which counts as high quality work experience, as defined in this advice, should be included.

For traineeships aged 19 and over, the Skills Funding Agency's funding guidance⁵ must be followed and should be read alongside the traineeship framework for delivery⁶ and the ILR provider support manual⁷.

³ Overview of the 16 to 19 Funding Formula – June 2013

<https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20review%20june%2013%20v4.pdf>

⁴ See point 62 on page 17 of Overview of the 16 to 19 Funding Formula – June 2013

<https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20review%20june%2013%20v4.pdf>

⁵ http://readingroom.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/sfa/Funding_Rules_Traineeships_19-24_July2013.pdf

⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223591/Traineeships-framework-July2013.pdf

⁷ http://www.theia.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/9280846E-F5D2-40E0-9F5E-9D5B63444054/0/TraineeshipILRguidance_31July2013_v12.pdf

Voluntary work

Volunteering can also provide work experience if it takes place outside of the school, or college environment and the student is supervised by staff working for a voluntary organisation. In order to receive funding for a voluntary work experience placement, it must meet the criteria set out above - be arranged by the institution, and be supervised, timetabled within the institution's normal working pattern and focused on pre-determined outcomes for the student. Anything that falls outside these guidelines will not be funded.

What will Ofsted inspectors be looking for when they inspect work experience?

Work experience will be inspected and reported on as an integral part of the inspection of provision for 16 -19 year olds (and up to age 23 for traineeships) against the Common Inspection Framework for FE and Skills 2012.

Work experience should contribute to students' overall development. For example, when considering **outcomes for students**, inspectors will explore how well they can develop their employability and vocational skills and personal effectiveness (e.g. attendance, attitudes, punctuality, behaviour) in relation to their starting points while on work experience.

Similarly, when inspecting **teaching, learning and assessment** inspectors will, for example, explore how well students on work experience are supported to achieve in a very different learning environment, and the extent to which they are set challenging tasks at work and receive frequent, detailed and accurate feedback on their progress.

The inspection of **leadership and management** will evaluate the extent to which the provision of work experience is purposeful for each student, where it is appropriate, and how well it fits into the other aspects of their study programme. The provider is also responsible for ensuring that students are working in a safe environment, including when on work experience.

Will Ofsted count learning in a realistic work environment as work experience?

Work experience must be purposeful and planned. It should give young people the opportunity to develop vocational and employability skills in real working conditions.

Providers' realistic working environments, such as college companies, provide good opportunities for students to develop initial vocational skills, knowledge and employability skills. However, they should progress to external work experience at the earliest possibility, especially if work experience is a substantial part of their programme. The funding requirement for traineeships is that work experience cannot take place within a simulated work environment. Students should get external references for their performance on work experience from external partners and customers, and realistic working environments do not always provide this.

Enterprise work can also provide opportunities for students to develop employability skills, but again, this needs to be real work and not internal projects.

Lessons learnt from the pilot

Between 2011 and 2013 DfE funded the evaluation of work experience practice within 25 Further Education Colleges. The research report can be found [here](#).

The pilot evaluation findings highlight areas of common practice which are effective in the planning and delivery of work experience.

- The central and dedicated role of work experience coordinators was seen as crucial to managing the relationship between employers and heads of curriculum areas to ensure that work experience was integrated into the curriculum.
- Taking a top-down strategic approach to delivering work experience will gain the buy-in of curriculum staff and students and lead to more sustainable work experience provision.
- Flexibility in the timing of placements was important in meeting the needs of students' programme requirements and employers' capacity to provide work experience.

Planning for work experience within the study programme

The funding reforms introduced in September allow schools and colleges greater freedom and flexibility to organise work experience placements to suit better employers' requirements. The results of the pilot study suggest that there is no single 'correct' way of planning placements – much of this will depend on employers' capacity and could vary considerably. For example, work experience placements could follow a pattern of once a week for the duration of the term, longer block placements, or a rotation of shorter placements at different employers, so students can experience different aspects of the sector.

Clarity about who has responsibility for the organisation of work experience in an institution, whether it is an individual or team with central responsibility or decentralised to departments or faculties is very important.

The length of the work experience placement will depend on the providers' assessment of students and what level of work experience will adequately develop them for progression into employment, taking into account their abilities, prior attainment, career goals and work readiness.

In exceptional cases, work experience may be arranged outside an institution's normal working pattern, so long as it meets the EFA criteria set out above. Most importantly, the school, college or training provider must be able to demonstrate that there is a member of staff available to visit the student on placement and who can be contacted by the student/employer, if necessary, for the full duration of the placement. This may mean that education providers have to adapt their business hours to enable greater variety of work experience to be incorporated within study programmes.

Health & Safety

Revised Health and Safety guidance has now been published which makes it very clear that much of the health and safety practice which has grown up around the provision of work experience reflects custom and practice rather than legal requirements⁸.

Key points in the guidance include:

- employers who already employ young people do not need to repeat risk assessments if they offer work experience placements
- repeat assessments are not required for each successive work experience student where an employer regularly takes them on

Risk assessments

The employer is responsible for the health and safety of students whilst on a work experience placement. Education providers must satisfy themselves that an employer has assessed the associated risks to workers under 18 on their premises and has put in place measures to mitigate these risks. The nature of the risk assessment will depend on the type of work environment. Assurance can be gained through a conversation with the employer rather than a physical inspection or requiring the employer to complete lengthy forms.

There is no requirement for a separate risk assessment for work experience students where an employer already employs young workers under 18, as the risks should already have been considered. Where work experience students are the first young workers an employer takes on (or the first for some years), the employer should review the existing assessment. For some higher-risk environments, the employer will need to consider specific factors where relevant – these are described in the HSE guidance.

In the rare case where an accident may happen on an employer's premises, the employer would be liable if the provider has taken the steps described in HSE's guidance to satisfy themselves that the employer has put in place measures to manage the associated risks in their work place, prior to the placement.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 has been amended so that a civil action for breach of health and safety legislation may only be brought where it has been proved that the employer has been negligent. The provision covers all those in the workplace - including work experience placements, interns, apprentices, and volunteers in workplaces where there is also paid employment. This came into effect on 1st October 2013.

⁸ Education providers should refer to the HSE guidance:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/index.htm>

Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance

As part of the government's Red Tape Challenge, ministers have written to employers confirming that the insurance industry has committed to treat work experience students as employees so that they will be covered by existing Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance policies. If an employer has Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance cover already, they do not need to buy additional cover.

Providers can [download the letter](#) from the Department's website. The Association of British Insurers has also published guidance for employers planning to take on work experience students⁹.

Insurance requirements for the voluntary sector

If the voluntary organisation employs staff, students on work placements will be covered by their existing Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance policy. If the voluntary organisation only has Public Liability Insurance, they will need to obtain temporary Employer Liability Compulsory Insurance for the duration of the work placement.

Disclosure and Barring Service (formally CRB)

From July 2012 providers are no longer required to carry out enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services checks on employers/staff supervising young people aged 16-17 on work experience.

⁹ <https://www.abi.org.uk/Insurance-and-savings/Products/Business-insurance/Liability-insurance/Employers-liability-insurance/Work-experience-students>

Employer involvement

Many education providers already have excellent links with employers. Some providers have already developed their own database of employers. Education Business Partnerships (EBP) have traditionally kept a list of local employers who have offered work experience in the past, which providers can pay to access. Other potential sources of information about employers include the Local Education Partnerships (LEP), Job Centre Plus (JCP) and Connexions services. The study programme principles and funding arrangements now mean that education providers have more freedom to work with employers to provide work experience placements that meet students' prior attainment and career goals.

Study programmes and traineeships are progression routes to Apprenticeships or other jobs, and we expect that employers will be engaged early in the process to influence the design of the programmes to make sure that they provide young people with the skills and attributes they need to be able to compete in the labour market.

Due to the number of external work experience placements required, providers may need to think creatively about ways of recruiting more employers, particularly small and medium sized businesses to offer work experience placements. The work experience pilot provides a good range of examples of how providers have successfully engaged new employers¹⁰.

Where a person on a traineeship is a benefit claimant, the provider will need to work with their local Job Centre Plus to ensure that the traineeship is designed to fit with the benefit rules. This would enable the trainee to continue to receive Job Seeker's Allowance or the new Universal Credit whilst taking part in a traineeship

National Minimum Wage

Are students undertaking work experience as a part of a 16-19 Study Programme entitled to the National Minimum Wage?

Employers are not required to pay young people doing work experience as part of study programmes or traineeships. The young people doing such work experience will not be entitled to the National Minimum Wage. Employers may, and are encouraged but not required, to provide students and trainees undertaking work experience with support to meet their travel or meal costs.

Education institutions should agree with both students and employers:

¹⁰ <https://education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/b00223495/post-16-work-exp-enterprise-educ/work-experience-pilot>

- the education and training goals of the placement
- reasonable expectations on student conduct
- the role of the employer in providing supervision and training.

This agreement can take the form of a short note or e mail from the education institution to the student and the employer. This is in line with good practice in the provision of work experience as part of a 16-19 study programme and to meet EFA audit requirements for the provision of work experience.

Annex 1: Delivering high quality work experience

We have included this step-by-step guide that has been informed by the evaluation of the Work Experience Pilot, to help providers plan and deliver high quality work experience provision. Traineeship providers should also see the principles for good quality work placements in the traineeship framework for delivery¹¹.



¹¹ See page 16 of traineeships framework for delivery: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223591/Traineeships-framework-July2013.pdf

Further sources of information

Other departmental advice and guidance providers may be interested in

Health and safety

guidance <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/index.htm>

Ofsted and Health &

Safety <https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/i/ofsted%20and%20health%20and%20safety.pdf>

Employers' liability compulsory insurance guidance

<https://education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/b00223495/post-16-work-exp-enterprise-educ/creating-work-exp-opp-young-people>

Traineeships <https://education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/qandlearning/traineeships/a00219695/traineeships->

Supported

internships <https://education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/changingsen/b00211325/sen-supported-internships>

16-19 study

programmes <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/qandlearning/programmes>

Overview of the 16-19 Funding Formula (EFA June

2013) <https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/funding%20review%20june%2013%20v4.pdf>

EFA Funding Guidance

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/executiveagencies/efa/funding/fundings/a00209794/funding-guidance-2012-to-13>

Other departmental resources

Work experience readiness

checklist <https://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/w/20130620%20wex%20readiness%20checklist.pdf>



Department
for Education

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