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Work Experience - why do it?

Work Experience is extremely valuable to any student and in some cases absolutely essential to support your university / job application.

Spending time in a workplace has many benefits, not only seeing first-hand how organisations are run, but it also gives you the chance to build your reputation with prospective employers who may be able to provide references for any future opportunities you should apply for, as well as for any opportunities they themselves may have.

Work experience also benefits you by building on your **transferable employability skills** which are essential in any workplace.

What are Employability Skills?

According to Stem.org.uk employability skills can be categorised into three subgroups:

How you work

- 1) using your initiative and being self-motivated
- 2) organisational skills
- 3) working under pressure and to deadlines
- 4) ability to learn and adapt

How you work with others

- 1) communication and interpersonal skills
- 2) team working
- 3) negotiation skills
- 4) valuing diversity and difference

How you think

- 1) problem solving skills
- 2) numeracy/it skills

All these skills are used on a daily basis in the workplace, and you will develop them further over time. Any experiences you have will help to build on these skills and gives you a solid foundation for any interview.

Where do I find work experience?

Anywhere! You just need to look for it

There are some careers/uni courses that require a certain type of work experience, others want you to be aware of the skills required in the workplace, and they want to see that you have that extra spark and determination to succeed.

Ask parents/guardians, family and friends – ask your parents/guardians friends or even neighbours – does one of them work in the sector you would like to work in? Talk to them, tell them what you are thinking, ask if they can put you in contact with their HR department, ask if they can arrange some work shadowing or work experience for you.

Top 10 employability skills



KEY

10

NUMERACY AND IT SKILLS

- use numbers and data to support your work and obtain meaningful information
- apply your valuable IT skills

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- use numerical evidence in a science practical, STEM project or business idea
- help your family with budgeting or other money decisions
- learn new IT skills such as coding

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

- identify key issues in a problem
- use your knowledge and experience when tackling problems
- develop and test possible solutions

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- design objects and materials in design and technology
- plan a STEM Club project
- analyse results in maths or science
- evaluate evidence in science or humanities

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USING INITIATIVE AND BEING SELF-MOTIVATED

- follow instructions, making sure you do not always have to be told what to do and when
 - put forward your own ideas
- see something through to the end, and not be put off by setbacks

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- finish work without being asked
- work without help – but know when to ask for it
- suggest new ideas

1

ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

- plan your work to meet deadlines and targets
- organise your own time and coordinate with others
- monitor and adjust the progress of your work to stay on track

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- help organise an event or project
- plan your revision timetable
- calmly change plans if you run out of time, or something unexpected happens

2

3

WORKING UNDER PRESSURE AND TO DEADLINES

- meet deadlines and targets
- handle the pressure that comes with meeting deadlines and targets
- ensure that you are seen as a reliable person

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- finish work before the deadline, using that time to check and improve it
- plan and make the most of available time
- prioritise your commitments inside and outside school or college

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VALUING DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

- respect others
- value the skills and experience that different people have
- show consideration for the needs of different people

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- work with people who have different skills
- make sure everyone is involved in conversations and activities

7

NEGOTIATION SKILLS

- think about what you and others want and need
- 'give and take' fairly when working with others

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- look for ideas that benefit others as well as yourself
- carry out a school/college enterprise or STEM project that involves agreeing prices
- ask a favour of someone, supported by offering something in return

4

ABILITY TO LEARN AND ADAPT

- learn new things
- learn from successes and failures
- adapt and do things better

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- think how to make your work even better
- put yourself forward when there are chances to learn new skills
- share your ideas and use feedback to improve your work

5

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- explain and present what you mean clearly, whether written or verbal
- do your best to understand others

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- do a presentation or speak with an audience
- take part in debates
- give instructions to others

6

TEAMWORK

- understand how you and others work best together
- get things done when working with people with different skills, backgrounds and personalities

HOW I CAN DEVELOP THESE SKILLS:

- plan ahead when working with others
- take account of how your team are feeling when you work together



Follow companies of particular interest on social media, check out their websites, look on YouTube for anything they've published, register for opportunities.

Approach workplaces yourself – write a covering letter and do your CV – call into workplaces and introduce yourself, hand them a letter and ask if there are any opportunities for work experience. If there's nothing available, ask them to let you know if anything comes up - they'll remember you've been and if they hear of anything, they may let you know.

Part time jobs are also an invaluable source of work experience. It may be in the local coffee shop and might not be something that you want like to do forever, but every day you are there, you are learning from this experience. With many occupations there's an element of dealing with the general public, where better than a coffee shop/restaurant, pub, or retail to build on your people skills. At some point, in an interview, you might get asked how you would deal with an awkward customer, and there will be many stories you can recount of situations you have been in where your customer wasn't happy and you can talk about how you dealt with the situation.

There are many opportunities for work experience and all, no matter what sector, are beneficial and can be adapted to showcase your skills in your chosen career, it just takes a little bit of imagination – think outside the box!

Virtual work experience

Virtual, is there any point? YES

Who'd of thought a few years ago that we'd now be holding meetings via teams/zoom etc, all sat in different locations? We've all had to learn how to adapt to a changing world and all this has been achievable with the aid of technology, so why shouldn't virtual work experience be of any value?

Virtual programmes are written by real companies, and many hold live sessions and then set projects based on this, just like real life. Many companies now are giving employees the opportunity to work from home, indeed many workplaces have become a source of hot-desking where employees spend 1-2 days per week with the rest working virtually.

It gives you the opportunity to access businesses/opportunities you may not have access to otherwise, it overcomes barriers by providing equal opportunities for everyone and increases your digital skills.

Many virtual work experiences are free, but some do have a small cost incurred so please do double check.

Please see the following free services that we promote:

Springpod: <https://www.springpod.co.uk/virtual-work-experience-programmes/>

The Forage: <https://www.theforage.com/>

Speakers for Schools: <https://www.speakersforschools.org/experience-2/vwex/>

Pathway CTM: <https://pathwayctm.com/events/>

Volunteering is also another good way of building your employability skills – again, this may not be in the exact sector that you are looking for, but is still a worthwhile learning experience. It will help you to gain new skills and add experience to your CV, builds your network therefore opening up other opportunities, increases confidence, prepares you for work and allows you to see if the role fits you as well as giving you tangible experience to talk about in interviews.

Medicine

If you are thinking of applying to medicine, please join the Y12 medsoc team. There is lots of articles, advice and opportunities posted there to help and support you.

For medicine, work experience is essential and should be carried out as a first year student. Have a look at the Medical School Councils website for details of what each school requires
www.medschools.ac.uk/

Hospitals – often have a dedicated work experience officer and may offer 1-3 day work shadowing. They may also offer longer volunteering placements – this will not be with medical staff, but more likely in other areas on the ward/in the hospital and is still relevant.

James Cook, in particular, have 2 types of experience - short term placement (1-3 days only on a specific ward) and ongoing volunteering (you must commit to 4 hours every week for a minimum of 6 months) – there is a different application form/email for each – please see the Careers team for further details.

Approach your **GP surgery** and ask if they offer anything – they may not take people who are registered with them, but they may also be able to offer something in another practice.

Care homes - some organisations will require you to be 18 in order to work there, but they may let you volunteer on a short term basis – don't forget, care homes have visiting doctors, physios, nurses etc and they may let you shadow meetings.

Other ideas:

St Johns Ambulance – volunteering and NHS cadets – see the website <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-involved/young-people/>

The British Red Cross - <https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer>

Virtual options to support:

Medic Mentor - <https://medicmentor.co.uk/virtual-work-experience-programmes/>

Brighton & Sussex Medical School Virtual Work Experience -
<https://bsmsoutreach.thinkific.com/courses/VWE>

Royal College of General Practitioners - www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/discover-general-practice/observe-gp.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1WFg9Q3UsJa1UzPbsQTWpdh--7p09kaEuxot8yK7bsxaKEAayUL_CCxpM

Royal College of General Practitioners, Observe a GP <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/observegp>

Aspiring medic - www.theaspiringmedics.co.uk/online-work-experience

Health

There are over 350 different NHS careers and the majority of students are rejected because they have a poor understanding of the role and are unable to explain how they have the skills required. You can better your chances of success by doing some thorough research on any of the following websites:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/explore-roles>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers>

<https://www.stepintothens.nhs.uk/careers>

Make a table to define the skills required, then match your experiences and evidence to show how you meet these.

Secure a variety of work experience in either hospitals or private practice, care homes or join St Johns Ambulance as a cadet or the Red Cross.

Virtual options to support, from Allied Healthcare:

Weekly healthcare society Thursday evenings 6-7 pm (zoom)

<https://alliedhealthmentor.org/virtual-healthcare-society/>

£10 a day, health days <https://alliedhealthmentor.org/product/live-virtual-work-experience-programme/>

REMEMBER – any application for medical/health must reflect the NHS Constitution <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about/our-values/nhs-constitutional-values-hub-0> and Values <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-constitution> - please remember to make notes to show how you have observed this during your work experiences

Dentistry

Again, work experience is essential and should be carried out as a first year student. Have a look at the Dental Schools Council website for details of what each school requires

<https://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/>

Contact local **dental practices** and ask – take a letter and CV with you and ask initially to shadow for one morning/afternoon – they may offer you longer term if you're lucky, but anything is relevant

Veterinary

Another one where work experience is essential and should be carried out as a first year student. Have a look at the Veterinary Schools Council website for details of what each school requires <https://www.vetschoolscouncil.ac.uk/>

Contact local **vets** and enquire – if there's no vacancies at the time, request to go on a waiting list

Gain any hands-on experience possible – **volunteer** at kennels/catteries, animal welfare charities, wildlife centre, stables, zoos, rehoming centres.

Farms – milking, lambing – many farmers are looking for staff at high demand times, ensure you ask early and keep asking.

Remember, don't just stick to one place, the wider the variety the better your knowledge, understanding and experience - don't forget there are many different types of animals and therefore vets, don't just stick with domestic, even if this is where you want to be in the future

Virtual option to support:

Future Learn www.futurelearn.com/courses/vet-school-application-support

Teaching

Work experience is VITAL and should ideally be in a school

You will be expected to have a DBS certificate in place and will need 3 forms of ID in order to apply for one – don't worry, we can help guide you on this

Contact your old **primary or secondary** school

Beavers/Cubs/Scouts Rainbows/Brownies/Guides

After school Clubs or Holidays Clubs

Sports clubs with younger members (Coaching)

Nurseries or other **childcare providers**

Places of Worship (Sunday school volunteer), **Community Centres**

Policing

Don't forget, it's not just for police officers -police forces also recruit a number of civilian roles. Check out their website for opportunities: <https://www.cleveland.police.uk/police-forces/cleveland-police/areas/cleveland-police/careers/careers/>

Here you will find information on volunteering as well as joining the Police Cadets

Also, this is one of those occupations where any public facing customer service role would benefit an application. Much of policing involves dealing with the general public, so any experience you can talk about, shops, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs etc, would be a good selling point.

Law

Contact local **Law firms** and ask about work experience/shadowing

Citizens advice – call in and ask if you can work shadow, or sit in on appointments – they may be able to task you with researching on clients behalf

Contact the local **Law courts** and ask about volunteering opportunities

Attend **court cases** in the public gallery

Other Ideas/Voluntary

Charity Shops

Age UK - www.ageuk.org.uk/teesside/

Interpreter for MAP Middlesbrough - <https://mapmiddlesbrough.org.uk/>

Mind - www.middlesbroughandstocktonmind.org.uk/volunteering.aspx

Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency - <https://mvda.info/>

RCVDA (Redcar and Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency) <https://www.rcvda.org.uk/>
<https://do-it.org/> - You now have to create an account before you can see local opportunities
<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/>

Local foodbanks

Church groups/Places of Worship

Care homes

Community Groups

<https://www.gov.uk/find-internship>

www.milkround.com

<https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering/find-an-opportunity/>

Volunteering England <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>

V-inspired.com <https://vinspired.com/>

Brownies, Guides, Rainbows, Cubs, Scouts

Stockton Volunteers - www.stocktonvolunteers.co.uk

Virtual Work Experience

Please be aware that uni's will also consider virtual experiences as relevant, but please prioritise a variety of physical work experiences and use virtual to support.

Royal College of General Practitioners - www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/discover-general-practice/observe-gp.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1WFg9Q3UsJa1UzPbsQTWpdh--7p09kaEuxot8yK7bsxaKEAayUL_CCxpM

Royal College of General Practitioners, Observe a GP <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/observegp>

Aspiring medic - www.theaspiringmedics.co.uk/online-work-experience

Medic Mentor - <https://medicmentor.co.uk/virtual-work-experience-programmes/>

Brighton & Sussex Medical School Virtual Work Experience -

<https://bsmsoutreach.thinkific.com/courses/VWE>

Kennedys Law www.theforage.com/virtual-

[internships/prototype/4MkD3QfC96ybnpH4C/Kennedys-Virtual-Experience-Programme](https://www.theforage.com/virtual-internships/prototype/4MkD3QfC96ybnpH4C/Kennedys-Virtual-Experience-Programme)

RateMyApprenticeship.co.uk - www.theforage.com/virtual-

[internships/prototype/7Rb7m3mmcv5QtLqd3/Work%20Ready%20Virtual%20Experience#pgSrvA2BJtwTxb2CQ](https://www.theforage.com/virtual-internships/prototype/7Rb7m3mmcv5QtLqd3/Work%20Ready%20Virtual%20Experience#pgSrvA2BJtwTxb2CQ)

Barclays Life Skills - <https://barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-virtual-work-experience/school/virtual-work-experience/>

You be the Judge - www.ybtj.justice.gov.uk/

Hunter Bevan – <https://hunterbevan.co.uk/missing-out-on-work-experience-this-year/>

IGD - www.igd.com/social-impact/feeding-britains-future/work-experience

Halliday Fraser Munroe - <https://workexperience.hfm.co.uk/>

Please see here for lots of virtual work experience opportunities:

<https://www.studentstream.co.uk/blog/virtual-work-experience-opportunities>