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Supported Work Placements - Schools

Student Placements

ITEC recognises the importance of personalising work placements to the individual needs and aspirations of young people. Agreeing the content of a work placement is a vital part of the “matching” process and this is where ITEC can step in to reduce the burden on Schools to identify, set up and monitor work placements.

Many employers are well aware of the benefits of work placements and place great emphasis upon the value of gaining new skills, particularly within their own recruitment process. Any work experience will add to a student’s skills profile, and bring new insights and the ability to solve problems and tasks, whilst supplementing those skills developed during school and through extra curricular activities.

If young people are to get real value from work experience, pre-placement support is vital. Too often employers feel that young people arrive on placement ill prepared and lacking basic awareness.

An overview of placements

A Placement Description will typically cover:

- Employer contact information
- Placement overview: aims and objectives, key skills, requirements and meal breaks
- Pre-placement interview requirements
- Placement logistics: Work hours and transport
- Risk assessment

Our service

Our approach enables us to deliver investment of quality assurance time in health and safety and the content of placements; streamline paperwork; and reduce costs to schools by quality assuring placements using a robust methodology based on risk.

Each work placement commissioned by a school from ITEC will receive a check to provide reasonable assurance that the host employer has appropriate health and safety policies and systems in place. We also provide support to ensure there is a clear plan for what the young person will do, captured in a Placement Description.

The HSE's guidance sits at the heart of our approach and each employer will be pre-vetted by an IOSH qualified assurer/nominated Safeguarding expert to determine suitability for placement and occupational risk will be the determinant of how frequently we visit employer to undertake monitoring.

We will:

- Discuss with the employer what work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed.

Remember that 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

- Be satisfied that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and planned effectively
- Check that the employer understands about the specific Health and Safety and Safeguarding factors relating to young people.

The term placement or work experience, is used to describe a planned period of temporary work that a student does to give them experience of the working world or of a particular industry. The experience may take the form of short term, a rotational placement into different sectors or long term (e.g. one year). Work placements are different from volunteering because the main focus is the development of working skills, not helping a charitable cause.

A work placement can be a period of practical and professional work which can be undertaken as part of a course at school.

The benefits of a placement

- Significantly improves the CV/Personal profile of a student and helps to gain a good reference from an employer, enhancing future employment prospects
- The possibility of an offer of permanent employment by the organisation
- Enables the student to apply the theory and practice gained during the academic studies in a real-life working context
- Develops organisational, management and personal skills, and builds an awareness of the workplace culture.

It doesn't matter if it is a term or a year, a work placement can help a student to make decisions about a future career.

How to make the most of a placement

A placement is a step into the world of work. Employers are not only looking for academic achievement, they also want well-rounded employees who have some experience of the 'real world'. A placement provides the perfect platform to achieve this.

A student can leave with tangible accomplishments. One of the goals with any placement is leaving it with some tangible outcome.