

Date: July 2023

Guidance – Work Experience

From: Human Resources

1 About this guidance

- 1.1 This guidance specifically applies to arrangements where young people (usually aged 15-18) attend the University for the purpose of gaining work experience during their last two years of compulsory schooling.
- 1.2 It provides managers with information about what should be considered and the process to follow to ensure the safety of young people who do work experience on campus.

2 The University's obligations

- 2.1 The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of young people doing work experience on campus, which includes conducting a risk assessment. In addition:
 - The young person should receive an induction on the first day of their work experience.
 - The objectives of the work experience, if any, should be discussed with the young person as part of their induction and the activities should be suitable to their age and level of experience.
 - Work experience should not be offered in situations that are covered by the categories set out in section 4 of this guidance.
 - The manager responsible for overseeing the work experience must keep appropriate records of the risk assessment and the letter sent to the young person. These should be retained for a period of 12 months.

Planning the Work Experience

- 2.2 The work experience needs to be purposeful and planned to ensure that the young person finds the experience rewarding and enriching. Thought needs to be given to what sorts of activities/tasks the young person will be involved in each day, who will be supervising them, and how they will participate in these activities.
- 2.3 Activities might constitute a combination of training, shadowing, and attempting certain tasks. The school/college may provide information on the objectives of the work experience and this will help inform decisions about which activities will be suitable. Thought needs to be given to whether any of the activities pose a risk to the health and safety of the young person (see the risk assessment section in 2.5 below).

Assigning a supervisor

- 2.4 A supervisor needs to be assigned to the young person. They will need to understand the objectives of the work experience and be on hand to support the young person on a day-to-day basis. It is not appropriate for the young person to be supervised by a University contractor, agent, or other individual who is not an employee of the University.

Risk assessments

- 2.5 Before the young person arrives on campus, a risk assessment must be carried out by the manager responsible for overseeing the work experience and this must be reviewed with the young person as part of their induction.
- 2.6 A specific risk assessment for a young person doing work in an office environment is available on the [HR website](#).
- 2.7 The risk assessment must be relevant to the tasks and activities it is expected the young person will be carrying out and reflect their:
 - lack of experience;
 - absence of awareness of existing or potential risks;
 - age and level of maturity; and
 - unfamiliarity with the environment.
- 2.8 Control measures should be introduced to eliminate or minimise the risks to an acceptable level. Higher levels of supervision than normal will be required. If the young person has identified any special needs or there is reason to believe they have special needs, these must be taken into account in the risk assessment. If the young person will be doing their work experience in a non-office setting, the risk assessment template mentioned above will need to be tailored to reflect the environment they will be working in. Further advice is available from Health, Safety & Risk.
- 2.9 A copy of the risk assessment should be given to the school or college and/or young person. A copy must also be given to the young person's parent or guardian if they request it.
- 2.10 The risk assessment needs to be shared with anyone who will be supervising the young person while they are on campus.

Work experience letter

- 2.11 The young person should be sent the standard work experience letter (attached as Appendix A). The letter provides useful information about the expected minimum standards for acceptable behaviour and conduct and provides parents or guardians with useful information about the work experience. The letter includes an acceptance form that must be signed by the young person and their guardian and returned to the line manager overseeing the work experience.

Insurance

- 2.12 The Insurance Office should be notified by email (insure@soton.ac.uk) before the work experience commences. Details of the work experience should be summarised in the email and a copy of the signed work experience letter and risk assessment attached. The Insurance Office also needs to be notified in the event a young person does not turn up or if there are other amendments to the arrangements initially set out in the letter.

DBS checks and safeguarding

- 2.13 A DBS check is not required if the young person is aged 16-17. If the young person is under the age of 16, it may be necessary to carry out an Enhanced with Children's Barred Lists DBS check, on the person who will be supervising the young person. This is to confirm the person isn't barred from working with children. Consideration must be given to whether the person providing the supervision will be:
 - unsupervised themselves; and
 - providing the teaching/training/instruction frequently (more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight).

- 2.14 The school or college is likely to stipulate if an Enhanced with Children's Barred Lists DBS check is required. If a check is required, please raise an HR ticket on [ServiceNow](#) to request this. If the DBS certificate reveals the person does have a criminal record, please contact Ask HR (Ask_HR@soton.ac.uk) to discuss the next steps. Please allow at least 14 days for a DBS check to be processed.
- 2.15 Questions about the DBS process can be directed to Ask HR (Ask_HR@soton.ac.uk) in the first instance.
- 2.16 All staff working with work experience students should familiarise themselves with the University's [Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults](#).
- 2.17 As part of their induction, the supervisor should explain to the young person that if they have any concerns regarding safeguarding that they should raise these with their school or college.

Hours of Work and breaks

- 2.18 Generally, work experience should last no more than ten working days in total. Hours of work should not exceed 8 hours a day and 35-40 hours per week. A lunch break and other rest breaks during the day must be provided. Working overnight is not permitted.

IT Access

- 2.19 In most situations it will not be necessary or appropriate to give the young person access to the University's computing network. In very exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to request that the young person is set up as a [temporary visitor](#) for the purpose of creating a University computing account. Such requests should be discussed and approved by the Head of School or Associate Director of the professional service first.

Final review

- 2.20 There should be a meeting with the young person at the end of the work experience period, to wrap up the work experience, so they can receive feedback and to give the young person a chance to reflect on their experience and provide any feedback they might have that could help inform future work experience opportunities.

3 The young person's obligations

- 3.1 The young person, together with their parents or guardian, needs to sign and return the University's standard letter for work experience. The young person is expected to adhere to the minimum standards for acceptable behaviour and conduct set out in this letter.

4 Unsuitable or high-risk activities

- 4.1 The following activities are considered unsuitable for a young person doing work experience:
 - work involving exposure to radiation;
 - work that is physically or psychologically demanding;
 - working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults;
 - work where there is a risk to health from extreme temperatures, noise; or vibration;
 - work that involves the sale of alcohol.
 - work involving the risk of accidents that a young person may not recognise or be able to avoid;

- working in an isolated environment or with just one individual for extended periods of time, or
- working away from home overnight.
- Work that may expose the young person to sensitive and confidential information, including that relating to members of the University staff and student community.
- Work that may involve exposure to distressful information, including that relating to the mental and physical wellbeing of others.

4.2 The following activities are potentially higher risk and should be carefully assessed before they are carried out by a young person. They must be highlighted in the risk assessment and the young person must be continuously supervised at all times whilst they are carrying out these activities:

- working in areas involving animals;
- working with patients in a clinical setting;
- working with or around potentially hazardous machinery;
- work involving potential exposure to agents which are toxic or carcinogenic;
- work involving the use of sharp knives;
- working at height.

5 Process summary

1. Risk assessment	Undertake a risk assessment in accordance with section 2.5 of this guidance. If any risk has been assessed as high or medium you must consider ways to eliminate the risk entirely or reduce the risk to an acceptable level before proceeding. Discuss the risk assessment with the young person.
2. DBS check	If the young person is under 16 and the school or college has requested it, arrange for a DBS check of any staff who will be working closely with the young person, unsupervised (see section 2.11).
3. Work experience letter	Send the standard work experience letter to the young person or their school/college (see section 2.9 and Appendix A).
4. Notify the insurance office	Once you have received the signed copy of the letter back from the young person, notify the Insurance Office by e-mail (insure@soton.ac.uk), attaching the signed agreement and a copy of the risk assessment (see section 2.10).
5. Plan their activities	Give some thought as to what activities/tasks the young person will be involved in each day and how these will support the learning objectives of the work experience (see section 2.2).
6. Induction	An induction must be provided to the young person on their first day. The induction should be tailored to reflect the time they will spend on campus, the activities they will be carrying out, and the age of the young person (see section 2.1).
7. Report incidents	Immediately report any incident involving the young person by following the process and procedures set out in the Health, Safety and Risk Sharepoint site . You should also notify the University's Insurance Office (insure@soton.ac.uk).

	The young person's emergency contact should also be notified, as well as their school/college.
8. Final review	Consider arranging a final review meeting with the young person and what aspects you will provide feedback on. Ask the young person to reflect on how they've found the experience and to share any feedback they might have (see section 2.17).

6 Appendix A – Template Work Experience Letter

[Name]
[Address]

[Date]

Dear XXXX

RE: WORK EXPERIENCE

I am pleased to welcome you to the University of Southampton for a period of work experience, which will start on [date] and finish on [date]. I hope that you will find your time with us interesting and enjoyable.

While on work experience, you will be based in [faculty or service] and should report to [name]. You should observe such working hours as may be agreed with the faculty or service where you are working.

If you have a disability, a long term physical or mental health condition (such as autism) or a specific learning difference (e.g. dyslexia) we encourage you to let us know so that we consider an adjustments we may need to make for your work experience so that it is as accessible and inclusive as possible. It will also be helpful if you could provide details of any medical requirements you have.

There are a few rules that we will ask you to observe while working with us:

1. If working in an administrative role there is no particular dress code, but we suggest you adopt smart casual wear. You will be advised if there is any particular dress requirement relevant to the area you are working in, e.g., if working in a laboratory or a healthcare setting.
2. You will be expected to be punctual and to show courtesy to members of University staff and others whom you come across during your work experience.
3. You should not work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults.
4. Any information of a confidential nature that is communicated to you during your work experience must remain confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone, including your family members. This includes records or other information about the University's activities, areas of research, or students or prospective students of the University.
5. Your period of work experience will be unpaid.
6. Please abide by any specific health and safety rules relevant to the area where you are working. These should be explained to you in your induction.
7. If you are given access to the University's computer network and/or software, please be aware that this is purely for your work experience. You should not use our computer networks, systems, software, and hardware for activities of a personal nature.
8. If you are issued with a temporary access card, this must be returned on the last day of your work experience to your manager.
9. A copy of this agreement, together with associated documents and information collected from your work experience will be kept by the University for six years. It may be shared by the University with your parent or guardian, school or college, or disclosed by the University to third parties where it is required by law to do so. By signing this letter you consent to us sharing your information in this way.

We ask that you and your parent or guardian complete and sign the appropriate section at the end of this letter to indicate your acceptance of the above.

I hope you enjoy your time with us. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. We would appreciate it if you sent us feedback about your work experience at the University.

Yours sincerely,

[name]

WORK EXPERIENCE ACCEPTANCE

Please complete the details below in the attached copy of this letter and return to the address above to confirm your acceptance.

<input type="checkbox"/> Young person: I agree to a period of work experience on the above terms.	
Your full name:	
Your School/College name:	
Any special requirements:	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - please specify below:
Emergency contact name:	
Relationship to you:	
Emergency contact telephone:	
Your signature:	
Date:	

<input type="checkbox"/> PARENT/GUARDIAN: I agree to my child undertaking this work experience on the above terms.	
Signature:	
Name:	
Relationship to student:	
Date:	