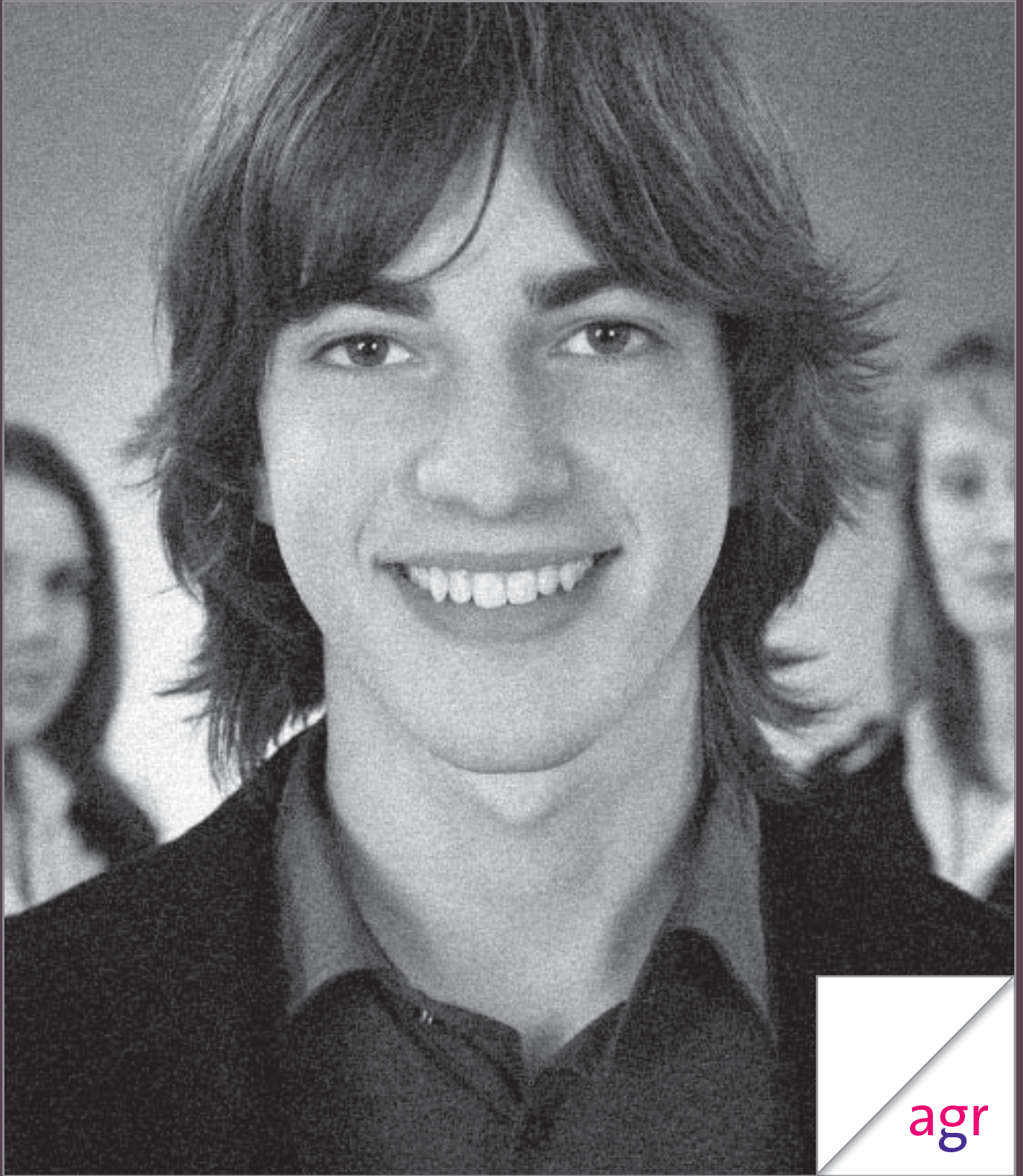


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Work Experience - An Employers Guide

The AGR Briefing Paper Series



Written By:
Hugh Smith - *TetragonHR Ltd*

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1. Executive Summary



“Employers can do much to ensure a quality experience for the students they engage”

- The gaining of work experience by university students is a topic which is high on the agenda of many groups: employers, government, higher education and students
- Employers can do much to ensure a quality experience for the students they engage by addressing a number of key aspects of a work experience programme
- There are many ways in which an organisation can benefit:
 - Direct benefits**
 - > Work-related (projects achieved; short-term tasks addressed; leading edge knowledge/thinking and fresh outlooks accessed)
 - > Recruitment-related (extended selection process; building business awareness and reputation in student body)
 - > Business-related (expanding HE relations; employees develop managerial skills; knowledge transfer to employees)
 - Indirect benefits**
 - > enhanced standing for organisation; corporate social responsibility; development of business opportunities; diversity agenda; alignment with Government agenda
- There are several types of work experience: summer placements and internships; sandwich placements; part-
- Key elements of a work experience programme are:
 - > Setting up an accepted framework internally (purpose, budget etc.)
 - > Linking with HE effectively
 - > Identifying and defining the work experience opportunities
 - > Publicising the scheme to attract applicants
 - > Assessing and selecting applicants
 - > Providing support to the line managers
 - > Supporting the students:
 - before the placement (advance information and briefing)
 - as it starts (role definition, student’s objectives, induction)
 - during it (progress reviews and feedback; supporting student’s learning; helpline)
 - at its close (performance review/consolidation of learning; potential job offer)
 - after it has finished (‘keep warm’ activities; programme review)
- Templates for guidance are provided covering;-
 - > Induction process
 - > Optimising student’s work-related learning
 - > Placement performance review
 - > Conversion to graduate recruitment >>

2. Introduction

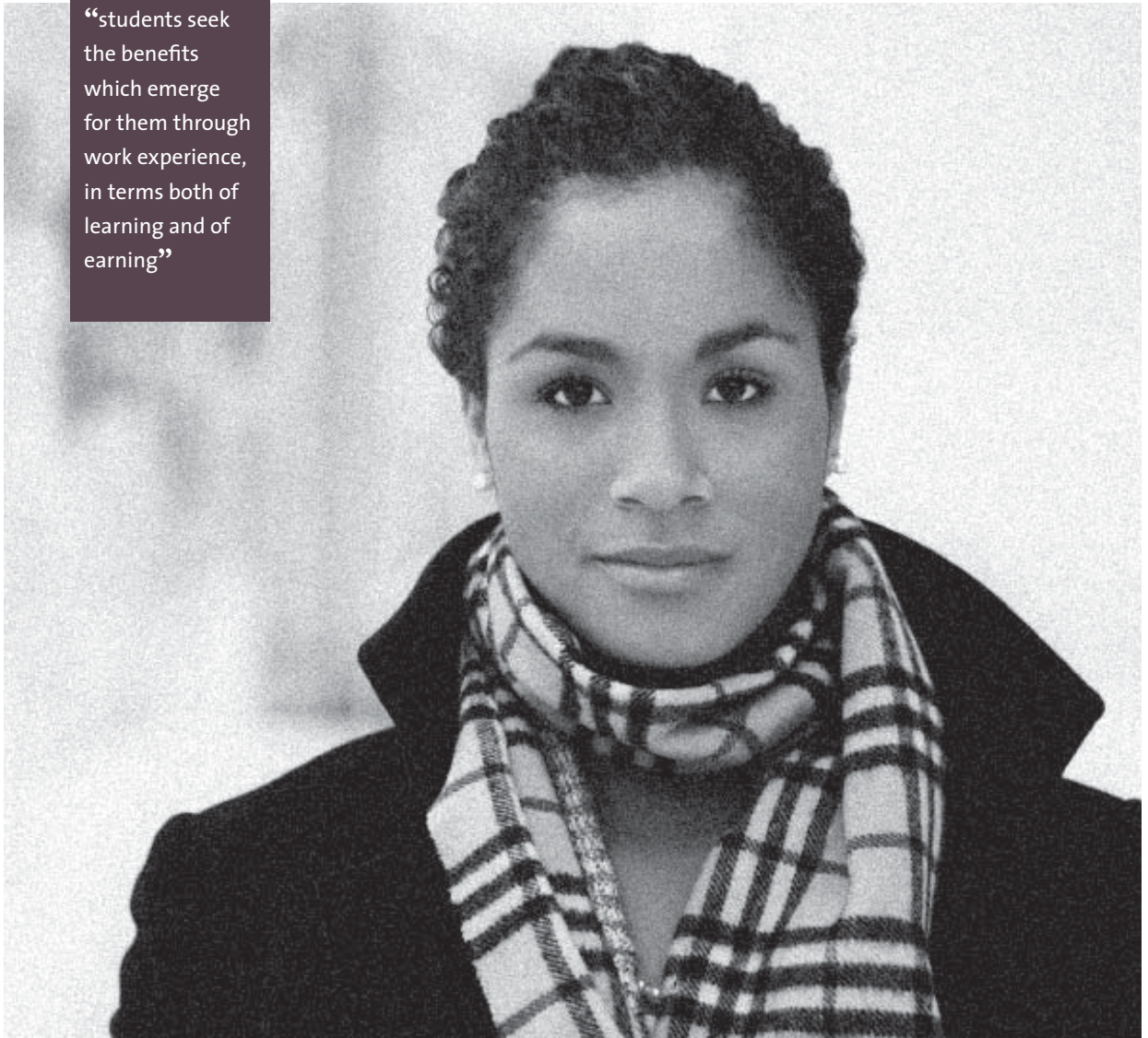
Experience of the workplace by students before they emerge as potential employees is an issue which has been growing in profile for some time. This has been the result of a combined set of pressures. The Government has given it an increasing sense of priority at a national level, emphasising that it should comprise an expected element of the educational experience. Employers underline the value that is generated when people who join organisations as new recruits do so with at least some prior exposure to the world

of work. Higher Education institutions support the development of work experience, in many cases featuring it as an integral element of programmes of study. And students themselves seek the benefits which emerge for them through work experience, in terms both of learning and of earning.

But there are many forms of work experience – and many levels of “quality of the experience”, for all parties.

This Briefing aims to outline the case for employers becoming involved in work experience, or increasing their involvement in it. It also provides a framework and a set of guidance, which can be used to optimise the quality of work experience which they offer. >>

“students seek the benefits which emerge for them through work experience, in terms both of learning and of earning”



3. Why is Work Experience Important?

Most work experience is offered by employers as an opportunity for students to engage themselves in a work situation. Employers do this for a range of reasons, but fundamental amongst these is the direct benefit which they see to their business, and it is this benefit which governs their view that work experience itself is important.

For organisations which are seeking to build an involvement in the offering of work experience, the benefits which can sell the concept internally need careful articulation. They separate into direct and indirect benefits.

3.1 Direct benefits for the employer

Work-related

Many of the most compelling arguments for offering work experience opportunities derive from the benefits of the specific tasks being undertaken.


- Work experience programmes offer the employer the opportunity to **undertake projects and other cohesive blocks of work which might otherwise go unexploited**. In many cases – particularly where the desired outcome has been clearly spelt out from the start – employers derive substantial value from the outcomes of projects which have been the subject of a degree student's energies during a work experience placement
- Even where the work to be done does not constitute a project as such, significant benefit and value can still be drawn from the **opportunity to address groups of short-term tasks**. The nature or scale of some work, for example, may not warrant the allocation of a full-time employee, whilst short-term casual labour would not bring the required level of rigour. But in situations like these where the challenge of the work lends itself to an individual

with a strong intellect, a work experience student will often bring the right level questioning and attention to detail to generate significant benefit for the employer.

- Other organisations may regard certain work as suited to an interim resource – where a defined piece of work, usually with a specific outcome and time scale, demands specific attention but does not justify the recruitment of an employee to the permanent payroll. Student availability for work is by definition time-bound, often offering a win-win situation to **resourcing work on this type of interim basis**.
- There are also a number of qualitative benefits that can be reaped from having work experience students in the organisation. In areas of work which have a technical or research focus, students selected from appropriate courses can **bring current leading edge thinking into the organisation**. This can be applied to benefit the organisation and perhaps generate a useful competitive edge. The students are also likely to **approach issues with a fresh outlook**, unencumbered by established thinking which may constrain creativity within the organisation.

Recruitment-related

Employers may engage in work experience as an adjunct to their recruitment activity and the wider agenda of attracting skilled people to the organisation.

- Where the employer aims to recruit additional skills and talents to the organisation, work experience provides the opportunity to see individual students operating in the work environment for an extended period:
 - > If the approach to selecting students for work experience is aligned with the organisation's recruitment processes, extensive selection evidence can be captured during the work placement. As a result, both the employer and the student obtain an economical and in-depth understanding of each other and of the extent of the longer-term match that there might be.
 - > Schemes also exist where students engaged initially in relatively casual part-time roles may, over a longer period, become included in elements of the organisation's management development activities. This raises their competence and skills and can lead students to become more engaged in the organisation as potential recruits upon graduation. 

3. Why is Work Experience Important? (continued)


- Less immediate, but still of direct benefit to the organisation, is the infusion of business-awareness that flows back into the student population as a result of spending meaningful periods actively engaged in the workplace. Particularly where the organisation has a strongly localised presence, the growth of people who have significant work experience amongst the wider student group within that locality generates its own spin-off benefit, as the business awareness of one student influences and increase that of others. The development of this wider pool can benefit the employer significantly.
- Recruitment is also affected by **the reputation that develops amongst students for organisations in which they have first-hand experience**, or where they learn of the experiences of their colleagues. Of course this will apply both to good and to bad experiences, and it is this feature in particular, which emphasises the need for employers to work to create the best placement experience that they can. Where these efforts bear favourable fruit, the positive spinoff on the organisation's reputation can be extremely good, and its recruitment attractiveness strengthened.


Business-related

Other benefits derive from work experience through the wider opportunities which are opened up to the employer.

- In some situations employers are seeking to expand their relationships with higher education institutions in their location, or amongst HEIs with a special strength in particular areas of study. This may be to promote research collaboration, recruitment effectiveness or the university as a potential customer, for example. Here the offering of work experience can link favourably with these agendas, enhancing the organisation's reputation held by faculty, students and university administration.
- Whilst the direct work and recruitment-related benefits of offering work experience tend to come from the achievement of project outcomes, the enhancement of reputation etc., there are also benefits available to the employer in terms of the **development of existing employees**. Work experience students do require proper management, as is discussed later. However they can often provide a source of line-management roles to employees who have only a developing skill in this area. A young manager can be given line-management responsibility for a placement student as their

first people management role, offering an effective learning context, with minimal longer-term risk and good potential benefit. Equally a manager might also engage as a mentor – to the student or to their placement manager – opening up the benefits available through effective mentoring relationships to each of the parties.

- In areas of the organisation which operate within a fast changing business environment, exposure to students from progressive universities and departments can provide the **opportunity for valuable knowledge transfer to employees** with whom they work or come into contact. 



“Whilst the direct work and recruitment-related benefits of offering work experience tend to come from the achievement of project outcomes, the enhancement of reputation etc., there are also benefits available to the employer in terms of the development of existing employees.”


3. Why is Work Experience Important? (continued)

“There can also be benefit for organisations from being able to show evidence of working in alignment with Government priorities and initiatives.”



Indirect benefits for the employer

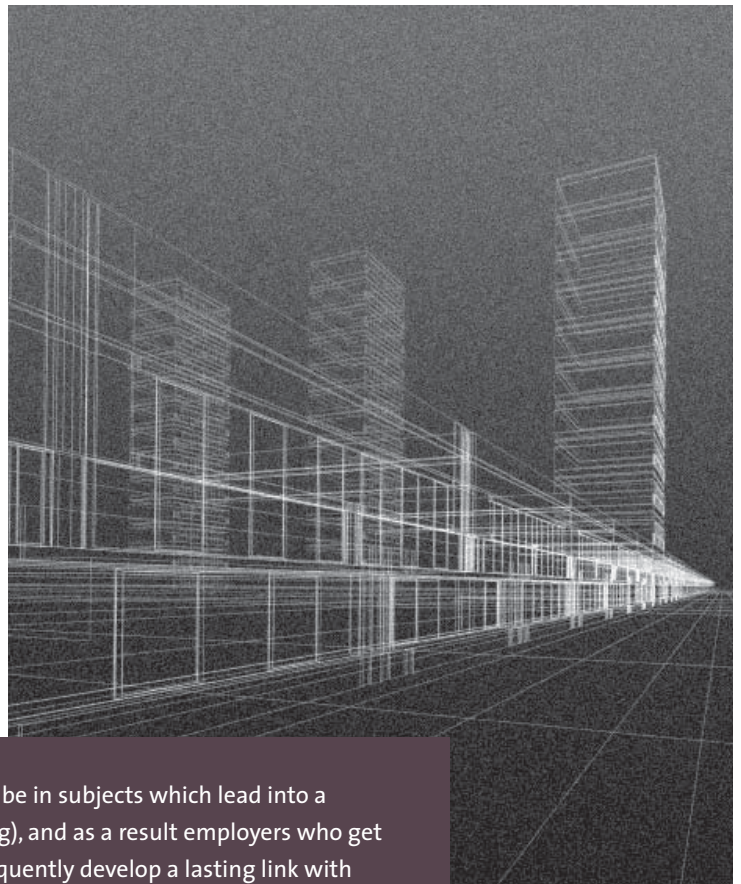
A number of outcomes can flow to the employer through the provision of work experience which provide benefit to the organisation, if only indirectly.

- The contribution which work experience makes to the wider pool of graduates, who gain workplace skills and business awareness through it, **can enhance the standing of those organisations** which provide the opportunities.
- It demonstrates that the organisation is serious about addressing issues of skills shortage, and that it takes positive action to contribute to their resolution. In addition, some organisations have a significant series of **objectives in the area of corporate social responsibility**, and work experience can form a valuable element in delivering against this agenda.
- The creation and development of a reputation for being “serious about skills” **can support the acquisition of business**, for example, from the public sector and from larger employers. For these organisations, the tie-breaker in the awarding of tenders may at times be the evidence of a wider societal contributions such as the provision of work experience.
- Appropriate provision of work experience can also **contribute to the organisation’s diversity and equal opportunities agenda**. This can be in valuable association with the needs of Higher Education, which from autumn 2002 must offer the same extent of placement opportunities to students with disabilities as to any others.
- There can also be benefit for organisations from being able to show **evidence of working in alignment with Government priorities and initiatives**. The development of Foundation Degrees and Graduate Apprenticeships and the drive to widen participation in Higher Education all provide drivers for greater provision of work experience. Indeed the Government’s intent is that all graduating students shall have had some experience of the workplace, and that work related learning should be an increasingly visible element in the accredited degree. 

4. Types of Work Experience

Organisations with established work experience programmes will have their preferred approach and type of placement. However there are a range of work experience formats, each with its own value and criteria.

- **Work placements** or Internships the focus of this Briefing. These take place most commonly during the summer vacation, and typically last two to three months. They can be managed in fairly large volume, and are typically built around a specific project which the manager offering it requires to have done. Students may receive assistance from the university in finding placement opportunities, or they may secure them themselves
- A distinct form of work placement is available on a “third-party, structured” basis, where the provision is arranged and in some cases supported through organisations established for that purpose. Perhaps most notable is STEP, a scheme managed through Business Link and targeted at companies with 250 employees or less and at community organisations, and where the idea of offering placements may not previously have been considered. Most of STEP’s placements are 2-3 months in duration, although 12 month duration is available. The Year in Industry organisation also handles longer periods – mostly for pre-university students.
- **Sandwich placements** these form an organised and required part of a degree course, most commonly comprising the third year of a 4-year course. The university takes an active part in arranging and managing them. Often they will be in subjects which lead into a professional career path (e.g. Engineering), and as a result employers who get involved with this type of placement frequently develop a lasting link with particular universities. Conversely, universities which run few 4-year courses have limited need for sandwich placements.
- **Part-time jobs** there is a long tradition of students taking part-time jobs to help with earnings, but with the increasing pressure on students with regard to funding the scale of part-time working is expanding. Students take these jobs during term time, and may extend their attendance in the vacations. Universities are developing job-shop approaches, both to help with the promotion of part-time work opportunities, and to enable them to take a hand in moderating the time that employers require of these students and to help students maintain an appropriate control of the balance between study time and paid work. 



“Often they (Sandwich placements) will be in subjects which lead into a professional career path (e.g. Engineering), and as a result employers who get involved with this type of placement frequently develop a lasting link with particular universities”

4. Types of Work Experience (continued)

- **Unpaid work experience** much work experience is regarded as giving tangible value to a commercial employer and the student is therefore paid. Indeed the normal expectation is that a salary is paid to work experience students unless operating on the specific basis of volunteering. Student volunteering is a distinct and coherent activity which can expand the range of work options open to an individual. It demands no less effort in its organisation and management. It is often arranged through the not-for-profit sector, giving students access to experience of working with disadvantaged people, campaigning organisations or fund raising projects.
- **Work-shadowing** what is commonly termed 'work experience' at secondary school level generally takes the form of one or two week periods of work-shadowing. (Indeed it is worth noting that undergraduate work experience will generally offer significantly more by way of 'output' for the employer than can a secondary school pupil – a distinction that should be borne in mind when setting expectations about the latter.) At university level, work-shadowing is less common, and for some it is less effective. It can be "observational" in nature and less involving than output based work experience in which students deliver results of value to the organisation. None the less work-shadowing does expose students to many aspects of the workplace, and in contexts where, for example, safety or qualification level are major issues, it can provide an essential insight into the work which could not otherwise be obtained. There is a particular role for work-shadowing amongst research students in some disciplines – here the equipment or facilities where their field of expertise is applied may be extremely valuable or technically unique. Work-shadowing provides a practical window into this world of work for research students at a level of risk that is acceptable to the employer.

These forms of work experience take place on the employer's premises. There are alternatives to this where the employer is unable to commit to this level of involvement or where their concern is more generally to increase student's awareness of the world of work. For example, the provision of work simulation tools and packages for use within courses, or of real-life industrial problems and data, constitute welcome work-related learning material. Alternatively, academic projects in the workplace can engage students on a consultancy basis in a way which benefits the employer, but which requires only periodic visits or project meetings. Initiatives such as these are best developed by employers in direct liaison with university departments of principal interest to the organisation. >>

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5. The Higher Education 'learning' perspective

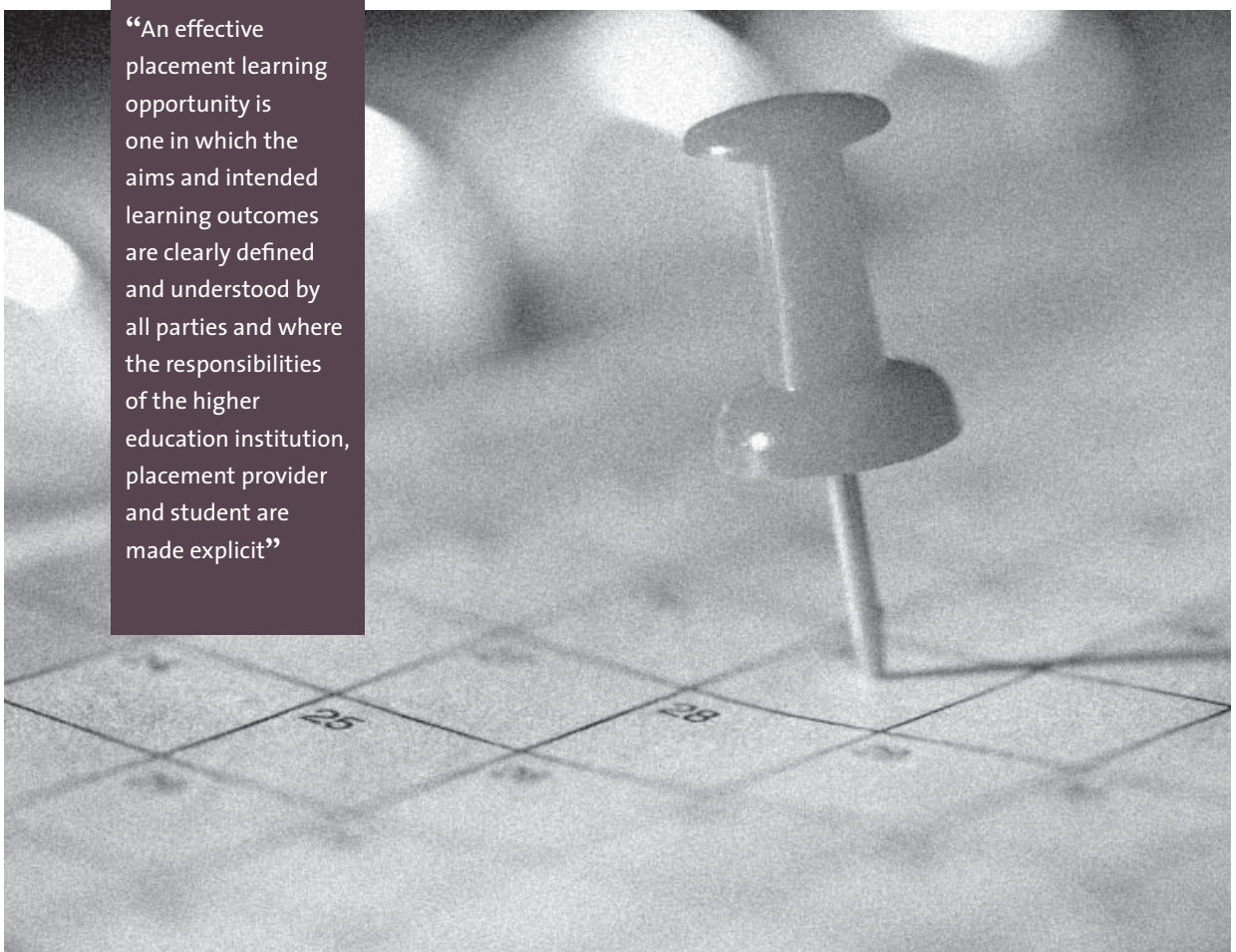
Whilst the employer's focus for providing work experience will be on the benefits that it generates, the university's main interest will generally be on the learning which the student can secure. However there need be no inconsistency between these two primary drivers, as the higher education code of practice (www.qaa.org.uk) shows.

Drawn up by the QAA, the code defines placement learning as:

"A planned period of learning, normally outside the institution at which the student is enrolled, where the learning outcomes are an intended part of a programme of study. It includes those circumstances where students have arranged their own learning opportunity with a placement provider, with the approval of the institution."

The QAA's code is not intended to cover learning outside an institution unless it is a planned part of a programme of study. However, its guidance can be equally well applied to part-time, term-time and vacation work which students have arranged for themselves:

"An effective placement learning opportunity is one in which the aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and understood by all parties and where the responsibilities of the higher education institution, placement provider and student are made explicit." >>



"An effective placement learning opportunity is one in which the aims and intended learning outcomes are clearly defined and understood by all parties and where the responsibilities of the higher education institution, placement provider and student are made explicit"

6. Getting Started

A successful work experience programme requires attention to a number of steps addressing issues such as:

- Planning
- Promotion
- Application-handling
- Implementation
- Performance review
- Exit

The principal steps in a work experience scheme are laid out in a Flowchart which can be viewed in Appendix C.

Experience shows that thorough planning of a placement scheme results in positive outcomes for the students, and a good pay-off for the organisation and its managers - whose work experience projects form the core of most programmes.

6.1 Setting up the framework internally

The early planning of a scheme should establish a clear framework through which the placements will be operated within the organisation. This will ensure that key decision makers understand the scheme and are committed to it, and that the processes for securing projects and selecting and managing students are soundly based and widely understood.

Some of the early decisions for a successful work experience scheme will cover objectives, strategy and scale. It is important that an organisation is clear about the key drivers for its scheme. This is likely to be related to the business benefits which are envisaged – whether from the short-term project outcomes, the enhancement of university links, the contribution to students' skills and awareness more widely or other factors. In order to optimise the perceived value of the scheme to management colleagues less closely involved

in its inception – who may potentially be sceptical – it is useful to emphasise the benefits of having enthusiastic people working over a period on projects which can help those colleagues deliver their personal business objectives.

It is also important at this point to scope out the scheme in terms of its scale and budget. The most visible element to consider and quantify is the payroll cost of the placement students, and this should be provided for, perhaps as a central budget or within individual units' budgets. Early decisions need therefore to be made on the number and duration of placements, and the pay rate that will be applied. Pay-related costs beyond base pay/overtime and National Insurance are unlikely to be substantial, although the requirements of the new Fixed Term Employee Regulations which applied from 1st October 2002 should be borne in mind with regard to benefits for placement students.

Where company policy or placement duration lead to issues with headcount and the impact that placement students may make on reported numbers, it may be useful to consider the option of outsourcing the employment relationship with students. In this situation, an agency can be engaged to serve as the direct employer, with the student assigned on contract to the client organisation. Agencies under this scenario can also deal with applicant handling and administration if required for an agreed charge.

An important early task will also be to verify the arrangements in place to provide Employer's Liability Insurance and appropriate Third Party and Public Liability cover. In addition to these, health and safety issues should clearly be considered. It may well be that current provision requires no amendment for placement students to be covered, but the questions should be asked at an early stage.

At this stage the roles and responsibilities involved in running the scheme should be clarified, with owners agreed for the key elements of the activity. These may, for example, include overall scheme management, work experience project identification, publicity and links with universities, applicant handling and selection, payroll and employment administration, manager briefing and student induction and line management. Since they are likely to be involved at the early stages by proposing projects for the scheme, the briefing of appropriate line managers is a step which should be commenced near the front of the process. >>

6. Getting Started (continued)

6.2 Establishing links with Higher Education

If a placement scheme is to operate on a significant scale it will be necessary to consider the relationship that is to be formed with the universities. Whilst with a scheme that offers only a handful of placements this may be an unnecessary step, but to achieve an effective outcome for any larger programme, a good inter-working with the relevant universities pays dividends.

Initially, this may mean little more than identifying which universities are to be targeted, or which departments are of key interest. This might be based on the placement locations and on the spread of subject-expertise which may be required for effectiveness in the planned placement work.

Where a university or a number of institutions are identified as being of prime interest it is always worth making early contact with their Careers Service to give notice of the planned placements and to obtain advice on the most appropriate way of publicising and managing them. Careers Services have a close awareness of student needs in this area, and often act as an 'information exchange' between students and employers as part of their wider advisory and guidance roles. In many cases they have a member of staff who acts specifically as a placement officer or work-experience co-ordinator. They are well equipped to point an employer with placement opportunities in the most fruitful direction, provided that they are brought into the process at an early stage.

Careers Services are increasingly handling placement opportunities as part of their wider agendas for work-based learning and student support, drawing these together into a job-shop or 'work bank' solution. An employer's approach regarding work experience may integrate well with such initiatives and offer benefits to both parties.

Beyond the Careers Service, the employer may also benefit from

direct contact into with relevant academic departments. This is the case where the nature of the work placement requires students with a specific technical knowledge, such as engineering or software science, or where the placement offers particular value to students in certain subject areas – perhaps work in an overseas development agency for politics or geography students. Making contact with the departments with this type of close fit can both optimise the prospects of making a good match between student and placement, and keep the cost of finding well qualified students to a minimum. If the organisation's approach is focused more on the establishment of links by contributing to the curriculum, say through supporting course projects or providing industrial case studies, it will be necessary to bear in mind the relative timescales of business and Higher Education. In some cases the material offered will need to be mapped into the degree course's assessment framework; any required teaching time and resource may need to be planned, and so on. As a result what appears to the employer to require quite a quick "Go/No Go" response may take an extended period for the university to implement a sponsorship offer of this kind.

In all situations, it is also worth leveraging any relationships which may already exist with relevant university departments or Careers Services. Recent alumni working in the organisation, or recruitment or research contacts that are in place are good points of contact, which can assist the setting up of prime linkages with Higher Education to get a work experience scheme under way. >>

“Where a university or a number of institutions are identified as being of prime interest it is always worth making early contact with their Careers Service to give notice of the planned placements and to obtain advice on the most appropriate way of publicising and managing them”

6. Getting Started (continued)

6.3 Identifying your work experience opportunities

In order to approach the student marketplace and secure individuals who are well qualified for the work experience on offer, it is important to identify the placements which the organisation has available. As indicated above, many of the most effective placements are based upon project work, which the employer is actively seeking to have carried out – work experience has the greatest pay-off when both the employer and the student are meeting tangible objectives and needs.


One effective method of identifying the projects themselves is to invite line managers to propose work experience projects, which would benefit their area of the business.

Organisations which are familiar with the work experience process often operate an established canvassing approach to this on a scheduled basis. Unless the number of work experience projects envisaged is quite small, this can be a good way of gaining buy-in to the practice and of surfacing projects which might not otherwise become visible.

Whatever the method of their identification, there is a minimum set of information which is needed at this stage to enable the work experience opportunities to be promoted and filled by students who are well qualified for them.

This may typically be summarised in a project outline.

- **A brief description** of the work or the project – outlining what the individual will be working on, what colleagues they will encounter and their specialisms, what the work environment will be, and identifying the responsible line manager.
- The key **objective** for the placement – if a desired outcome or set of results is spelt out, the work experience benefits from the clarity that this generates. It can also provide an important frame of reference for the work-based learning, which the student will be acquiring through the placement.
- Desirable and **essential skills** – all placements will benefit if the student's skills-mix matches the project requirements. In addition there will be situations where technical capabilities are essential for effectiveness in the role, such as knowledge of specific programming languages or familiarity with dealing with the public.
- **Operational details** for the placement such as duration, preferred start date, location, any essential pre-placement training etc. Any mentor or 'buddy' for the student should also be identified. This information will address some of the first questions that students will have.
- **Preferred degree subject** or university – although in many cases these may be immaterial, it is important to identify any specific requirements at this stage.

Once these details have been captured, the organisation is well-placed to begin the process of securing the appropriate students for the placements based on a clear description of what is required. Even in situations where only a single work experience opportunity is planned, defining it in this way offers benefits in terms of clarifying expectations and optimising the outcomes. 

“Whatever the method of their identification, there is a minimum set of information which is needed at this stage to enable the work experience opportunities to be promoted and filled by students who are well qualified for them.”

6. Getting Started (continued)

6.4 Publicising the opportunities and attracting applications

The process of marketing the work experience opportunities is an important one for several reasons. Firstly, the aim will be to secure sufficient well-qualified applications to meet the needs of the programme, without generating large numbers over and above that – since the handling of unneeded or inappropriate applicants is time consuming and expensive. Secondly, organisations which provide work experience can use this to secure a significant profile, and the way in which the opportunities are promoted and the ensuing applicants are handled offers some potentially very favourable publicity. In addition, the reputation of a work placement scheme within the organisation itself can be enhanced by good external publicity.


One of the key implications of these factors is the importance of considering the competition from other organisations seeking placement students, and of matching the publicity effort to the placement numbers anticipated. Where numbers are low, the most appropriate approach is generally to form a close link with a small number of university careers services or with one or two specific departments so that a good understanding can be developed of the work experience on offer and of the students who may potentially take it. In larger schemes there will be a need to cast the net wider, and a first step will be to ensure that the placement opportunities are addressed in conjunction with the organisation's graduate recruitment programme. Penultimate year students check employers' careers publicity for clues about placement opportunities, and

a link from the graduate recruitment website to a placement section is now generally standard practice. The approach to publicising placements can also be chosen so as to support the organisation's strategy in the field of diversity, with equal opportunities objectives being specifically addressed through the channels and the message used.

There are a number of third-party websites which cater effectively for the marketing of placements. Leading ones are run for example by CSU/the National Council for Work Experience (<http://www.work-experience.org>), GTI (<http://www.doctorjob.com>) and STEP (<http://www.step.org.uk>). Sites such as these offer an ideal way of promoting work experience vacancies and attracting applications, and incorporate guidance elements to help steer students towards the most appropriate fields for them individually. For employers who opt to outsource student payroll management etc, providers can offer internet sites where project details are held, making them visible to students as they consider which work area they are best matched to.

For some types of work experience the competition for the best students can be strong, and in these situations a more active promotional strategy is required to ensure that the organisation's opportunities stand out. Approaches can include:

- Offering a substantial training element as part of the work experience package covering personal and business skills applicable during the placement. It can also offer an element which adds value for the student even though not directly relevant to the placement (e.g. presentation training or media coaching which go beyond the scope of the placement role but are valuable in their own right).
- Running work-experience workshops at targeted universities providing tips on how to optimise the chances of a successful application. These also give an opportunity to expand on the nature of a career in the employer's field, to make contact with students at first hand and potentially secure their interest.
- Setting up events with a particular appeal – perhaps at a prestigious sporting or other venue, or offering the chance to participate in a special activity or to meet a celebrity.

The options for competitive promotion are limited only by the creativity and the budget that can be brought to bear on the issue. 

7. Assessing and Selecting Work Experience Applicants

Whatever the approach to promoting the opportunities and attracting students' interest, it is essential that the process by which people should apply for them is clear.

Application by CV with covering letter, whether on-line or on paper, is a common approach but many of the more established work experience schemes use an on-line application form. It is likely that those students who have no previous work experience will produce a more structured and usable application when it is based around a form which seeks evidence of relevant knowledge, skills and attributes. The form can guide them to think through and provide details of educational and personal activities and experience, which align with the demands of a particular placement in a way that a CV may not readily do.


In situations where placements are to be used by the organisation as a feed in to permanent recruitment upon graduation, it is important that the placement application and assessment processes are founded on the criteria which are sought in graduate recruits. A similar degree of rigour is advisable, since individuals who are assessed favourably through their placement should be regarded as front-runners for recruitment as graduates. By this stage the employer will have the best chance of recruiting the good placement students if they do not need to submit to the full selection process required of a new graduate applicant. ➤



“Application by CV with covering letter, whether on-line or on paper, is a common approach but many of the more established work experience schemes use an on-line application form.”



7. Assessing and Selecting Work Experience Applicants (continued)



“...the aim is to hear about specific situations, rather than “What we often do is ...”, or “What I would do is ...”, probing quite hard where necessary to find out what the individual themselves actually did”

Other decisions in determining the selection process will need to be made early in the development of the scheme, in particular whether applicants will be interviewed – either face to- face or by telephone – and what other assessment tools are to be used. In some cases, testing will be appropriate where, for example, a higher level of numeracy is required for the project work. As above, developing the structure of assessment can start from that used in graduate recruitment where appropriate. The equal opportunities legislation which governs the organisation’s normal recruitment procedures should of course be adhered to within the process of selecting placement students. If students may subsequently be considered for recruitment, it is important to retain records which show that equal opportunities requirements have been met.

Competence-based interviewing will be appropriate in many cases, and where this follows the methods normally adopted for recruitment by the employer, managers are familiar with the standards and the process for applying them. This tends to provide the most robust approach to selecting placement students, and creates a good position for running a placement scheme, which is of high quality for both the organisation and the student. Where the specific requirements of each work experience project have been summarised, as in the Project Outline above, the skills and capabilities required in the student should be readily articulated. From this the structure of the competence-based interview can be drawn up and the assessment criteria determined. Placement students may have fewer examples of what they have done in the past on which to base evidence of competence, but they can be encouraged to relate situations (university/degree work, voluntary work or social activities) from their recent past that will demonstrate their behaviour and skills against the required criteria.

Within each situation the interviewer should probe to ensure that they understand the circumstances that caused the individual to take action, behaviour or what they actually did, and the impact or effect of their actions and how this was measured. As usual in competence-based interviewing the aim is to hear about specific situations, rather than “What we often do is ...”, or “What I would do is ...”, probing quite hard where necessary to find out what the individual themselves actually did.

It is, at the same time, important to bear in mind that students attending an interview for work experience will be less familiar with its format than candidates for graduate recruitment. Closer attention may need to be paid to positioning the interview for the student and conducting it in a supportive way, whilst still securing the data required for a selection decision to be made. It is often useful to provide interviewing managers with some additional specific guidance on this prior to their commencing a work placement interview round. At the same time, thought should be given to ways in which the disappointment of unsuccessful applicants can be managed in a manner that supports their self-esteem and builds their self-awareness, as well as reflecting the organisation in a positive light. >>

8. Supporting your Line Managers

The quality of the experience felt by placement students is heavily influenced by the managers to whom they are reporting during the period of the project, and it is therefore important that these managers are as fully informed as possible about the scheme and its requirements of them. Where a scheme is being introduced for the first time it may be worth conducting face-to-face briefing sessions for managers, but at a minimum they should be provided with written briefing as the scheme starts.

Some of the issues that should be covered have already been addressed in detail; others are developed below. Overall they include:

Purpose

- Objectives of the programme – the principle benefits which the organisation is seeking to secure
- Potential benefits for the manager – e.g. assistance with project work; an early sight of future recruits
- What the students want to gain from it – e.g. real work experience, skills development, pay, insight into the sector

Process

- Key dates – bulk of student interest in the November-February period, application dates, selection timescales, project start & end dates
- Work-experience Project definition – providing a full outline of the work and the student capabilities needed
- Any organisation-wide entry criteria – e.g. year of degree study, A-level/Highers requirements
- Selection process – what part the manager is expected to play

Policies

- Policy on budget and student pay, procedures for handling it
- Policy on student travel-to-work costs – issues of accommodation for students located away from home area
- Approach to holiday and sick leave


Preparation

- Provision of first-line support and guidance – an individual with day-to-day responsibility for supervising and supporting the student
- Getting facilities arranged – ID/security passes, working area/desk space, telephone & PC provision, e-mail account, safety equipment
- Addressing any special-needs – access arrangements; equipment modifications
- Personal support – a “buddy,” initial lunch arrangements, meeting the team, other placement students or recent graduates

Performance management

- Providing an outline of the role – a clear definition of the project and the job expected of the student
- Involvement – managing the student as far as possible as a member of the established team
- Work-based learning – clarity about the learning that the student is seeking to secure during the placement
- Appraisal and assessment – scheduling regular 1-to-1 feedback and review sessions; conducting performance appraisal as for regular employees

Once the placements commences it will be necessary to provide a contact point to whom managers can refer when they require additional information, or when issues arise which they feel unprepared to deal with.

This does not have to be burdensome or over-prescriptive – after all, managers’ key motivation will be to see their project carried out successfully – but it does need to emphasise the impact that their role has on the quality of the experience. Students above all remember their first day with an organisation; it is very often this day which they subsequently refer to when discussing the quality of a placement. 

9. Supporting the Work Experience Student

9.1 Before the placement starts

Whilst it is important that managers who will be taking work experience students on placement receive full support and a briefing about the arrangements and what is required of them, it is equally essential that the students are given similar support. Many will have the typical anxieties before starting a new job - about aspects of the placement work and whether they will get along with their colleagues on the project, as well as personal and administrative details.

Much of this anxiety can be turned into a positive sense of anticipation if some of the details are briefed to the student ahead of the placement itself. Clarity of the project objectives and of what will be expected of the student should be evident from a good project outline, and the student would normally have been provided with this in advance of their selection. Further information and assistance will be especially welcome by the time they are planning their start date.

Issues which can be resolved by suitable support in advance of the placement include:

- **Assistance with accommodation** - if the placement is to be away from home. This will be a significant concern for the student until it is resolved, and the employer can provide useful assistance either through giving contact numbers for accommodation agencies or by canvassing recent recruits, who are often aware of shared accommodation opportunities.
- **Clarity about travel costs** - it will often be appropriate to provide the student with the funds for the initial journey from home

or university to the placement location, or to reimburse these expenses. In addition it may be necessary to provide a season ticket loan for the daily commute if this will involve a significant journey, say in the London area.

- **Reporting arrangements** - A written outline of exactly where the student should go on the first day of their placement, and the name of an individual who will meet them helps to provide an effective start. Ideally, there should be contact with this person a few weeks before the placement begins – this will also provide an opportunity for the student to raise any queries that they may have.

There is significant mutual value to be gained if students have a detailed discussion with their university tutor about the placement before it starts, and this process can be encouraged if the employer refers to it – or specifically requests it – as part of the pre-placement briefing to the student. Where the placement is a structured part of the degree course such as a sandwich year the tutor's involvement will already be well established, and indeed a 'learning agreement' may be drawn up as a standard step. However for shorter summer placements for example, the aim of this dialogue is to help to prepare the student to learn from their experience of work. It can cover discussion with their tutor about:

- i) Their own perceived strengths, weaknesses and development needs;
- ii) The learning value which can be derived from the work experience;
- iii) The learning objectives which might be agreed with the employer;
- iv) The process that will be adopted for reflection on the experience itself. ▶▶



“...it is essential that the students are given support. Many will have the typical anxieties before starting a new job...”

9. Supporting the Work Experience Student (continued)

9.2 Support as the placement begins


First impressions are important on both sides of the placement relationship, and the way in which the induction of a new student takes place has – as for any new employee – an important influence on this. For the student, a good induction to the organisation will set them off on a positive path where they are welcomed in an inclusive way to the workplace. For the organisation it is the process which makes the student fully effective in their project role quickly and effectively. Placement students may have some special needs because this may be their first experience of working with the organisation; indeed it may be their first experience of employment. Beyond this, the induction of students should be similar to that of permanent employees. It can be based upon the regular induction processes that the organisation adopts, with amendments where appropriate. Key elements will be:

- Introducing the student to the members of staff they will be working with;
- Explaining the aims and culture of the business and the department;
- Giving the student a tour of the workplace. Show them the manufacturing or service cycle of the company's offerings or the work cycle for the department, so that they can understand the business and can quickly apply this knowledge to their work;
- Outlining office procedures and workplace practices including:
 - > Office hours and policies - Outline what the normal office hours are and when they may be expected to work outside these. They will need to know about coffee and lunch breaks and if there are any general policies such as not smoking



“Linking up with a ‘buddy’ or mentor, where present... being their first “friend” within the company and generally easing the transition to the working world.”

on the premises. If the company uses timesheets, students should be shown how to record their time in the detail necessary.

- > Administration - Show students how to use office equipment and explain any security procedures. Bear in mind that they may not have developed some skills which many employers take for granted – e.g. a confident telephone manner.
- > Office dress - Discuss the dress policy of the office, bearing in mind that students are unlikely to have a complete business wardrobe, so flexibility may be necessary.
- > Travel - If the business requires students to travel, they should know this at the recruitment stage. Induction provides a further opportunity to make the expenses policy clear.
- > Company procedure - Explain to students the procedures for writing Emails, letters etc, the authorisation levels necessary for sending external correspondence and incurring expenses.
- Explaining the details of Health and Safety provisions. This topic is an important one, and in most cases it will be a specific managerial responsibility for the relevant policies and procedures to be explained in detail to the student.
- Linking up with a ‘buddy’ or mentor, where present. This role encompasses answering students’ questions, being their first “friend” within the company and generally easing the transition to the working world. The chosen mentor should be good with people and should not be too senior in the business. 

9. Supporting the Work Experience Student (continued)

A suggested induction checklist for use where existing procedures are not well developed is given in Appendix A.

Beyond this general induction, the student will want to know how they can start contributing quickly. They will need an early briefing and discussion of the specific work that they will be doing, and this can be based on the project outline generated earlier. Specifically the student should be able to discuss:

- The project objectives
- Their role outline
- The overall aims and expected outcomes for the end of the placement
- How the student's performance will be reviewed
- What support they will have for their learning objectives

One particular step at this stage is to verify that the student is clear about their own personal objectives, and what the 'line of sight' is between these and the business objectives embedded in the project outline. The employer should ensure that the link between the review processes applied to the student's own learning and to the actual contribution they have made to the business is fully transparent.

9.3 Support during the placement


The main principle for supporting a work experience student during the placement must be to treat him or her as a regular employee as far as possible, but to recognise that additional guidance is likely to be needed particularly where the individual is new to the world of work.

Regular reviews of progress and output should be made, doing so in a way which engages the student directly and encourages them to contribute their own assessments and suggestions. Generally it will be best to adopt whatever process already exists for the purpose of defining employees' work objectives, maintaining reviews, identifying shortfall and ahead-of-target achievement and defining development or training needs and following them through.

Where the student has equipped themselves with a tool such as a Learning Log, they will benefit from a collaborative approach to this from the line manager. Learning objectives should in any case be set, and the steps through the placement that contribute to their achievement may not all be evident directly to the student without an element of coaching and discussion with learning in mind. Appendix B addresses this issue in more detail and draws on current developments within Higher Education and beyond. In particular, there is an increasing focus upon making workplace learning an integral part of degree courses.

Employers therefore need to bear in mind that the placement may at a minimum be certificated by the institution. Increasingly it will be assessed and accredited as part of the student's qualification, and these developments have implications for the quality and management of work experience programmes. Initiatives such as CRAC's Insight Plus and the personal development award from City & Guilds indicate the focus and attention that this topic is receiving.

In organisations where there are a significant number of students on placement there can be much benefit in establishing a community for them. This can be achieved, for example by:

- Ensuring that students have one another's contact details;
- Setting up an on-line newsgroup or chat-room;
- Initiating social and networking events, including an opportunity to capture their feedback about the scheme and its processes;
- Considering a larger student event at which career opportunities can be presented and explained. 

9. Supporting the Work Experience Student (continued)

A lively placement student community can benefit both the individuals on their placement through the mutual support it provides, and the organisation by promoting the creation of positive accounts of the whole exercise which then feed back favourably into the external student population.

It is possible that someone on work experience may encounter a problem which is specific to their status as a placement student, and it is therefore advisable to have a dedicated point of contact that they can refer to for this type of issue. This may be with a human resources specialist or through a help-line, and access to it should be made clear to the student at the start of the placement. It can be a valuable route to defusing any potentially difficult situations where a manager is not fully aware of some of the particular issues that can arise or of the provisions which may be made for them.

9.4 The end of the work experience


As the end of the placement approaches, there is a significant opportunity for the employer to consider how it wishes to handle the on-going relationship with the student. It is also a time at which the student should be in a position to finalise the learning which they have drawn from the work experience.

If work experience is being used as a pathway for the identification of high calibre potential recruits, this is the time when the employer should be agreeing a view about whether the student meets the criteria for consideration for a future full time position – or whether students in the earlier years of their degree should be encouraged to apply for a further placement.

Alternatively, if the organisation's purpose is focused on profile-raising then the close of the placement offers a good opportunity to consolidate the best of the experience in the student's mind, and to take the opportunity to gain feedback for improving the scheme.

This is therefore the time when a more formal review of the student's performance should be conducted, and in many cases the organisation simply adopts its standard performance review framework. Managers are familiar with the structure and criteria of the process, and it helps make it a relatively routine step for them. To the student, the final review should provide a document and an opportunity for discussion about their performance in a workplace setting, about their effectiveness in bringing their knowledge and skills to bear on real-world problems and tasks, and about the learning which they take from the work experience.


For situations where no appropriate performance review process exists, there is a format for Student Placement Performance Review which can be downloaded from the Publications/Briefings section of the AGR website at www.agr.org.uk. The evaluation session should be of an objective nature with input and feedback from both the student and the manager. It is important that examples are provided to support the evaluation process. The output should offer the student an opportunity to learn from the overall experience of the placement and provide the basis for ongoing self evaluation and reflection on his or her own performance.


High calibre students may at this stage be assessed to be attractive candidates for permanent graduate roles, and where this is the case it may be a point at which the recruitment criteria could be applied. If a placement student can be assessed in a manner which meets the elements and the rigour of the graduate selection process, it is a good point at which to make a conditional job-offer for them to take up on graduation. Alternatively, the decision could be to exempt the student from the first stages of the selection process for permanent recruitment. Either approach will typically leave students with a very positive story about the organisation, and may be successful in recruiting a group of employees who have a thorough understanding of the organisation, and who are themselves well understood by it. 

9. Supporting the Work Experience Student (continued)

The other purpose of the final review is to assist students in consolidating the learning which they have done through the placement – an aspect of the placement which should by this stage have become well established. Whilst the definition of the desired learning outcomes may be well supported by the university or the student’s tutor, there is often less clarity on the issue of reflective learning. Many people use the skills and behaviours that personal development planning promotes in an ad hoc and intuitive way. The process helps to formalise the learning that has taken place through enabling the student to:

- articulate and reflect on what they are doing;
- value themselves and their own achievements;
- identify ways of improving themselves and their work;
- work towards the objectives and directions they have set for themselves;
- move towards the objectives that have been set in their work.

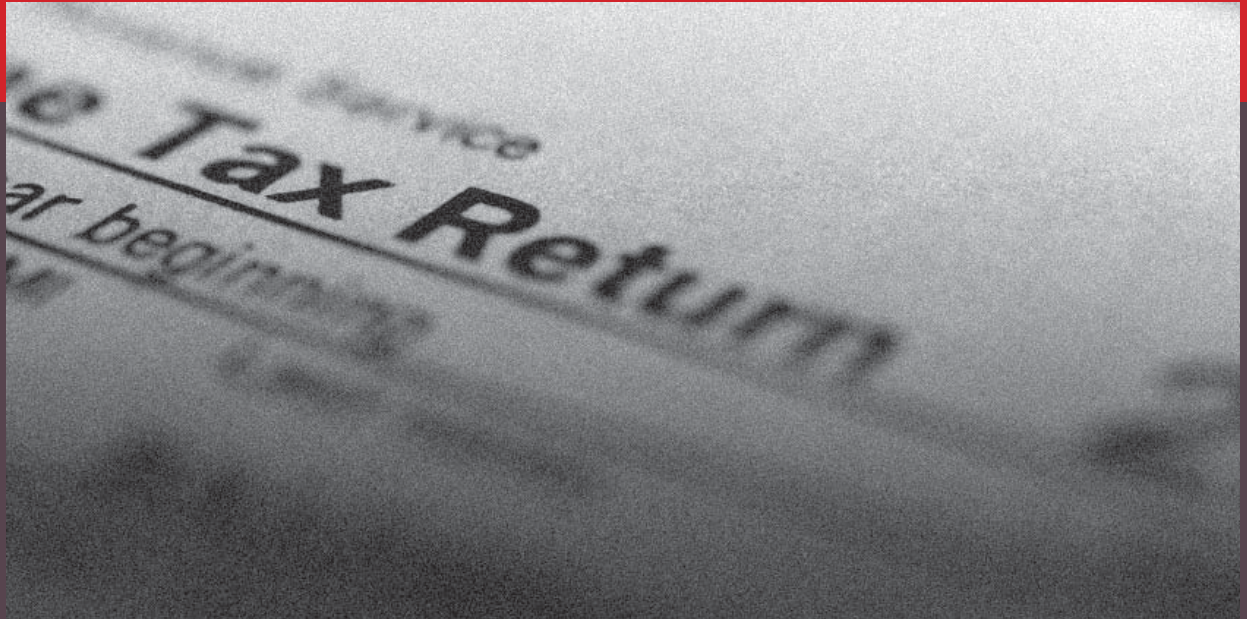
The process can be explained in ways that emphasise to a greater or lesser extent learning 



“Many people use the skills and behaviours that personal development planning promotes in an ad hoc and intuitive way. The process helps to formalise the learning that has taken place...”

Reflective question	Process/Actions
What have I achieved or done?	Personal records and reflections
What did I learn from it?	Evaluation
What do I need to learn to improve my performance or myself?	Reflection on current situation
How do I do it?	Review of opportunities and identification of personal objectives or general direction for change
How will I know I’m getting there?	Strategy for setting targets and reviewing progress
Have I done what I set out to do?	Reflection and evaluation
What next?	Action planning

>> Case Study: Work Experience Programme – Baker Tilly



Work experience placements are offered in many of our competitor firms and they are an excellent opportunity for potential trainees to experience the world of Audit, Accounts or Tax to help them make informed career decisions.

Baker Tilly offices have always received a number of requests for work experience and as a result the Guildford office was keen to implement something.

We wanted to offer a placement to students who would be looking to apply for our Audit or Tax graduate scheme or an AAT training position. As the market has become even more competitive when it comes to graduates we felt that this may give the office an opportunity to sell the culture and type of work we do to those candidates who were unclear about what a mid-tier firm could offer.

The work experience programme allows A-level students and graduates the opportunity to consider careers in accountancy. 56% of the candidates offered work experience placements have started as Audit trainees in the Guildford office and 33% in the Basingstoke office which indicates an extremely high recruitment placement rate.

Overall the offices that have implemented a work experience programme have found that work experience has been invaluable in recruiting some excellent graduates. We offer a combination of interesting work both in the office and out at client sites, being part of a friendly team and help with how to apply for the training schemes.

Equally, candidates gain real experience at a range of different clients and improve their organisation, time management and team work skills. It also gives the candidates a chance to make new friends and take part in social activities which all help motivate them to want to have a career with Baker Tilly. >>

“We wanted to offer a placement to students who would be looking to apply for our Audit or Tax graduate scheme or an AAT training position. As the market has become even more competitive when it comes to graduates we felt that this may give the office an opportunity to sell the culture and type of work we do to those candidates who were unclear about what a mid-tier firm could offer”

>> Case Study: Elenor Farmer – Linklaters

“Throughout my time at Linklaters they also provided vacation students with departmental workshops in which we were exposed to the other practice areas of the firm. This was useful in relation to training contract interview preparation. Most importantly, there was a class on ‘Commercial Awareness’.”

I have just completed a three year undergraduate degree in law at Oriel College, Oxford University. I completed a vacation scheme with Linklaters in June 2007 in their Corporate Department.

After completing three other vacation schemes with different firms, this was by far my most positive experience.

I found the time spent with them highly enjoyable and incredibly facilitative in obtaining training contract offers. I spent two weeks with the firm where over the course of that time I gained valuable experience and insight into the firm specifically and also of a career in law as a whole.

Primarily, the advantage of completing a vacation placement with a Law firm is that you are automatically given a Training Contract Interview if desired, with an opportunity to provide an updated academic reference form and that's all. Invariably, this eases the process as you do not have to complete the tedious training contract applications as you must with all other firms.

The two week vacation placement was incredibly valuable in two aspects. Firstly, it is an invaluable opportunity to learn about a firm first hand, and although you can get a broad insight into a firm by looking at their graduate recruitment brochures and any formal presentations, being able to spend a few weeks with a firm ensures that you are really able to see into the culture.

Secondly, by completing a vacation placement I was able to determine whether a career in law, and in the city was for me. I sat in the corporate department for two weeks with principal who was a qualified lawyer and I was also given a trainee ‘buddy’ throughout the scheme, so that I was able to obtain a range of work from various sources at differing levels.

By having contact with both senior and junior members of the firm, I was able to carefully consider the type of work that trainees complete and I was quickly able to dispel the myth of trainees at magic circle firms simply photocopying all day long!

Throughout my time at Linklaters they also provided vacation students with departmental workshops in which we were exposed to the other practice areas of the firm. This was useful in relation to training contract interview preparation. Most importantly, there was a class on ‘Commercial Awareness’. This prepared me extremely well for all the commercial tasks I was given in all my future interviews and, so, for me this was perhaps the most valuable experience.

It is also important to note that the vacation scheme is not about all work and no play. Throughout the two weeks, Linklaters took us on various social events, including meals out, theatre trips, ready steady cook challenges. We also always met for breakfast every morning with the graduate recruitment team and all other vacation students which encouraged us all to mix together. The experience was one to be enjoyed socially and emphasis was placed on developing a knowledge of the culture of the firm and its aspirations.

Overall, I believe vacation schemes are extremely beneficial to all students whether completing a law degree or not. >>

>> Case Study: Katy Breddal - Colman Getty PR

I graduated from Leeds University last year with a degree in Fashion Communication and Marketing BA (Hons). I took up part time work in the first and second year, as I didn't feel the student loan was enough to cover all my living costs, and I wanted to reduce my chances of getting into debt as much as possible.

I did bar work and waitressing at four different businesses across the two years, including a wedding planning company. Here I learnt skills such as customer relations, team work, and working under pressure.

Now, having completed a three month internship at Colman Getty PR, I have joined the company as a Junior Account Executive. I suppose the skills I gained can now be utilised - politeness with a client, as with a customer in a bar, is essential without regard to personal feelings! Also the need for concentration when working to a deadline is similar to that of a busy café/bar. There is a definite similarity with juggling drink and food orders, tables and kitchen staff, with the never ending points to prioritise on one's 'to do list!' >>



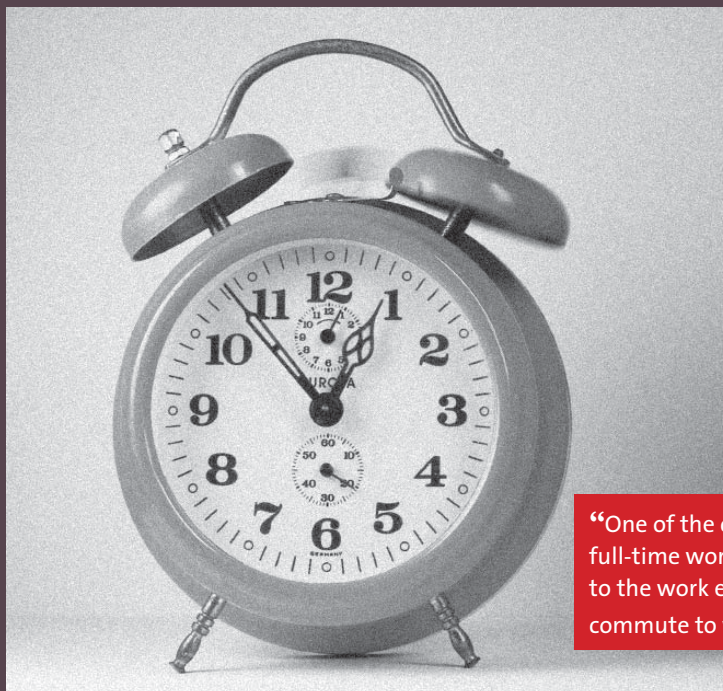
“...those skills I gained I can utilise now - politeness with a client, as with a customer in a bar, is essential without regard to personal feelings! Also the need for concentration when working to a deadline is similar to that of a busy café/bar.”



>> Case Study: Kim Rickard - LogicaCMG

I spent my placement year with LogicaCMG in '05-'06 and rejoined the company after my graduation in '07.

I found that there were numerous "soft" skills which I started to develop during the placement year which were of real benefit to starting my working career as a graduate. For example, general experience of the working environment and daily communication and teamwork with my colleagues allowed me to quickly adopt a professional attitude towards my work and my career development. This gave me a higher starting platform from which to build my people and work skills when rejoining the company and a confidence boost as I already had a certain level of familiarity with my surroundings, highlighting a significant advantage over those graduates who had not had previous work experience. There were technical skills which I built on throughout the placement which were useful later on but it was the softer skills which proved to be universally transferable between projects and situations. In a similar vein, many of the colleagues I worked with during my placement year and the people I met through networking within the company and its clients have proved to be most useful contacts for uncovering work opportunities and prospects that I would have never had access to otherwise.



One of the challenges I underwent when starting full-time work during the placement year was adjusting to the work environment, typical working hours and the commute to work every day. This was quite difficult at first as a much stricter routine is necessary for working life compared to university hours where students may perhaps have only a handful of scheduled lectures and classes each week and are otherwise left to their own devices. It took me a month or two to become comfortable with the daily schedule required for work as a placement student, but once this was in place I found that the discipline stuck with me through my final year at university and back into working life which saved the need for much adjustment and made the transition as a graduate very smooth.

Working in several different roles across my placement year allowed me to gain genuine experience of what an IT professional's career might be like, not only through the roles themselves but also observing the work that my colleagues were a part of. It was very useful in ruling some jobs out as my experience was enough to make it clear that they would not be right for me, but furthermore it has brought some clarification to my career decisions as I thoroughly enjoyed my time in a service delivery role and would like to do much more work in that field in the future. >>

“One of the challenges I underwent when starting full-time work during the placement year was adjusting to the work environment, typical working hours and the commute to work every day. .”

10. Post-placement Activity

Once the placement has terminated there are a number of actions which should be considered.

It is important that students who have been given a job-offer, or on whom the organisation otherwise wishes to maintain a hold for future work, do not feel that they have gone into limbo and lose contact with the employer. A “keep warm” process for these students should be put in place, to ensure that the links which they have formed with the organisation are strengthened and do not fade. This may consist of steps such as:

- Periodic telephone contact from the placement manager or colleagues;
- Regular mailing of, say, the company magazine;
- Occasional social events for placement students, perhaps run by recent graduate recruits/alumni;
- Contact on a birthday, anniversary etc.

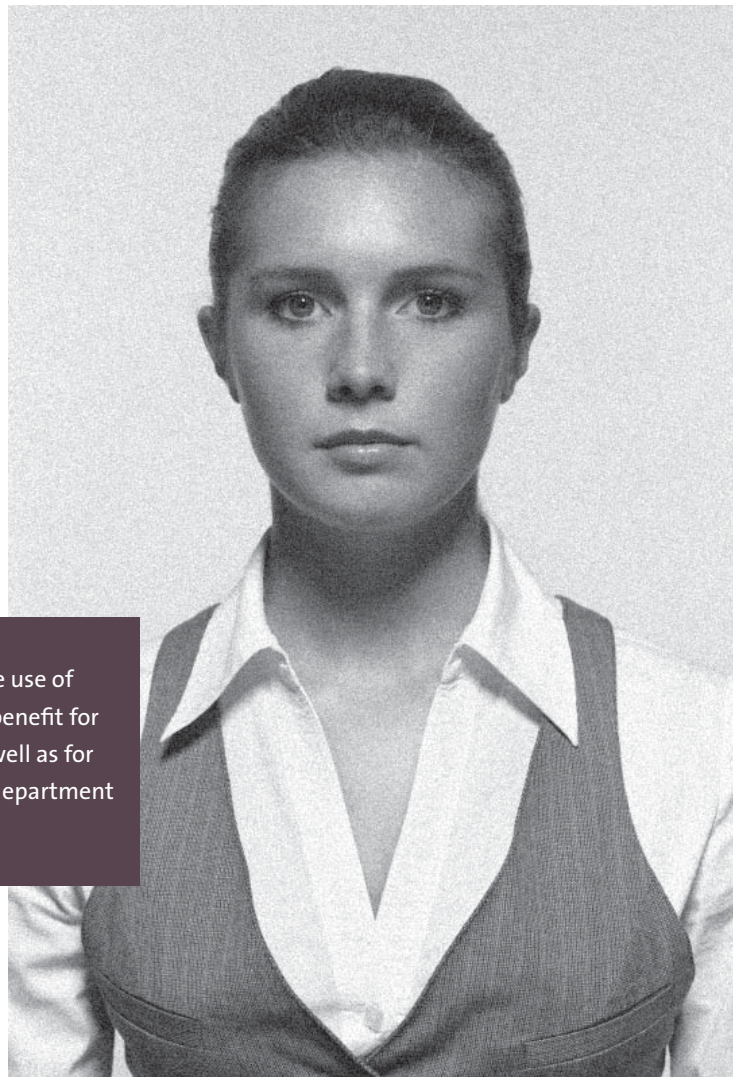
This is also a point at which the overall placement scheme should be reviewed. The review process benefits greatly from input from the students as well as their line managers and colleagues, and from the scheme administrators. Ideally comment can also be obtained from the university careers service or the student’s tutors.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the effective use of work placements can deliver much benefit for the organisation which offers it, as well as for the student and the university and department which become engaged in it. The quality of the experience for all participants can be a very powerful influencer of the reputation which the organisation develops as a result of a well-managed scheme. The guidance in this Briefing is intended to maximise the probability of a high quality work experience placement – one in which all participants gain both immediately and in the future. The growing profile and importance of good work placements within the agendas of Government, businesses, universities and students shows no evidence of abating.

Organisations offering positive experience through placement activity will secure continuing business benefits. >>

“There is no doubt that the effective use of work placements can deliver much benefit for the organisation which offers it, as well as for the student and the university and department which become engaged in it.”



10. Post-placement Activity (continued)

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CIHE - Brenda Little

Acknowledgements

This AGR Briefing was prepared by Hugh Smith with assistance from many individuals active in the work experience field. Hugh runs TetrakonHR specialising in strategic HR and recruitment projects and interim management.

The input and views contributed to this Briefing from many people is gratefully acknowledged. These included: Val Butcher (Learning & Teaching Support Network Generic Centre); Liz Rhodes MBE (National Council for Work Experience); Dr Peter Hawkins (Graduates into Employment Unit); Philip Donnelly (STEP); Alex Kirby (Construction Industry Training Board); Bianca Kubler and e-skills UK; Linsey Perry (Railtrack); Denis Walsh (e-peopleserve Ltd); Julie Fowle (University of Sheffield Careers Service); Karen Paginton; Lisa Sargent, and AGR's Research and Information Task Group ➤



Appendix A

A. The Induction Process for Work Experience

What follows is a suggested process¹ to which to add any company specific induction routines may be added.

A.1 Prior to Arrival

Day 1: Initial Orientation

- The Organisation
- The Operation or Department
- The Project or work tasks

Have you...

- Advised the Premises manager of new joiner?
- Allocated workspace/desk, PC, telephone?
- Arranged access to systems and e-mail account for Day 1?
- Arranged provision of basic stationery supplies?
- Established briefing/training plan and timetable with appropriate team member?
- Appointed a 'Buddy'?
- Planned content of Welcome?
- Project Outline to hand?
- ID card received from Security?

Initial Orientation

- Welcome the new employee in person
- Nominate and introduce a guide ('buddy') and point of contact
- Conduct tour of the work area
- Introduce the student by name to colleagues
- Facilities: cloakrooms/ refreshments and lunch facilities
- Smoking policy
- Explain Health & Safety/Fire Drill/Security arrangements
- Explain IT equipment, shared printers


The Organisation

It is important the new employee understands the company he/she will be working for. It is useful to give them some reading material, which they can refer to later, including:

- Company business purpose
- Company Handbook, if one exists
- Organisation charts, if appropriate
- Company or product brochures
- Initial details of key customers and contacts

The Operation or Department

More detailed information about the organisation can be provided here, for example an organisation chart for the operation or department. Also explanation of departmental routines such as:

- Hours of work, shift patterns, rotas
- Holidays
- Administrative, secretarial or other support, if appropriate
- Stationery and Forms
- Pay, payment date, any bonuses or other benefits
- How expenses are reimbursed, providing VAT receipts
- Absence and sickness reporting,
- Accident reporting
- Telephone and Computer systems
- Fax and photocopier
- Postal arrangements
- Sports and social facilities
- Departmental staff meetings 

Appendix A

A. The Induction Process for Work Experience (continued)

The Project or Work Tasks

The new employee wants to know how to start contributing as quickly as possible. Ensure the employee has the Project Outline on the first day:

- Role description;
- Objectives of the project;
- Key overall aims and expected outcomes at the end of the placement;
- How the employee's performance will be reviewed.

Training will generally be on the job, in particular if there are new skills such as machine operating or computer systems to be learned.

Ensure training and/or ongoing coaching is in place or planned for:

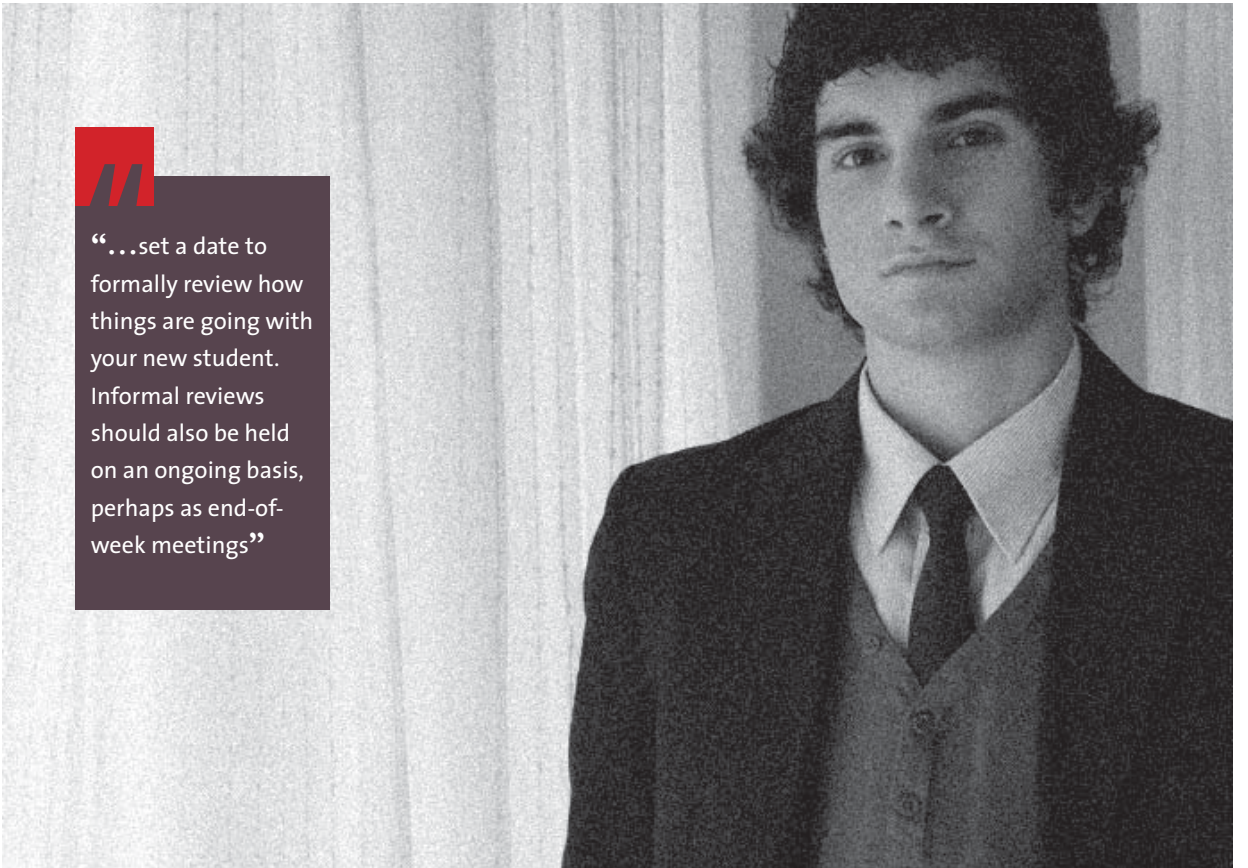
- Operation of equipment or machinery to do the job
- Support systems e.g. switchboard operation
- Computer and administrative systems
- Company induction days, if operated
- Company training e.g. Quality systems, Health & Safety

After Day 1: Subsequent Review

Once the student has been taken through the induction process, it is important to check how well they are settling in. They may have forgotten certain things due to the sheer volume of information to remember on day one. Maintain a high level of contact with them for the first few days or weeks, and if necessary go over some of the Induction Process again.

Finally, set a date to formally review how things are going with your new student. Informal reviews should also be held on an ongoing basis, perhaps as end-of-week meetings.

Ask for feedback on how effective the Induction process was for them; this will be useful for enhancing the process next time round. ➤



“...set a date to formally review how things are going with your new student. Informal reviews should also be held on an ongoing basis, perhaps as end-of-week meetings”

Appendix B

B. Work-related Learning & Placement Development Records

Students can be helped to optimise the value of the work experience they are doing if they are encouraged to realise what skills they are developing. A personal development plan will help them to identify these skills, recognise their weaker areas, set objectives and record the results and reflect on what they have learned. This reflection should not only focus on tasks but also on attitudinal and behavioural factors

Employers can assist students in this by working with them to structure and review their learning plan and then giving them constructive, honest and supportive feedback on their performance and contribution.

Within university courses there is an increasing use of workrelated learning modules which are assessed and accredited and which therefore form an important part of the student's overall degree work. To support effective assessment, workrelated learning needs to be able to demonstrate that specific learning outcomes are addressed within it and employers need to be aware of this in designing placement programmes.

In line with this, from September 2002 all new university entrants hold a Progress File in which the skills developed from work experience will be recorded. This type of approach is of course well established for study towards vocational degrees or professional qualifications. And for the future, a personal and academic development planning element is to be a required component of all degree programmes from 2005, making the learning from work experience a vital component.

The following format from the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) can be used with a student to guide development through work-related learning.

B.1 Guidance to placement student

Think about...

Review

Think about your level of knowledge, understanding and skills. By the end of this placement, what do you want to know more about, understand better and be actually able to do?

Focus on aims

Think about the opportunities available to you on placement.

What precisely do you want to learn or improve? It might be:

- To learn more about the roles and relationships of professionals/ organisations and their clients. How to interpret client needs, win business or set up projects;
- To understand the environmental impact and social consequences of projects and how to deal with these;
- To see how a technical concept you have worked on at university is applied in practice;
- To improve your prospects of entering a competitive employment field by gaining useful contacts and relevant project experience;
- To improve your report writing or presentation skills, and learn how to use a specific database package;
- To understand the organisation and its business better so you can decide if you want to work here, and to meet key people who could advise you;
- To learn about the nature of the working environment, and identify those aspects that you will seek to secure in your longer-term working life – and those you want to avoid.

Plan

Talk to your placement manager and plan how your objectives might be achieved. You might also ask for support, help or feedback. How will you measure your progress?

Action

Work through your plan. If you get stuck or the situation changes, ask for help

Reflect and record

Reflect on your task achievement and the process you used.

What has been achieved? Write it up and note down any evidence you could use in support. Your manager may be able to offer written feedback... and now go back to Review. ➡

Appendix B

B. Work-related Learning & Placement Development Records (continued)

Placement learning and development record

Review

Where are you now?

Where do you want to be?

Focus on aims

What are your goals for this placement?

What are your precise objectives?

Plan

How will you achieve your chosen objective?

What? When?

How?

With whom?

Action

Any changes needed to the plan?

Reflect and record

Reflect on your success / action / experiences

What did you learn?

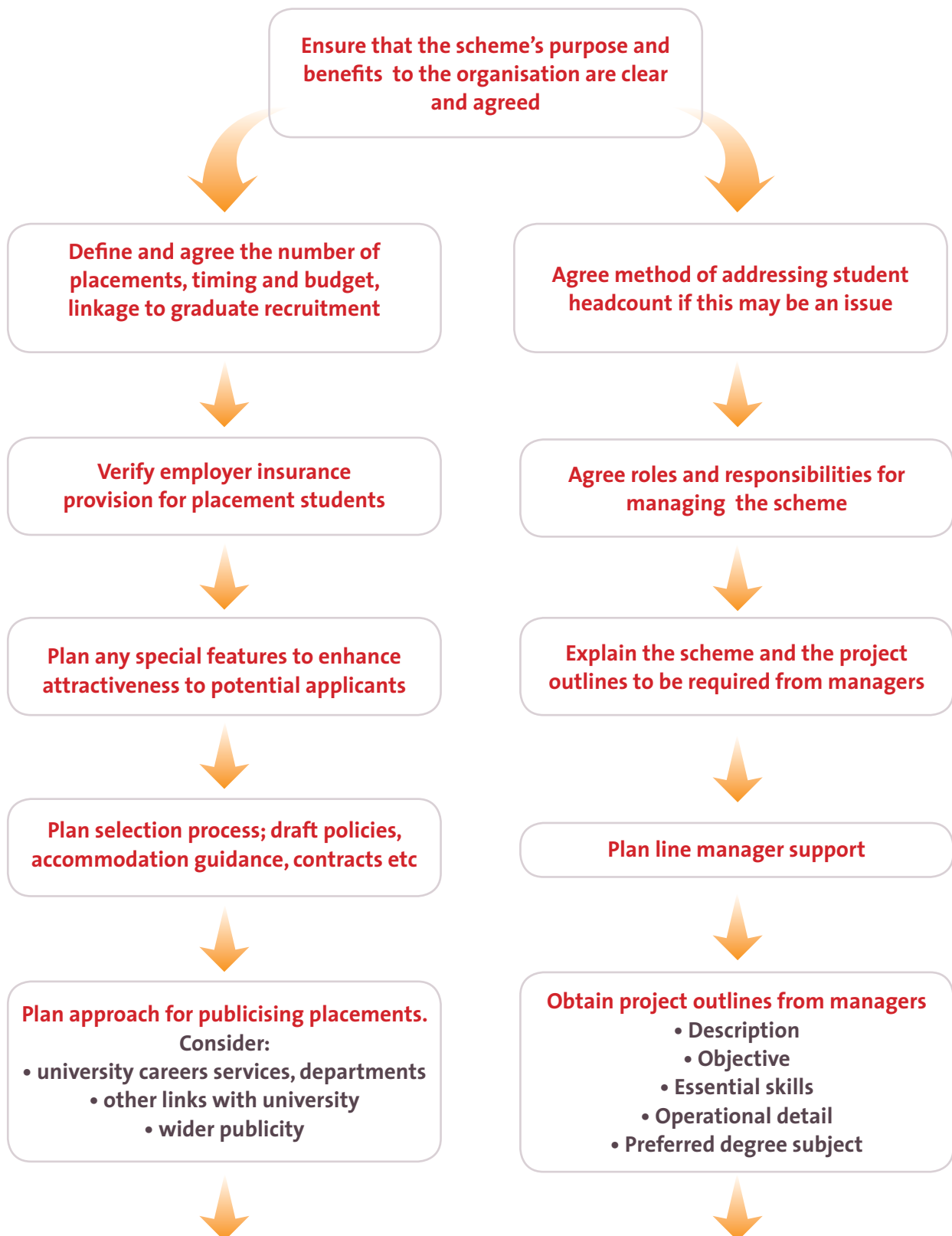
What evidence do you have to prove your achievements?

Line Manager's comments:

Appendix C

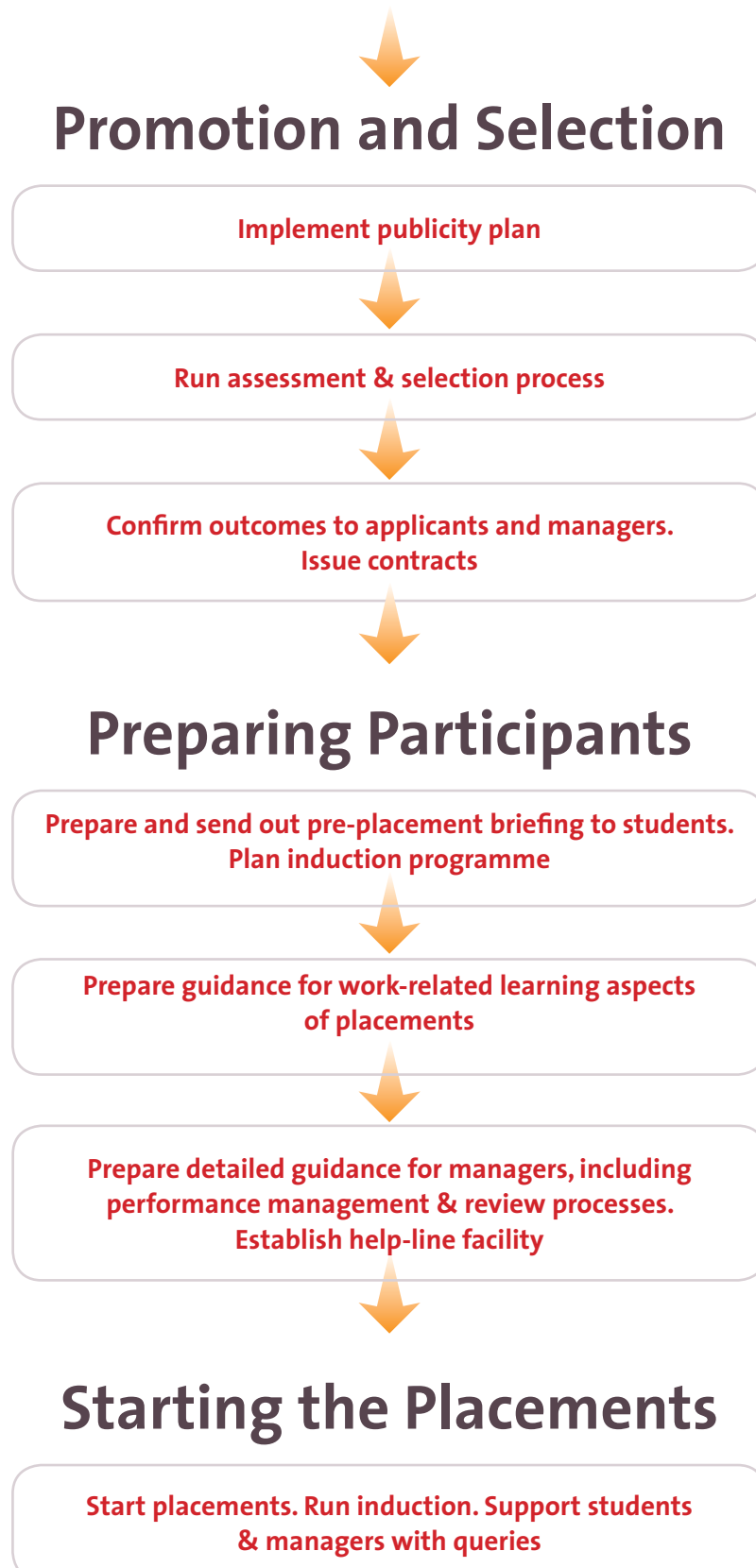
C. Work Experience Scheme Flowchart

Planning



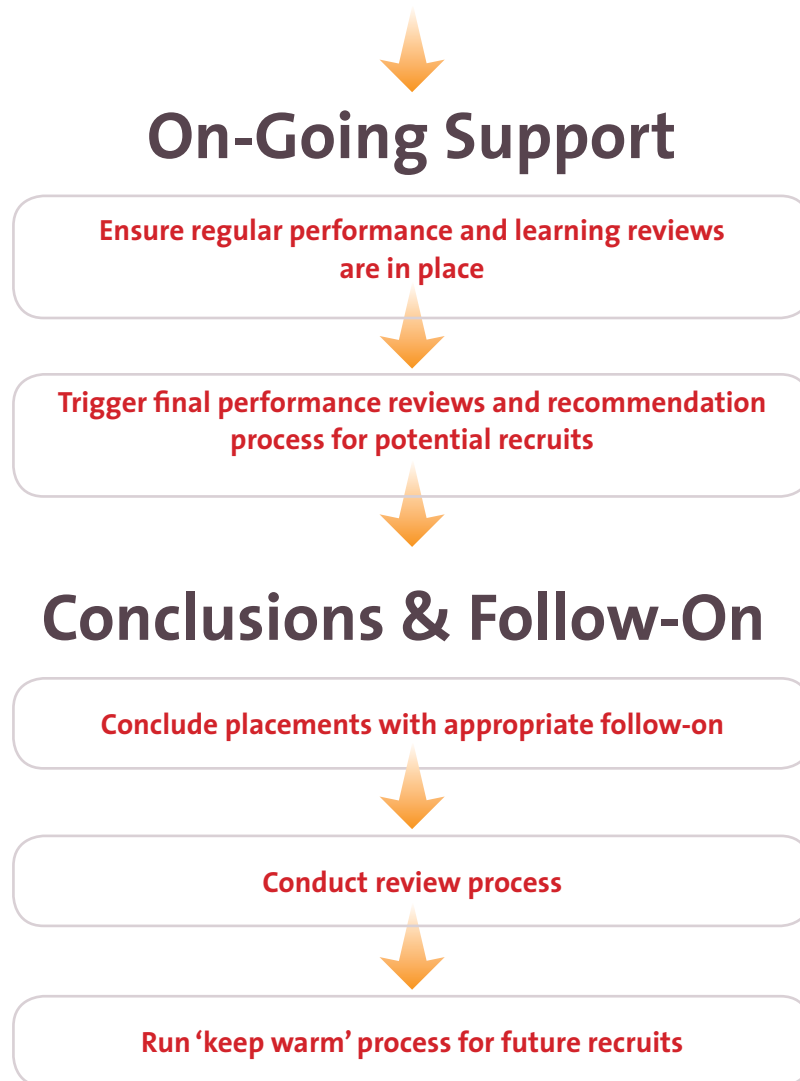
Appendix C

C. Work Experience Scheme Flowchart (continued)



Appendix C

C. Work Experience Scheme Flowchart (continued)



Appendix C

C. Student Placement Performance Review (continued)

Access Performance of core competencies

4 Seizing opportunities 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6
 (Drive business growth, deliver results)

5 Delighting customers 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

6 Professional/technical 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

Please describe the particular skills the student had or has developed.

D) Additional

Briefly record here any factors which have affected the individuals performance of work,
 e.g. health, domestic circumstances)

E) Overall Assessment of Placement, 1 = Outstanding, 6 = Unsatisfactory 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6

Please describe the particular skills the student had or has developed.

Appendix C

C. Placement Student Conversion to Graduate Recruitment

This form is not to be shown to the individual concerned. In Confidence when completed.

Name of Student:

University:

Line Manager:

Telephone Number:

Location:

Please print clearly and circle your appropriate response to the questions.

Q1) Taking into account the project the student was working on, should this person be considered for graduate recruitment into the organisation?

YES / NO

If 'YES' please specify which year's intake: Current year or Next year

Q2) Does the student wish to work for the organisation?

YES / NO

If 'NO' to either above question please give comments:

Q3) If you have vacancies in your work area, would you wish to progress graduate recruitment opportunities for him/her?

YES / NO

Q4) Are there any graduate opportunities in your work area?

YES / NO

If 'YES' applies to both Q3 and Q4, please complete the remainder of this document

Q5) What other work areas within the organisation might be suitable for this individual for employment?

Appendix C

C. Placement Student Conversion to Graduate Recruitment (continued)

Name of Student:

 Please note: you must have HR authority to proceed with graduate selection.

Name of HR Manager:

Date Authorised:

 Managers carrying out interviews should ensure they are familiar with the organisation's competence framework, which forms the basis for selection.

Has the student attended an assessment day or selection interview?

YES / NO

 If Yes, following the assessment was the student recommended for graduate recruitment?

YES / NO

Name of Assessors **1**

2

Has the student attended an assessment day or selection interview?

YES / NO

Will a work permit application be required for the student?

YES / NO

 If yes, please confirm arrangements with HR

If the student is recommended for graduate recruitment, please complete the following 2 pages

Appendix C

C. Placement Student Conversion to Graduate Recruitment (continued)

In order to make the conditional offer of employment please complete the following documentation.

Students Full name

Students date of birth

Students permanent home address

Postcode

Alternative mailing address for correspondence during the next 6 months

Postcode

E-mail address

Telephone number

Mobile number

Name of University

Degree Type.

Degree subject

Year degree achieved or expected to be achieved

Continued...

Appendix C

C. Placement Student Conversion to Graduate Recruitment (continued)

In order to make the conditional offer of employment please complete the following documentation.

Line Manager details

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

E-mail address

Student/Recommended Offer details

Work area (e.g. Sales etc)

Recommended starting salary

£

* Please refer with HR

Relocation Allowances

£

Interest Free Loan

£

Other allowances, please specify

Job Grade

Proposed Start date

If the graduate recruitment offer is conditional upon attaining a specified class of degree, please state