Wootton Academy

REAL SKILLS BRIGHTER FUTURES

WORK EXPERIENCE

Your guide to getting started

LEARN EXPLORE GAIN EXPERIENCE

SMALL STEPS CAN LEAD TO BIG OPPORTUNITIES



BUILD SKILLS

MEET PEOPLE

EXPLORE CAREERS

BOOST YOUR CV

BE YOUR BEST SELF

THIS BOOKLET WILL HELP YOU...

- ☑ Understand what work experience is and why it is important
- ☑ Find and contact employers
- ☑ Make the most of your placement

Work Experience 2027 - 28th June - 2nd July

What is work experience?

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Work experience gives you the chance to spend time in a real workplace. It provides you with the opportunity to learn what jobs and working life are actually like.

You may watch professionals, help with suitable tasks, learn new skills, meet people in the industry and see how a workplace operates.



EXPLORE LEARN GROW

Think of it as a test drive

You do not need to know exactly what career you want. The goal is to explore, learn and ask questions.



What might you gain?

- A better idea of what a particular job or industry is like.
- Experience working with adults and as part of a team.
- New practical and communication skills.
- A chance to discover what you enjoy — and what you do not!



Remember

Your placement does not have to be your future career.

It is a chance to learn more about yourself and the world of work.

EVERY EXPERIENCE COUNTS!

Why is work experience important?



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BRIGHTER OPPORTUNITIES

Build confidence

Meet new people, try unfamiliar tasks and become more comfortable in a professional environment.

Discover your interests

You may find a career you love — or rule one out. Both are useful!



Strengthen your CV

It shows future employers, colleges and apprenticeship providers that you are motivated and willing to learn.

Develop real skills

Communication, teamwork, organisation, problem-solving and time management all matter at work.

SKILLS FOR LIFE

Build useful contacts

You can meet people who may give advice, recommend opportunities or help you understand an industry.

Small experiences now can make your next big decision easier.

EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE

What makes a good placement?



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A good placement is not just somewhere that lets you turn up. Look for a place where you can learn, contribute and ask questions.

Meaningful tasks

You should have something useful to do that will help you learn new skills or develop skills you already have.

REAL WORK = REAL SKILLS

Supportive staff

Someone should be willing to explain things, answer questions and help you learn.

GOOD MENTORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Matches your interests

Think about the type of work, industry, people or skills you want to explore.

EXPLORE WHAT EXCITES YOU

Safe and professional

The workplace should have clear expectations and appropriate supervision.

- SAFE
- RESPECTFUL
- PROFESSIONAL

Opportunities to learn

A great placement lets you see real work and, where appropriate, get involved in projects or tasks.

LEARN DO GROW

Before you say yes...

Ask what you will be doing, what hours you will work, who will supervise you and what you need to bring or wear.

GET THE FACTS FIRST

How to find a placement

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Do not wait until the last minute!

Some employers receive lots of requests or need time to arrange safeguarding and paperwork.

PLAN AHEAD

1 Use your network

Ask family, friends and other trusted adults whether they know someone who could help. Most placements are found through parents/carers, other family members or family friends.



TALK
ASK
CONNECT

2 Look locally

Think about shops, offices, charities, councils, sports organisations and other local employers.



YOUR COMMUNITY HAS OPPORTUNITIES

3 Search online

Look at employer websites and reputable job or careers sites for organisations that interest you.



EXPLORE
RESEARCH
FIND

4 Explore careers events

Open days, careers fairs and industry events are great places to learn about employers and opportunities.



MEET
LEARN
BE INSPIRED



The sooner you start looking, the more options you'll have!

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Different ways to contact employers

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Email

Quick, professional and easy to send to many employers. Keep it short and personalised.

Phone

Useful for smaller businesses. Prepare what you want to say before you call.

BE PREPARED AND BE POLITE

In person

Where appropriate, visit a local business and politely ask who deals with work-experience requests.



Best approach

Research the employer first. Mention why you chose them and what you hope to learn. Be polite, clear and realistic.

SHOW YOU'VE DONE YOUR RESEARCH

A little effort goes a long way...

The right contact, the right message, can open the door to great opportunities.

OPEN THE DOOR TO YOUR FUTURE

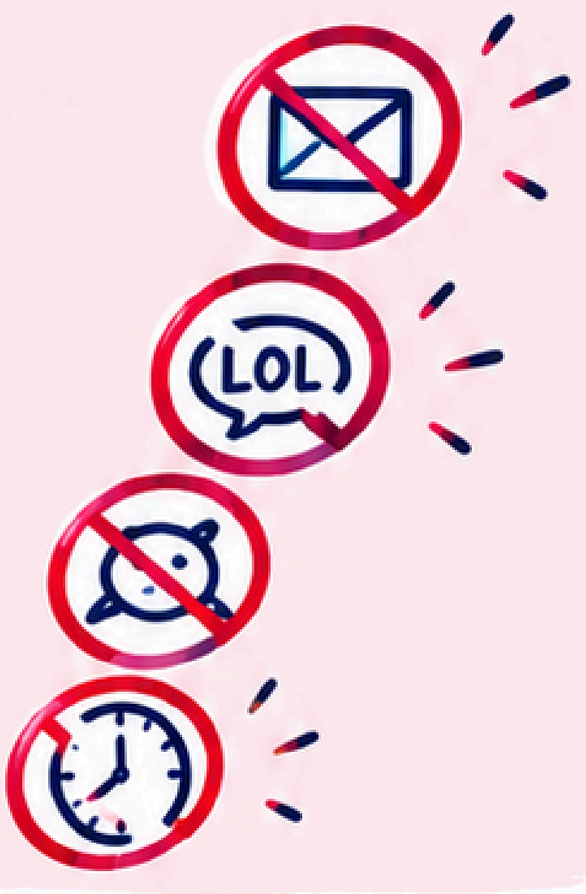
Tips for contacting employers via email

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- Be polite
- Check spelling and grammar
- Reply promptly
- Use a sensible email address
- Be enthusiastic
- Keep trying if you do not get replies straight away

Don't:

- Wait for a reply before contacting another employer
- Use slang
- Give up after one attempt
- Wait until the last minute



Sample email to an employer

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Subject: Work experience opportunity

Dear [Name or Hiring Manager],

My name is [Your Name] and I am a Year 10 student at [School/College]. I am very interested in [industry/type of work] and I am looking for a work-experience placement.

I would love the opportunity to learn more about your organisation and develop my skills. I am available from [dates] and would be grateful if you could let me know whether you offer work experience for students my age.

I am happy to provide any further information you need. Thank you for considering my request.

Kind regards,

[Your Name]
[School/College]



Make it personal

Change the email for each employer. Mention something specific about the organisation so they can see you have done your research.



How to contact an employer by phone

A simple script for asking about work experience



1 Before you call

- Have a pen and paper ready.
- Know the dates you need work experience.
- Find out the employer's name and company name.
- Speak clearly, politely and confidently.



2 Sample script

STUDENT: "Hello, my name is [your name]. I'm 15 and I'm a student at [school name]. Is it OK if I speak to the person who deals with work experience, please?"

EMPLOYER: "Hello. How can I help?"

STUDENT: "I'm looking for a work experience placement from [date] to [date]. I'm really interested in [type of work/company]."

3 If they say YES:

STUDENT: "That's great, thank you! I will add your details to an online platform called Unifrog. You will receive an email from them soon."



4 If they say NO:

STUDENT: "No problem. Thank you for your time."



5 Finish the call

"Thank you very much for your help. Have a lovely day. Goodbye!"



TOP TIP:

Smile while you speak – it can help you sound friendly and confident!

What if you feel nervous?

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This is completely normal!

Most students feel nervous about:

- making phone calls
- speaking to employers
- visiting workplaces

Remember:



- employers understand you are young and inexperienced
- confidence improves with practice
- a polite attitude matters more than being perfect



Practice with family members or teachers first if needed.



Top tips for success

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1 Be prepared

Research the organisation and plan a few questions.





2 Be punctual

Arrive on time and follow the agreed schedule.

ON TIME = GREAT IMPRESSION



3 Dress appropriately

Ask what is suitable for the workplace.

LOOK THE PART



4 Ask questions

People expect you to be learning — curiosity is a strength.

BE CURIOUS



5 Be positive

Try new tasks and be willing to help.

A CAN-DO ATTITUDE GOES A LONG WAY



6 Keep a record

Write down what you did, what you learned and useful skills you developed. This can be added to your Unifrog account.

REFLECT AND GROW



7 Follow up

Thank the employer afterwards. A short thank-you message can leave a great impression.

A LITTLE THANK YOU GOES A LONG WAY



WORK EXPERIENCE CAN OPEN DOORS.

Take the first step!

More experience - more options - a brighter future



How to log your work experience on Unifrog

unifrog

1 Log in using your school Microsoft email and password.



Use your school Microsoft account.

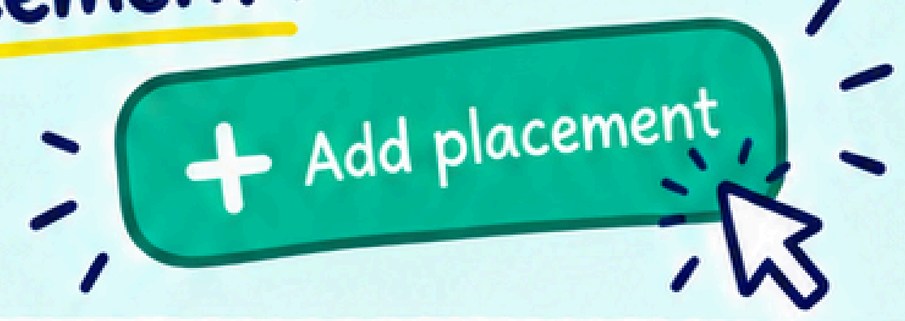
2 Go to the placements tool.

This can be found by scrolling down the home page to the 'tools' section.

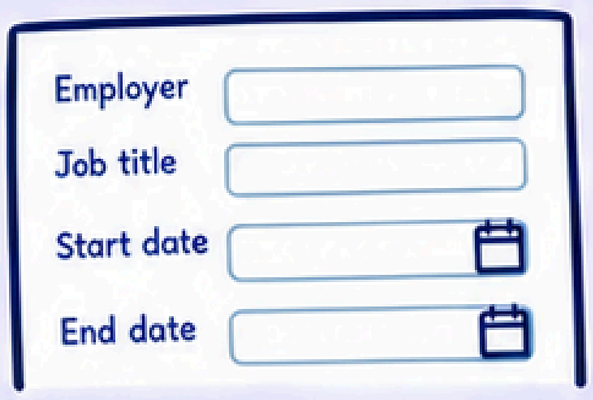


Scroll down to Tools

3 Click 'add placement'.

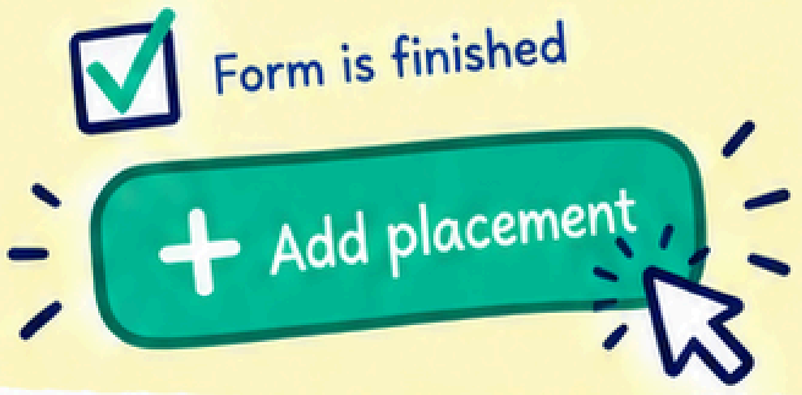


4 Complete the details.



Add as much detail as you can!

5 Tick the form is finished and click 'add placement'.



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Quotes from Employers last year

"Student showed great leadership, creating games for the children and entertaining them all week!"

"Student showed great confidence and progress. You should be very proud of him!"

"Students made a lasting impression with their politeness, respect and positive attitude. They were a credit to themselves and the school. We would love to have them back!"

"Doing great – can we keep him?!"

"Student showed fantastic employability skills – timekeeping, communication, adaptability and professionalism"

"A breath of fresh air, sometimes putting us to shame!"

Quotes from our Students last year

"Its impacted me in a great way, I've been interested in doing a teaching job for over 6 years, and experiencing this workplace and going on this placement has further solidified my want to go into a teaching career."

"I am very proud of myself for creating very strong connections with these wonderful people regardless of my interest in their work."

"On the placement I have learnt, that even when things become a little challenging to keep going and to not give up"

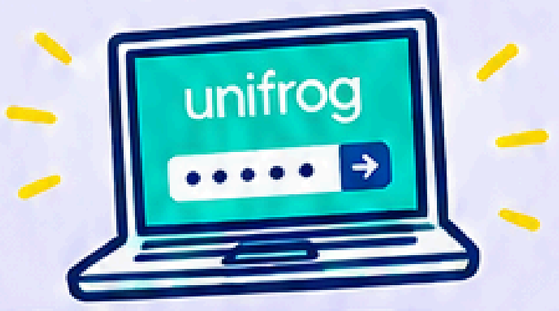
"I was very proud of my contribution on transition day being able to try and make a day of change slightly easier for people by doing the smallest of things."

Frequently Asked Questions

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

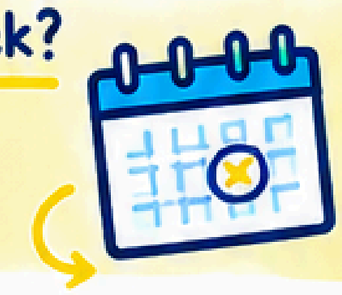
1 How do I reset my Unifrog password?

You can do this yourself at the log in page by clicking on 'reset password/resend welcome email'.



2 Can I do my work experience during a different week?

No, your placement must be during the week set by the school.



3 I haven't had a response from the placement about my request for work experience, what do I do?

Send a follow up email and try contacting them by phone.



4 Is there a deadline for finding a placement?

21st May, but we would strongly recommend students find and record their work experience by February.



5 What hours am I expected to work during work experience week?

Your working hours should be discussed with the placement. As close to a full working week as possible would be a good experience, but employers may need to adjust this for students.



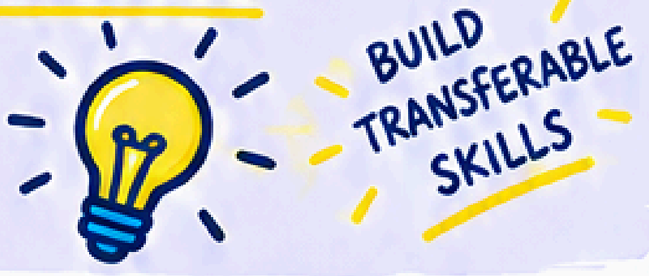
6 What if I can't find a placement close to where I live?

If you can't find a placement withing walking distance, consider where you could get to using a bike or the bus. This will provide you with more opportunities.



7 How do I find work experience if I don't know what carer I want?

This is completely normal. Work experience is valuable even when students are unsure of future plans because it develops transferable skills.



8 How do I find a placement if my parents don't have professional contacts?

Many excellent placements come from local businesses and community organisations. Persistence and professionalism also play a part when looking for work experience.



What to do if you can't find your "dream" placement

THERE ARE OTHER GREAT OPTIONS!

Don't worry! Many students won't be able to find the "perfect" placement for a variety of reasons.

Look for related areas that allow the development of transferable skills, for example:

Medicine/Healthcare

First choice: Hospital, GP Surgery, Dental Practices

Related areas:

- Care homes
- Pharmacies
- Health charities
- First aid or community support roles

Computing/IT

First choice: Software or Tech Company

Related areas:

- IT support roles
- Website management
- Data entry
- Coding clubs
- Digital support in schools or offices

Law

First choice: Law Firm, Solicitors

Related areas:

- Local Council
- HR departments
- Legal admin roles

Business/Finance

First choice: Accountant, Business Consultant

Related areas:

- Office administration
- Retail management
- Bookkeeping assistant
- Customer service roles

Different paths can still lead to amazing opportunities!

USE YOUR SKILLS, BE OPEN-MINDED!

Wootton Academy

Need support?

The careers team are here to help

Email

workexperience@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Find us in the careers hub

on Tuesdays and Fridays

TUE FRI

Careers Lead

- Mr Stewart

Careers Administrator

- Mrs Stuart-Leach

WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!