

Work Experience

Information for Employers

Introducing students to the world of work can help them understand the work environment, choose future careers or prepare for employment. It can take the form of a short, or longer, placement with an employer where students will have the opportunity to observe and practice work tasks. Taking on work experience students should be straightforward for employers with just a few steps to take to enable the placement to occur.

What happens?

Schools/colleges across Oxfordshire will work in slightly different ways when organising work experience, some may find placements for their students, others' may ask students to find their own placements, but the health & safety checks of employers offering work experience are all co-ordinated by **Oxfordshire Work Experience (OWE)**. Schools and colleges use an online system to notify us where students will go on placement and can then use that system to see if/when a placement is approved.

OWE check employers through a quick visit every 1 to 3 years depending on the risk level of the job role. During our visit we simply check for suitable insurance and make sure the health & safety basics that an employer should legally have in place are there. The visit also gives employers a chance to ask questions about any aspect of work experience or give feedback. We can also update employers on Apprenticeships, Traineeships or other recent skills matters during this visit if required. A follow up visit for health & safety will then occur after 1, 2 or 3 years depending on the nature of the role.

What do you need to do?

Insurance

Under health and safety law, **work experience students** are your **employees**. You treat them no differently to other young people you employ. Your existing **employers' liability insurance (ELI)** policy will cover work placements provided your insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers, so there is no need for you to obtain any additional employer's liability insurance if you take on work experience students.

If you are a **family business** or **sole trader** you may not have ELI, however, if a family business takes on an employee who is not closely related to the employer, or if a sole trader takes on an employee, then there is a requirement to have ELI in place for work experience.

Risk assessment

If you already employ young people or have taken work experience students before **simply use your existing arrangements** for assessments and management of risks to young people.

If you do not currently employ a young person, have not done so in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, or one with particular needs, **review your risk assessment** before they start.

In all cases, you must remember **to take account of what you are told** of the student's physical and psychological capacity and of any particular needs, for example due to any health conditions or learning difficulties when reviewing your assessment.

Schools/colleges should provide you with student details. If a new student is of a broadly similar level of maturity and understanding, and has no particular or additional needs then repeating your assessment of the risks is unnecessary and your current risk assessment for young people will apply.

You need **to explain to parents/carers** of children what **the significant risks** are and what has been done to control them. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and suitable, and is very often done by sending a copy of the risk assessment via the school or college.

Induction

A simple way to explain the risks to young people and how they are controlled is through an induction. This is an opportunity to check that the student understands what they have been told and know how to raise health and safety concerns with you. It can also be used to outline fire safety and first aid procedures and inform students of other policies you may have around more general issues such as mobile phone use or confidentiality issues.

For more information you can visit the Health and Safety Executive website: www.HSE.gov.uk or call us on 01865 323478.

General Information

Hours of work

The Working Time Regulations 1998 apply for work experience not child employment laws. Therefore:

- ✔ working time, including overtime, must not exceed an average of 48 hours in each 7 days
- ✔ young workers are entitled to a rest period of not less than 12 consecutive hours in each 24 hour period worked
- ✔ where a young worker's daily working time is more than 4.5 hours, he or she is entitled to a rest break (of at least 30 minutes)
- ✔ young workers are entitled to a 48 hour rest period in each 7 day working period

We suggest that working hours are clearly defined and communicated to parents in advance of the placement so suitable transport to and from placements can be arranged.

Payment and expenses

Work experience is part of the school curriculum and employers should make no payment for work to students, however, employers may help out with travel or meal expenses at their discretion.

Reporting of absence or incidents

Employers must contact the school/college immediately:

- ✔ if a student fails to turn up, as their participation in work experience contributes to school attendance
- ✔ if a student is involved in an incident or accident. Accidents must also be recorded in line with HSE guidance.