### **Sixth Form Guide to Organising Work Experience**

**How do I find a placement**

Thinking of ideas for work experience can be a challenge, and if you don’t live in an urban area, it can feel like there are very limited options. Rather than trying to find the ‘perfect’ opportunity, look for a placement that ticks as many boxes as possible.

Instead of focusing on one specific job role, consider the wider career industry. For example, it may not be possible to shadow an anaesthetist (again, confidentiality and safety being the main reasons), but you could explore other roles in the healthcare industry like working in a dental practice, nursing home, or GP clinic. These will all give you relevant experience that you can still learn from and reflect on in your applications.

For ideas on work placements specific to each industry, take a look at Unifrog’s [Get on the ladder series of Know-how guides.](https://www.unifrog.org/student/know-how/series-get-on-the-ladder)

You could also think about the transferable skills that are relevant across industries to help you find a placement. For example, it’s unlikely that you’ll be able to find work experience as an air steward, but you could reach out to customer services departments as the staff will use very similar skills in their day to day jobs.

Or you can think about experiences that are relevant to the school subject that is most related to the job or industry you’d like to go into.

For example:

* History and classics: museums, archive offices, National Trust sites, and archaeological digs
* Art and design: galleries, workshops, branding departments, and architectural firms
* Drama and performing arts: talent agencies, local theatres, local events spaces, and drama departments in schools
* English and modern languages: foreign language classes, translating companies, local newspapers and radio stations, broadcasting companies, libraries, publishing houses, advertising agencies, blogs, and local councils
* Physics, astronomy, chemistry, and engineering: water works, research and development departments at a local factory, energy/oil/gas companies, local pharmacies, local airports or aerodromes, local astronomy observation centres, automobile and aviation manufacturers, and science museums
* Medical sciences and human biology: pharmaceutical companies, dental practices, nursing homes, local hospitals, GP or walk in clinics, opticians, chiropractors, and podiatrists
* Computer sciences: app development companies, IT security companies, programming companies, tech start-ups, and school IT departments
* Maths: finance departments, accounting firms, insurance firms, tax firms, HR departments, and banks
* All subjects: primary schools, local blogs and magazines, local societies or study groups, supermarkets, department stores, libraries, and local councils

**What about virtual work experience?**

You may also take part in virtual work experience as an alternative to an in-person placement during your two days.

Virtual work experience is completed digitally rather than in person and gives you the opportunity to complete an internship from home. Also referred to as online, remote or e-experience, all you need is access to a laptop/computer and a stable internet connection.

Virtual internship opportunities share many similarities with traditional, in-person internships but their online nature allows participants to work with organisations across the country, even the globe.

We recommend **Springpod** as a useful directory for age-relevant work experience online.[**https://www.springpod.com/virtual-work-experience/search**](https://www.springpod.com/virtual-work-experience/search)

**Finding contacts and how to message them**

When organising work experience, try to be realistic. You are unlikely to be allowed access into the head office of a national organisation with no prior experience. Look for local businesses or people with whom you already have a connection - like the parent/carer of a fellow pupil, a family member, a friend, etc.

If you don’t have any contacts, or aren’t sure where to start, speak to Mr Eke; they may be able to suggest organisations where pupils from your school have previously worked and made such a good impression that they’re keen to have another student.

Once you’ve decided where you want to work and have a contact, you actually need to contact them. Don’t rely on a parent or your school to contact them for you! You need to show that you can be confident and professional, even if you are nervous!

**How do I contact them?**

Unless the contact is a close family member, **you must contact all members of the public through your school email account.** This is to fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities to be able to help and support you through the organisation of this

 Make sure you include:

* The days or dates on which you would like to complete your work experience
* Why would you like to complete your experience at this organisation- *what do you want to learn? What do you want to experience? Some research would help here - maybe they have great customer reviews or are among the top ranked businesses locally? Maybe they have created a new way of doing something and you want to learn how to manage this?*
* What you can offer them - *that’s right: you can’t get something for nothing, so bowl them over with your skills and how your time with them will benefit them, even if that is admin support or helping out busy employees with their workload*

This template is an excellent start:

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| --- |
| Dear Sir/Madam/To Whom it may concernMy name is [name] and I am enrolled in Sixth Form at the Folkestone School for Girls. I am writing to you as I am currently looking for work experience between…Paragraph 2: say a little about why you’re interested in the industry. This could be because you hope to go into this career in the future, or it is a topic that interests you and you’d like to learn more, or it ties in with something that you are learning right now.Paragraph 3: suggest what skills you could bring to the company- this will help them to consider what experience they might give that will suit you. Are you well-organised, a good team member, creative, inventive, resilient? Try to give brief examples of two of these, with examplesOur school uses Unifrog to arrange all documents and health and safety processes online,making it easy to manage placements for businesses, and our Careers Leader, Mr Eke, encourages you to get in touch with any questions at keke@folkestonegirls.kent.sch.ukI hope you are able to support me with my work experience, and I look forward to hearingfrom you shortly.Kind Regards[Full name] |

 **Do I need to include a CV?**

**You should include a copy of your CV with your email/letter to offer more detail. You can create a CV using the Unifrog CV builder tool found here:** [**https://www.unifrog.org/student/cv**](https://www.unifrog.org/student/cv)

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| --- |
| **Please do not include*** **Full name (First name and initial is fine, e.g. Samantha P)**
* **Personal Contact Details, such as telephone number or personal email address**
* **Your address**
* **Your date of birth - give age at time of work experience**
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Remember, if you have any questions or would like support in arranging your placement please contact Mr Eke.

**Good luck!**