

16-19 Study Programme

**Work Experience
and Employability
Journal**

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Introduction

Conducting work experience is a great way to experience the world of work, learn new skills, develop employability skills and become more confident. You will also be able to explore possible chosen career paths and learn more about the type of work involved. You will get more out of this experience if you fully immerse yourself in it! Don't be afraid to ask questions if you are unsure.

The purpose of this work experience journal is to help you to prepare well for your work experience placement. It will also help you to identify the employability skills you already possess, develop them further and learn new skills. These transferable skills are what future potential employers will be looking for.

Completing this booklet in collaboration with your use of the Start  U-Explore Programme will put you in the best position to understand how to set up your work experience and make the most of it. It will also enable you to review your placement and reflect upon your experience.

Section 1: Employability Skills

In order to be flexible, we need a set of transferable skills that are not specific to one particular career path but are generic across all employment sectors. Employability skills are those skills necessary for getting, keeping and being successful in a job. They are the skills and attitudes that enable employees to get along with their colleagues, to make critical decisions, solve problems, develop respect and ultimately become strong ambassadors for the organisation.

Employability or 'soft skills' are the foundation of your career building blocks and they are frequently referenced in the media as lacking in school-leavers, graduates and those already in employment. Organisations spend a lot of time and money training staff, not in job specific areas but in general and basic skills.

Having a clear understanding of the skills that you already possess and which you need to work on further will give you lots to talk about when you set up your work experience placement and when you have interviews in the future.

Task 1: Key skills

Define each of the key skills below, in a maximum of one sentence. Use Start  to help you. Click the 'Employability' tab, select 'Employability Skills', then click through the tabs in turn. Read all the information from each tab.

NB: You do not need to complete the module in the 'Activities' tab - we will come back to this later in the year.

Self-Management -
Team working -
Business and customer awareness -
Problem solving -
Communication -
Application of numeracy -
Application of information technology -
Positive attitude -

Task 2: Activities utilising these skills

Make a list of any activities you do, which give you the opportunity to use some of the employability skills above. Use Start  to help you as you may already have some ideas stored in 'My Locker'.

- | |
|--|
| - e.g. babysitting, playing in a sports team, learning to play a musical instrument. |
| - |
| - |
| - |
| - |

Task 3: Evidencing Employability Skills

Take each of the 8 employability skills in turn and provide personal evidence of how you have already demonstrated the skill. Try to consider how this skill could be demonstrated during a work experience placement.

1. Self-management	How I have demonstrated this is the past.
I can prioritise tasks.	
I can manage my time effectively.	
I can meet deadlines.	
How I could demonstrate self-management in the workplace:	
- E.g. Setting myself SMART targets to enable me to meet deadlines.	
-	
-	
-	

2. Team-working	How I have demonstrated this is the past.
I respect other people.	

I can cooperate and negotiate with others.	
I contribute to discussions and/or outcomes.	
How I could demonstrate team-work in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Work collaboratively with someone to complete a task. - - - 	

3. Business Awareness	How I have demonstrated this in the past.
I have an interest in the field of work that I might like to go into Post-MES (e.g. medicine, carpentry, product design)	
I know the industry that a company is part of (e.g. healthcare, sports, electronics industry)	
I know who their target customers are.	
How I could demonstrate business awareness in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Researching the company before I request to complete my work experience with them. - - - 	

4. Problem solving	How I have demonstrated this in the past.
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I can analyse facts and circumstances.	
I can think creatively about my findings.	
I can find solutions to difficult or complex issues.	
How I could demonstrate problem solving in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Think carefully about a range of ways to complete a task before embarking on it. - - - 	

5. Communication	How I have demonstrated this is the past.
I can produce clear and structured written work.	
I can talk confidently, listen and question.	
I can adapt the way I speak or write depending on who I am communicating with	
How I could demonstrate good communication in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Write in a formal way when communicating with colleagues. - - - 	

6. Application of numeracy	How I have demonstrated this is the past.
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I can use numbers to solve questions and problems.	
I can use my maths skills in daily life.	
How I could demonstrate application of numeracy in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Using formulas within a spreadsheet. - - - 	

7. Application of information technology	How I have demonstrated this in the past.
I can use computer software for storing, retrieving, and sending information.	
I have basic IT skills in common software packages, such as Microsoft Office.	
I can search the internet, download documents and save them in folders.	
How I could demonstrate application of information technology in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Inputting data into a spreadsheet. - - - 	

8. Positive attitude	How I have demonstrated this in the past.
I am willing to take part in unfamiliar activities.	
I can accept constructive criticism without being offended.	
I have a desire to achieve.	
I can recover quickly from disappointment (Resilience)	
How I could demonstrate a positive attitude in the workplace:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. Show enthusiasm in the tasks that you are assigned. - - - 	

Section 2: What else do Employers expect?

As well as the 8 key skills above employers will also expect potential employees to demonstrate the following:

- A desire to learn
- A desire to work
- Awareness of their strengths and weaknesses
- Career ambition
- Confidence
- Experience of the specific occupation (gained through work experience)
- General experience of work
- Good academic qualifications
- Good vocational qualifications
- Politeness
- Good attendance and punctuality
- Smart appearance (at interview/work)
- Telephone skills
- Willingness to adapt to the company culture

Task 1: Expectations

Highlight any expectations from the list that you think that you need to work on.

How could you work on these?

- E.g. Improve my confidence by contributing voluntarily at least one a lesson.
-
-
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Section 3: Setting up your work experience placement

There are a number of ways to set up your work experience placement. You could write to your chosen company, email them or call them. It may be that you already know someone who works for the company, so you could talk to them in person. Whichever method you choose, it is important that you make a good first impression.

You will find lots of guidance on Start  about setting up your work experience. Go to the 'Employability' tab, select work experience and read the information in the 'How to Apply' and 'Organising your own placement' tabs.

More useful advice and guidance can be found by using the National Careers Service website:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/interviews/Pages/preinterviewchecklist.aspx>

N.B You will not need to complete all of the tasks in this section, just the ones appropriate to you in setting up your placement.

Task 1: Telephoning to arrange work experience

Setting up work experience via the telephone can be nerve-racking but it needn't be. Use the table below to help you to think about what you want to say, before you make the call.

Focus	What I plan to say
Introducing yourself to the receptionist	
Introducing yourself to the placement supervisor (the person you really want to talk with) - Tell them your name and what prompted you to call e.g. you saw an advert, or had read an article about them	
Explain your reason for calling e.g. you want to find out more – do they have any	

<p>job opportunities, apprenticeships, work experience opportunities?</p> <p>Or you want to draw upon their knowledge and experience of that industry.</p>	
<p>Capture and develop their interest. Give a brief summary of your interest in their company, your strengths and what relevant qualifications/skills/experience you have.</p>	
<p>Next steps e.g. your request for a meeting – suggested days and times. What would be convenient for them?</p>	
<p>Confirm what you have agreed e.g. when you are going to meet- or if you have to call again to arrange a meeting. Thank them for the time they have taken to discuss this with you today.</p>	

Pre-Placement Interviews

In most cases you will be required to have either an interview in person or a telephone conversation before your placement begins. This will provide you with an opportunity to meet or talk to your placement supervisor and to ask any questions in advance.

If your placement supervisor requests that you attend a face-to-face interview in advance, ensure that you are happy with the date, time and venue. Ask your placement supervisor if you are required to bring anything along with you on the day. Remember, you have one chance to make a good impression with the company.

Task 2: Personal Learning Checklist – Interview

If you are required to have a pre-placement interview, use this PLC to help you to prepare.

Research your journey in advance e.g. bus routes. It is advisable to arrive a little early	
Dress smartly. Think carefully about the clothing you will wear. Smart business dress is appropriate e.g. suits	
Inform the receptionist of who you are and who you have come to see	
Shake hands with the interviewer(s) and any other people you may encounter	
Think about how you conduct yourself e.g. say please and thankyou	
Relax and smile	
Give the interviewer good eye conduct	
Research about the organisation in advance so that you feel well prepared and are able to talk confidently about the business. Find out as much as you can about the employer, role and industry in advance	
Try to fully develop your answers in the interview e.g. avoid giving yes or no answers where appropriate	
Think of some questions you could ask (most interviewers will ask if you have any questions)	

Pre-Placement Telephone Calls

Some organisations require students to make a pre-placement telephone call in advance of starting the placement. Think carefully about how you are going to conduct yourself on the telephone. Remember you are not ringing a family member or friend. Try to make the telephone call a couple of weeks before starting your placement and find a quiet place to ring. It would also be advisable to have a pen and paper ready to note down placement details.

Telephoning in advance will give you an opportunity to settle any nerves and find out the answers to your questions. When you ring, introduce yourself and let the organisation know you are ringing to confirm arrangements for your forthcoming placement. Try to be confident and remember to be polite.

Task 3: Personal Learning Checklist – Telephone Call

If you are required to have a telephone conversation remember to ask these questions and note down the answers.

What time should I arrive?	
Where should I report and to whom?	
What time will I start and finish work?	
What should I wear? Is there any special clothing required?	
What will a typical day involve? What type of work will I be carrying out?	
Will I be based on the same site for the duration of the placement?	
What will lunch arrangements consist of? Can I buy lunch on the premises, are the facility nearby or should I bring a packed lunch?	
Do I need to bring anything with me?	
Inform them of any health problems which may affect your placement e.g. asthma or allergies	

Task 4: Other things to consider

How will I travel to my placement?

How long will it take to get there?

What time will I need to wake up?

What will I need to take?

Section 4: Making a good impression

To make the most of your work experience it is essential that your employers get a good impression of you. This will set the tone for the whole placement and may be the deciding factor in what responsibilities they give you or how much they enable you to get involved with.

Task 1: How do I make a good impression?

Use Start  to help you to create the right impression. Go to the 'Employability' tab, select 'work experience', then read the information and watch the videos in the 'Making a Good Impression' tab. In the table below, summarise (in no more than one sentence) how each strategy helps to create a good impression.

Strategy	How does it create the right impression?
Be organised	
Be on time	
Dress appropriately	
Be a team player	
Understand health & safety	
Listen carefully	
Ask for feedback	
Ask questions	
Be polite and respectful	
Set targets	
Keep a diary	
Be positive	
Network to make contacts	

Section 5: Your Work Experience Placement

Task 1: Details

Once you have successfully arranged your placement, fill in the details below.

Task 2: Email Mr Buck & your tutor

Remember to email Mr Buck (Assistant Head & Trust Lead for Careers & work-related learning) R.Buck@maidenerleghtrust.org & your tutor the following:

- **Official confirmation from the company** (to prove you have been accepted to complete your work experience placement with them).
- A copy of the table below.

Organisation name:
Placement address:
Contact person/who to report to:
Telephone number of contact:
Dates of work experience:
Daily work hours:
Type of work:
How does this work experience link to your Post-MES career goal?

Section 6: Making the Most of Your Work Experience Placement

To make the most of your work experience you need to engage with and reflect on the experience and skills that you are gaining. Start  has lots of advice on how to do this. Go to the 'Employability' tab, select 'work experience', then read the guidance in the 'Making the most of your placement' tab.

Task 1: Work Experience Journal

As a minimum, you must complete the journal, below, as you complete your work experience. Doing this will help you to record the activities you complete and will help you to reflect upon your experiences, what you have learnt and the skills that you have developed. This will help you with applications, personal statements and interviews in the future.

Describe what the employer does.					
The main tasks completed each day:					
- Insert date					
- Insert date					
- Insert date					
- Insert date					
- Insert date					
Employability skills I have used and how I have demonstrated them (see the 8 skills from Section 1, above).					
Skills	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	How I could improve further
Self-management					
Team working					
Business and customer awareness					
Problem solving					

Communication					
Application of numeracy					
Application of information technology					
Positive attitude					
Describe the high points of the week.				Describe the low points of the week.	
What I am most proud of.					
What I would have done differently.					
What I have learnt in the week.					
What I have found useful about my work experience.					

You could also add to your work experience journal with one or more of the ideas that Start  has for reflecting on your work experience, such as:

- Creating a photo album
- Write a blog
- Create a portfolio
- Keeping emails

Section 7: Before you leave your placement

At the end of your placement be sure to thank the person who set up your work experience and also anyone who has supported you or supervised you throughout the week.

If your work experience has gone well you may wish to ask your supervisor if they would be willing to write a reference for you in the future. This will be useful when future employers ask you to provide them with details of referees that they can contact for a reference about you.

Task 1: Performance Review

On the final day of your placement you should ask your supervisor to complete a performance review of you so that you can reflect upon both your strengths and areas to work on, moving forward. This feedback will be extremely helpful as most potential employers will ask you, in interview, what your strengths &/or weaknesses are. They will be interested to hear what you have learnt about yourself from your work experience.

Provide your supervisor with a copy of the 'Work Experience - Performance Review' which can be found below. Email it or provide a hard copy, whichever they would prefer. You can then share this with your tutor and save a copy of their feedback in 'My Locker' in Start  , for future reference.

Work Experience Placement - Performance Review

(Student Name)

Key roles/tasks undertaken:

Please provide a brief summary, as applicable, of how the student performed in relation to the key employability skills below.

Skill	What went well?	How might they improve further?
Self-Management		
Team working		
Business and customer awareness		
Problem solving		

Communication		
Application of numeracy		
Application of information technology		
Positive attitude		

Further comments:

Signature:

Print name:

Job role:

Date:

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE REVIEW!

Please email to: MESyear12@maidenerleghtrust.org

Or

Send to: Maiden Erlegh School, Silverdale Road, Earley, RG6 7HS

Section 8: Immediately after your placement

Task 1: A Formal Thanks

It is polite to formally thank your placement supervisor for the time and support that they gave to you. Start  has useful guidance on how to write a formal thank you email or letter. Go to the 'Employability' tab, select 'work experience', then read the guidance in the 'What Next?' tab.

Writing a formal thank you will provide a lasting good impression. If the company is looking to take on an apprentice or hire a new employee in the future they may get in contact with you, if you impressed them during your placement. Even if you are not interested in working for them in the future, they may write you a glowing reference for a job that you do wish to apply for. A reference from a work experience placement will be far more impressive to a prospective employer than one from a family friend, which so many young people end up resorting to. Such a reference would also immediately reflect the fact that you already have some experience in the world of work. Another thing that many young people applying for their first "proper job" often lack.

Section 9: Looking to the future

Your work experience placement may have confirmed that a particular career is right for you. It may have given you a clearer vision of how to achieve the next step towards your future career. Alternatively, it may have made you realise that this is not what you wish to do in the future. In which case you may have just saved yourself from wasted years of study or university debt by reaching this realisation now. Either way your time will not have been wasted as you will have gained new skills, experience and a point of reference for future applications and interviews.

Task 1: Was it for you?

Overall, how well do you think your work experience placement has prepared you for the next steps on your career path?

Has it helped you firm up your future career plan? Explain.

Task 2: What is your next step?

Write down your thoughts below and then turn these into at least one new goal that you can add to your 'Action Plan' in Start .

Describe what your next steps will be in helping you with your future career plan.

Task 3: Update your CV

One final thing to do is to update your CV with details of your work experience and the skills that you have gained/demonstrated. Once you have done this upload your new CV to your 'Locker' in Start .

Remember, you can share your CV with your form tutor, who will happily provide you with advice and feedback on how you may be able to improve it even further.

Task 4: Add to your Locker

Add this completed work experience journal to 'My Locker' in Start .

'My Locker' is such a useful filing system for all your extra-curricular and enrichment activities as it will help you to categorise the types of skills that you have demonstrated. When you review it all in one place you may be nicely surprised by how many skills you have developed, possibly without even realising.

You can even filter 'My Locker' entries by skill type in the future. This will provide you with an excellent starting point for writing personal statements and covering letters, completing applications and interviews. The more that you add to 'My Locker' the more invaluable it will become in helping you to achieve your future career goal.

WELL DONE AND CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPLETING YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTING UPON IT!