

## Work experience guidance

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### 1. Scope

This guidance note gives advice to schools and services providing work experience placements at the University. Work experience placements may be arranged either via the young person’s school or college, or directly with the University (e.g. through a friend or family member). The guidance has been written mainly for the placement of young persons; however the principles are the same for all work experience placements including those areas that provide work experience opportunities to adults.

### 2. Introduction

The University sees work experience as providing valuable and effective learning opportunities. Under health and safety legislation, the individual completing their work experience placement is considered to be an employee (even if the placement is unpaid). Schools and services are therefore required to provide them with the same health and safety protection as existing staff. Young persons on work experience are however considered to be at greater risk than University employees

because of their possible lack of awareness of existing or potential risks, immaturity and inexperience. This guidance note provides information on what additional controls may need to be put in place before and during a work experience placement.

### 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this guide;

**Work Experience:** a placement on university premises where an individual carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks or duties, more or less as an employee would, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.

**Young person:** person under the age of 18.

**MSLA:** minimum school leaving age (just before or after their 16th birthday).

### 4. Responsibilities

#### 4.1 Head of school or service

The head of school or service is responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to effectively manage work experience placements and that these arrangements are communicated to all staff in the local rules document.

#### 4.2 Work experience supervisor

The work experience supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the work and tasks the young person will carry out on their placement are well planned and supervised and that risk assessments have been produced for these activities;
- Making the findings of the risk assessment (e.g. the level of risk, any prohibited tasks and control measures) available to the young person and the parents/guardian if under the MSLA. This process may be coordinated through the school;
- Providing information relating to health and safety of the young person to third parties such as the young person's school or an agency carrying out safety checks on behalf of the school or college;
- Ensuring the young person has received induction training and that it has been fully understood;
- Considering if there are any areas in the workplace that the young person should not have access to and ensuring these areas are inaccessible;
- Ensuring that any necessary child protection requirements are met;
- Reporting any accidents or near misses involving the young person. The school/college or the parent of the young person will also need to be informed of any accident;

- Reporting any problems during the placement immediately to the school/college and being involved in any decision on whether the work experience placement should continue;
- The school or college where the young person is studying retains a general duty of care towards the work experience student whilst at the University and therefore must ensure as far as possible that the workplace their student is attending has suitable safety management systems in place. Prior to the placement starting, the school/college may arrange to visit or ask that a questionnaire asking for details of health and safety arrangements is completed. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to make these arrangements. If there are any queries regarding please contact your School/Service Safety Advisor or Safety and Health Services for guidance.

### 4.3 Young person

The young person on a work experience placement has responsibilities that must be outlined to them on induction. The responsibilities of the young person include:

- Following the rules and procedures outlined in their induction training;
- Not to do anything that would endanger their own or other's safety (e.g. use equipment that the student has not been trained to use, or access unauthorised areas);
- Immediately reporting accidents and near misses to their supervisor;
- To ask their supervisor for help if there is anything they are unsure of or do not understand.

## 5. Risk assessment

The risk assessment for a work activity involving a young person may not be any different to that for an adult employee carrying out the same task. However in some cases extra controls may be required.

5 steps to carrying out a work experience risk assessment:

1. **Identify the hazards** in the workplace. The hazards will be as per your employee risk assessment however, the risks may be greater for young persons due to their immaturity and inexperience. For example from work involving manual handling and ionising radiation. Young persons also may find using equipment designed for adults more difficult due to their physical size and strength. Prohibited activities for young persons are detailed in section 6 of this guidance.
2. **Decide who might be harmed and how.** Consider not only the work experience student, but other employees, visitors and the public (if appropriate). Consider whether there are any students that require special arrangements including those with disabilities or medical conditions such as colour blindness or epilepsy.

3. **Consider the risks.** Are the precautions already in place adequate to control the risks? If not, consider what additional/alternative control measure can be put in place. These could include:
  - induction training and task specific training;
  - issuing the work experience student with protective equipment;
  - prohibiting certain tasks or activities if the risk cannot be adequately controlled;
  - ensuring the work experience student is adequately supervised.
4. **Record the findings.** Record your risk assessment findings for any significant risks identified. Have a procedure in place that ensures that the young person and if necessary, their parent(s) or guardian(s) are made aware of the findings of the risk assessment.
5. **Review the risk assessment.** Review the risk assessment regularly for example if any significant changes take place, following an accident / incident or any concerns being raised. Any review should make sure existing control measures are adequate and check if any additional controls are needed.

If your school or service offers work experience placements regularly, you may wish to have a generic risk assessment for this area. There is no need for you to carry out a new risk assessment each time you provide work experience, as long as your current risk assessment takes account of the characteristics of young people and activities which present significant risks to their health and safety.

## 6. Prohibited activities

Generally, a young person should not carry out any work which:

- is beyond their physical or psychological capacity;
- exposes them to substances that are toxic, carcinogenic or chronically harmful to human health;
- exposes them to radiation likely to exceed the occupational dose limit set for members of the public;
- involves a risk of accidents which they are unlikely to recognise for example due to their lack of experience, training or attention to safety;
- involves a risk to their health from extreme heat, noise or vibration.

Further detail on the risks to young persons and the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations are available at; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/risks/index.htm#ywd>

Young people who are **over** the MSLA can do this work under very special circumstances, which are that the:

- work is necessary for their training;
- work is properly supervised by a competent person;
- risks are reduced to the lowest level, so far as is reasonably practicable.

There are risks associated with specific processes including the use of wood working machines, power presses and mechanical lifting operations. Further details are available at; (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/prohibitions/index.htm>).

Work experience placements involving catering should give careful consideration to the tasks the young person is permitted to carry out. A young person under the MSLA should not be allowed to use or clean dangerous machinery (e.g. food mixers, slicers, potato chippers, fat fryers, waste compactors or food processors). Young persons aged 16 years or over may do so, provided they have been trained or are supervised by a competent person. For more information see the Health and Safety Executive's guidance on safety for young person's working in catering [http://www.schoolshealthandsafety.co.uk/CYPD/docs/catering\\_youngpeople.pdf](http://www.schoolshealthandsafety.co.uk/CYPD/docs/catering_youngpeople.pdf)

## 7. Monitoring and supervision

Young persons on work experience will require a high level of supervision. The actual level of supervision needed will depend on the hazards identified by the risk assessment, the work being carried out and the individual's capabilities. The young person should not be lone working in the workplace at any time.

Certain tasks may only be carried out under supervision whilst other tasks may be so hazardous that after risk assessment, it is decided a young person can not undertake this kind of work. It is worth noting that each individual is different and maturity levels can vary greatly between young persons of the same age.

The University's insurance policy covers young persons whilst on work experience. Please contact the Insurance Office if there are any specific questions regarding the University's insurance policy.

## 8. Induction training

An induction of a young person on work experience should include the following information:

- supervisory arrangements for the placement including contact details of the supervisor(s);
- familiarisation with the workplace including a building and precinct map if needed;
- emergency procedures (including fire alarms, fire safety procedures and first aid and accident reporting arrangements);
- local safety rules (e.g. areas where access is not allowed or restricted);
- Significant findings from the risk assessment;

- any prohibited activities;
- any personal protective equipment that must be worn (including how to use and look after it);
- security arrangements and any confidentiality requirements of the work;
- working hours (a maximum of an 8 hour working day is recommended);
- any other information required to ensure the health and safety of the individual undertaking work experience.

The work experience student should be informed that any problems during the placement will be reported immediately to the school and a joint decision will be made on whether the work experience placement should continue.

Records must be kept of the induction training provided and also any additional training that may also be required to carry out certain tasks and activities. The University general induction form can be used or adapted for work experience, and can be found on the staff development website

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/documents/temporary-template.doc>.

## 9. Child protection

Depending on the duration and frequency that your department offers work experience placements to young persons, the placement may need to meet the requirements of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. Please refer to University Secretary's Office guide on safeguarding (<http://www.bris.ac.uk/secretary/legal/cppolicy.html>) for further information.

## 10. Useful information

- University Safeguarding policy: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/secretary/legal/cppolicy.html>
- HR guidance on providing work experience placements: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hr/policies/workexperience.html>
- The Widening Participation and Undergraduate Recruitment Office can provide advice and support with setting up a placement, including providing a work experience pack. For further information, contact [wpur-office@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:wpur-office@bristol.ac.uk) or 0117 928 8830.
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – 'Work experience placements that work': <http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/5799%20Work%20experience%20GUIDE%20%28WEB%29.pdf>
- Independent Safeguarding Authority child protection information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>