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Information Sheets

“Education and business need to work together. NEBA makes this possible.”

Head Teacher

Introduction

Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance has a proven track record of building successful partnerships between business and education. Our aim is to ensure that work-related learning is enhanced and supported through employer involvement, and work placements are a vital part of this.

Work placements provide an excellent opportunity for learners to experience the world of work whilst helping them to prepare for the transition from school to the workplace. They also help learners to make informed choices about their future career paths.

In a flexible and fast changing economy, it is essential that all employees possess the generic employability skills demanded by employers if they are to contribute

effectively. These employability skills include individual responsibility, team working and communication.

A work placement offers an invaluable opportunity to practice such skills in an unfamiliar environment with adults other than teachers.

This guide has been developed by NEBA to support the development of quality placements for the mutual benefit of employers and young people.



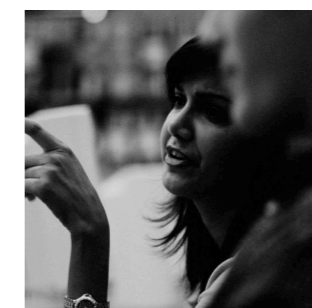
Work-Related Learning

Work-related learning for all 14-16 year olds is a statutory requirement.

This requirement means that schools must make provision for all learners at key stage 4 (14-16 year olds) to:

- **Learn about work**, by providing opportunities for learners to develop knowledge and understanding of work and enterprise (for example, through vocational courses and careers education).
- **Learn for work**, by developing key skills for enterprise and employability (for example, through problem-solving activities, work simulation, and mock interviews).
- **Learn through work**, by providing opportunities for learners to learn from direct experiences of work (for example, through work placements or part time jobs, enterprise activities in schools and vocational learning).

All three dimensions can be promoted through a quality work placement of 5-10 days which all young people should experience in the last two years of compulsory education.





"I have enjoyed learning lots of different skills during my placement."

Learner

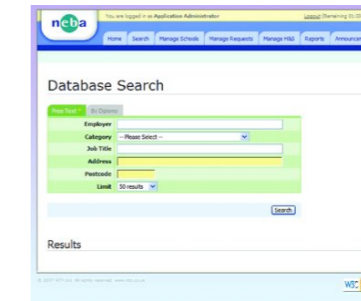
Benefits of Work Placements

Benefits of work placements to employers:

- Develops new recruitment channels. Building links with local schools and colleges can help to attract learners into jobs and reduce recruitment costs.
- Enhances the company's image and reputation at a local/regional level. Developing links with schools raises awareness of the company and helps to develop a positive image, not just with learners but also with their parents and teachers.
- Reduces the turnover of new recruits. Raising awareness of industry expectations at an early stage reduces the risks of recruiting learners who do not understand the requirements of the job.
- Generates fresh ideas and new perspectives from the learners.
- Motivates and develops your staff. They can benefit from participation as links with schools provides an opportunity for them to share their own experience and develop new skills of their own.
- Reinforces good health and safety practices.
- Broadens employees' experience by working with learners of varying abilities and different backgrounds.

Benefits of work placements to learners:

- Offers first hand experience of the world of work.
- Supports the raising of learner participation and achievement.
- Provides an opportunity to research a future career.
- Shows learners how school subjects, skills, interests and attitudes relate to the world of work.
- Gives an understanding of the procedures and daily routine associated with work.
- Allows learners to improve their employability skills and relate to adults in a new context.
- Gives learners the chance to gain a valuable employer reference.
- Enhances the possibility of being identified by an employer as a candidate for future employment.



Work Placement Programmes

Work experience is defined as a placement in which a learner carries out a range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.

The duration of the placement with an employer may vary depending on the learners' needs and desired learning outcomes.

Typically a placement will be a continuous period of 5-10 days or an extended period of time (1/2 or 1 day per week for 1-2 terms).

Placements may vary in their focus and in their levels of complexity depending on an individual learner's needs.

The Work Placement Process

Systems are in place to make sure that the employer, learner and school all benefit from any type of work placement programme and that the process runs smoothly.

NEBA can support employers during all stages of the process.

NEBA's online database can be accessed by teachers, learners and employers and holds details of over 11,000 local employers offering work placements in a variety of vocational sectors. This database also provides information on the status of health and safety risk assessments for each placement and profiles the learning outcomes in line with relevant qualifications.

Employers are able, if they wish, to access this database to check the accuracy of the details held on their organisation.

"Being a business volunteer is very rewarding and I'm pleased to be involved in work placements which enhance learning for young people."

Business volunteer

"It's all about understanding the business world and the skills employers want." Teacher



Work-Related Learning Placement Portfolio

A work-related learning placement portfolio should be provided to support learners undertaking any form of placement. A quality portfolio consists of four booklets which have flexibility of content to meet particular programme needs. Learners must complete each booklet as part of the work placement process:-

- The first booklet is targeted at pre-placement planning to ensure that the work placement has been well researched and that there will be maximum gain for the learner and the host organisation.
- The second booklet supports and captures the learning and skills gained whilst on placement and should be completed as part of the planned activities.
- The third booklet encourages learners to recognise areas for future learning, skill development and target setting.
- The fourth section is focused on specific learning outcomes.

A further portfolio is also available to meet the needs of those learners requiring additional support.

All young people need a document to record their learning outcomes. This may be called a record book, portfolio, log book or diary.

Making a success of Work Placements

The following guidelines are designed to ensure you, your business and the learner have a stress free, worthwhile and enjoyable work placement. Just a small amount of preparation can massively improve the chances of achieving a successful and meaningful placement.

The business engagement team at NEBA offer a work placement support service at no cost to you the employer. You can contact the team for advice and guidance on any aspect of the work placement process by calling 01623 404345 or emailing business@neba.org.uk

Pre-Placement:

1) Create a placement opportunity

You do not have to wait for a learner or school to approach your business to offer a placement. You can offer a placement in your business via the online work experience database which is accessed by learners searching for work placements. By offering a particular opportunity, you can be in control of the placement process rather than responding to requests. Using a job role specification you are more likely to attract learners who have a genuine interest in the work placement you are offering*.

2) Ask for written application letters from learners requesting a placement with you

This step helps you to assess the suitability of the learner for a placement within your business. The process also gives learners the chance to practice the art of letter writing and other learning skills associated with written job applications.



3) Hold short interview sessions

Holding short interviews gives learners some experience of a face to face formal situation. The interview also gives you a chance to meet candidates and ensure that they have the qualities required to fit into your business and the placement role you are offering. When hosting interviews always inform the school work placement coordinator and ensure you have a colleague in the room with you during the interview.

4) Nominate at least one designated work placement mentor/supervisor

It is important that people within the business know that a work placement is happening and that someone takes responsibility for it. If one person is involved in the whole process, this helps to ensure consistent communication with the school and allows for better planning. Providing the learner with a mentor/supervisor gives them the all important stability factor while on placement.

5) Draw up a timetable / programme for the placement

To help the placement run smoothly for you, your colleagues and the learner do some forward planning by drawing up a timetable of activities. You can give this programme to the learner so they know what they will be doing. You should also share a copy with colleagues in your business. Once you have a programme outline in place, this can be used or updated for future work placements.*

During Placement:

6) Complete an induction session at the beginning of the placement

At the start of any work placement, it is advisable to deliver an induction session which includes basic health and safety information and a tour of the premises. Make sure to cover first aid and fire procedures as well as any other information relevant in your business. This induction session should also give you an opportunity to go through basic information such as what happens at break time. Explain company security procedures and the

consequences of not following them. Ensure the learner has a secure place to keep their belongings. Use this session also to clarify what the learner can and cannot do. Please see induction checklist at the back of this pack.

7) Ensure the learner is completing a work placement portfolio

All learners should be completing a portfolio while they are on a placement. This will be provided by the school so ask to see it. It will be useful for you to ask the learner about their placement portfolio and build in a review of tasks covered and skills learned. The portfolio is a useful way for you and the school to monitor progress and for the learner to reflect on the placement.

8) A school representative should visit during the placement

Every learner should have a visit from a school representative. The visit should be pre arranged with the main contact at your company and is meant to offer support to both the learner and staff within the business. This site visit is important in terms of feedback and communication between your business and the school.

After the Placement:

9) Give feedback to the learner

There is an employer evaluation document that needs to be completed. Providing information to the learner on how to develop their skills relating to the work place will help them to improve and learn from the experience.

10) Complete a short evaluation of how the placement has gone from your point of view and ensure that all other staff in the business are comfortable with the process

Work placements should be beneficial to both you and the learner. This evaluation will give you the opportunity to improve the quality of future placements.

* If you would like support with work placements please contact the NEBA business engagement team on 01623 404345 or email business@neba.org.uk

Placement Activities and Tasks

Work placements have a key role to play in preparing young people for the world of work. For most it is their first taste of the work place. Patterns and attitudes are being formed that young people will carry forward into their working lives. Work placements provide an opportunity to illustrate the links between the skills they acquire at school and the competencies needed at work.

There are many activities that can be built into a work placement programme to promote an understanding of the world of work. Here are some suggested activities that you can fit into your work placement programme to encourage the development of employability skills.

1) Work shadowing:

It is useful if the learner can shadow a member or members of the business team for a set time period. By allocating time slots and building these into a programme of activities the learner can get a full experience of how your business works and the various job roles within it.

2) Collating material for an in house newsletter:

This activity may involve the learner interviewing staff or customers within your business to find out about their job responsibilities or their opinions on certain issues. This task helps to build the confidence and communication skills of the learner and gives you a useful insight into how your business environment is viewed by a young person.

3) Creating a presentation:

Throughout the placement the learner could work on a presentation focusing on their expectations, skills learned and any recommendations they have for your business. This could be presented to your business team at the end of the placement.

For more support and in depth programme plans please follow the link to the employer section of the NEBA website
www.neba.info/business/employerssupportpacks.asp

Work Placements and Legislation

NEBA is committed to supporting the provision of quality work placements where learners are treated fairly, reflecting their individual needs, in a safe environment. Under existing health and safety law when an employer offers a work placement to a learner they have the same responsibilities for health, safety and welfare of the learner as they do for their workforce.

All work placements need to undergo a risk assessment before a learner can start.

For further information relating to child protection, health and safety and equality please refer to the guidance sheets included in this pack or contact the business engagement team at NEBA on 01623 404345 or email business@neba.org.uk

“Delivering structured, quality work placements for young people provides benefits for both our employees and for the communities in which we work”

Employer