

February 2018



CAREERS

at Eltham College

Dear Parents and Students,

Year 11 Post-GCSE Work Experience Programme 2018

As we approach Half Term, I am writing to update you in relation to the Work Experience Programme. Over the past week, I have spoken to all Year 11 Form Groups about the programme, answering any questions raised. In addition, Sixth Form students have kindly shared their advice about both securing, and making the most of, a highly valuable work placement. Also by Half Term, all Year 11 students will have benefited from a CV Writing workshop as part of their timetabled Wellbeing lessons. During these sessions, we have shared some helpful resources, including this [video](#) from The Guardian, as well as CV templates on both [Reed](#) and [CV Plus](#).

With the deadline for confirmed placements and completed paperwork being just two months away, I would strongly recommend that students use the Half Term break to finalise their CV and actively seek a suitable work experience placement. Indeed, they may wish to apply for a programme offered by Network Rail and ARUP, the details of which I have attached.

As outlined previously, the principle purpose of work experience is to introduce students to, and broaden their knowledge of, the world of work. At the same time, the emphasis is on providing them with the opportunity to develop skills seen as being most valuable to employers. These include communication, problem-solving, teamwork, business awareness, use of technology, personal development and self-management. Placements may be with professional, commercial or industrial companies, or institutions such as schools, universities or hospitals. Work should be unpaid (although expenses can be met by the employer) and must not be a continuation of an existing part-time job.

Because we are obligated to maintain accurate records of the placements secured, as well as ensure they meet health and safety requirements, it is essential that both the [Parental Consent Form](#) and the [Employer Form](#) are completed online and submitted by **Monday 16th April at the very latest**, i.e. the start of the Summer term. Regrettably, no pupil may undertake a placement unless we are in receipt of both the Parental Consent and Employer Forms by this deadline.

Upon completion of the work experience placement, we will contact employers for their feedback on factors such as student engagement, punctuality, appropriateness of dress etc. We will also encourage pupils to reflect on their time spent in the workplace by asking them to provide a brief report of their experience.

With meaningful work experience playing an increasingly important role in providing students with a competitive advantage in their UCAS and Degree Apprenticeship applications, I thank you for your support in facilitating this key aspect of our Career Learning Programme.

Yours sincerely

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT YEAR 11 WORK EXPERIENCE

What is the purpose of work experience? The principle purpose of work experience is to introduce students to, and broaden their knowledge of, the world of work. At the same time, the emphasis is on providing the opportunity to develop skills seen as being most valuable to employers, including communication, problem-solving, teamwork, business awareness, use of technology, personal development and self-management. Work experience can be used to 'test drive' a possible future career option, but it is also the chance to try something new, gain confidence and make useful contacts for the future. We would expect the placement to provide meaningful and purposeful work, involving some observation, learning and carrying out a variety of tasks involving increasing responsibility. Importantly work experience should enable students to gain a clear understanding of expectations in the workplace.

Where can I go on work experience? Students can complete their work experience in almost any type of organisation, although the placement must be based in the UK and meet health and safety requirements. There may be limitations in terms of age-restrictions, e.g. many medical-related placements are only available to young people aged over 18 years, and some companies might not take students if they cannot ensure their safety. However, it is best to approach as many organisations as possible in the hope they offer a work experience programme. Even if they are unable to help now, for whatever reason, they could be a good contact for the future.

When can I go on work experience? Students take part in work experience in Year 11, for either one or two weeks between their final GCSE exam and the end of school term on Friday 6 July 2018. **However, a placement can take place later during the summer holiday if this is the only time available with the chosen organisation.**

Who finds the work experience placement? It is the responsibility of the student, with the help of their parent/guardian, to find their own work experience placement. Help, advice and administration support is provided by the school, but we do not source the placements. Indeed, the process of researching possible options and ultimately securing a suitable placement is a vital aspect of the career learning derived from work experience. Typically, students will source placements through existing networks of family and friends. Additionally, there are lots of resources and information available on the web in relation to finding suitable placements, including at [Success at School](#). Most importantly, with it being increasingly competitive to secure work experience, students should start searching for their placement as soon as possible.

What are employers looking for? Employers will understand that at a relatively young age, students are unlikely to be able to provide evidence of previous relevant work experience as part of their application. Nevertheless, they will expect to see evidence of a student's general skills and qualities, such as:

- Their ability to use their initiative, organise and manage themselves effectively.
- Their ability to get on with people, to work as part of a team and to communicate well with others.
- Their ability and willingness to learn new things.
- Their ability to be enthusiastic, hardworking and loyal.
- A positive attitude and a keenness to learn are also highly regarded in the world of work.

Can I be paid for work experience? Students cannot be paid for work experience, although employers may offer expenses in relation to travel and subsistence, but this is at their discretion must be agreed between you in advance. The school is unable to meet any additional costs incurred as a result of work experience.

Can I work with a close relative? A close relative may be able to help arrange a placement where she or he works but we would not encourage students to work directly with parents as it can create difficulties for the employer. In our experience students gain far more from the placement, and build greater confidence, by working with new people, slightly outside their comfort zone.

How do I confirm the placement with the school? Once you have agreed a placement with an employer, you must ask them to complete the online *Work Experience Placement Form* by sending them the following link: <https://goo.gl/gPkvR4> This, together with the [Parental Consent Form](#), should be submitted as soon as possible, but by 16th April at the very latest. **Regrettably, no pupil may undertake a placement unless we are in receipt of both the Parental Consent and Employer Forms by this deadline.**

Will I receive further information prior to the start of the placement? We will contact you with final details, including a copy of your Work Experience log book, by the end of May 2018. We do however recommend that you contact the named individual at the placement yourself to confirm final arrangements and answer any questions you may have.