
Good Practice Guidelines for Work Experience Placements

Prepared on behalf of
Forestry Commission
Scotland

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report on Good Practice Guidelines for Work Experience Placements has been commissioned by [Forestry Commission Scotland](#) in order to achieve a 08/09 Scottish Forestry Implementation Plan action: To publish best practice guidelines on work experience placements.

Work experience is considered to be one of the most important activities to establish links between employers and their potential future workforce. As it involves a significant level of practical activity, work experience not only plays an important part in preparing young people for adult and working life, but also provides an opportunity to increase an understanding and appreciation of the industry in which the work experience is being undertaken.

It is widely acknowledged that the forest industry is not only facing recruitment and retention problems, but also has an ageing workforce. With the need to attract more young people into the forestry sector, work experience placements are seen as an important tool in addressing this issue and one that has more potential than is currently being realised.

It is also recognised that there is a range of legislation and regulations surrounding work experience placements and that some of these have led to confusion and a lack of opportunities for particular age groups, especially the under 16's, to participate.

The publication of Good Practice Guidelines for Work Experience Placements is seen as one way to encourage businesses to see that it can be done and to show them how.

Throughout this report, [hyperlinks](#) have been inserted which take the reader directly to existing information on the specific subject title.

1.2 PURPOSE

The overall purpose of this report is to: -

- Review and collate existing available guidance on work experience placements; from the employer and placement perspectives
- Identify the gaps and produce new material where necessary
- Produce easy to access and navigate guidance from both the employer and placement perspectives, which covers the age range for school pupils 14-18 plus other types of placements for over 18's
- Provide 'next steps' advice/links to pathways into the forest industry following a work placement
- Make recommendations for on-line placement of the Good Practice Guidelines

1.3 DEFINITIONS

This report on Good Practice Guidelines for Work Experience Placements is aimed at [placement providers](#); the company or other organisation who offers the work experience placement.

Furthermore, it has been written from a Scottish perspective. Whilst the basic principles of offering work experience placements from a placement providers' point of view **should** be the same throughout the UK, differences may arise.

For the purposes of this report, [work experience](#) is defined as the process whereby young people - students and trainees, including children - are placed with an employer to carry out a range of agreed jobs; it should be noted however, that because they are young people, certain [restrictions](#) may apply to the types of work which they are allowed to do.

Work experience could be of regular short duration (e.g. one afternoon a week for one term) or a longer term placement (e.g. a sandwich year during a college course).

Under health and safety law, students and trainees, including children, on work experience are regarded as employees. This employee status means that participants on work experience placements must be provided with the same health, safety and welfare protection given to other employees.

In terms of the age of the participant, health and safety law uses the following definitions: -

- a **young person** is anyone under eighteen years of age (young people)
- a **child** is anyone who is not over the compulsory school age (CSA); i.e. they have not yet reached the official age at which they may leave school. This age is also referred to as the minimum school leaving age (MSLA)

In terms of the law on [working time](#), a **young worker** is defined as being below 18 years of age and above the MSLA.

SECTION 2

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Arranging work experience placements involves a number of individuals, companies and organisations from educational employers (e.g. local authorities), educational establishments (e.g. schools & colleges), through work experience organisers (e.g. school, college, specialist placement organisation) and placement providers (e.g. employers) to parents/carers and students and learners.

2.1 THE EMPLOYERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the employer, it is your job to provide **safe** and **supportive** work experience placements. There's lots of [advice](#) available to help you do this, but in summary, this means you need to: -

- Comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and its relevant statutory provisions
- Assess the risks (to which employees are exposed to at work and introduce and maintain appropriate measures to eliminate or control the risks.
- Comply with any restrictions or [prohibitions](#) on work for young people
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision for new or temporary employees
- Carry out induction training
- Comply with requirements under the [Working Time Regulations](#)
- Notify insurers that a work experience student has been employed

2.2 OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It's not just the employer who has specific roles and responsibilities when providing work experience placements. All the other partners involved in the work experience placement have specific roles and responsibilities too. More information on these can be found by clicking on each partner below: -

- [Education employer](#)
- [Education establishment](#)
- [Work Experience organiser](#)
- [Parent/carers](#)
- [Students/learners](#)

SECTION 3

STARTING OUT

3.1 KEY STEPS

[RoSPA](#), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, has produced a [12 point checklist](#) specifically for employers with responsibility for young workers which highlights the steps that should be taken before offering work experience or work placements to young people. These can be summarised into the 4 steps below: -

1. **IDENTIFY:** the benefit to your business; the work opportunities you have to offer, the existing member/s of staff/existing workforce who would be able to assist with/supervise the work experience placement and the school/college/student/trainee with whom you would like to work
2. **PREPARE:** the paperwork, your workplace and your workforce; obtain the necessary permissions
3. **INFORM & CONSULT:** with the student, the school/college, the parents, your existing workforce, your insurance company
4. **MONITOR & REPORT:** the young person's understanding of requirements, their work, their progress, their contribution to your business

In addition, the [Highland Council](#) has prepared an [Employers Safety Assessment Checklist](#) to highlight the sort of policies and procedures that would need to be in operation before any work experience or work placement could be offered. Whilst specifically prepared by for school work experience provided through the [Skills for Work](#) programme, this checklist shows which workplace policies and procedures would be required by an employer wishing to work with young people.

3.2 POLICIES, PROCEDURES & PAPERWORK

As stated in **1.3** above, students, trainees and children on work experience are regarded as employees and as such, must be provided with the same health, safety and welfare protection given to other employees. In addition, and depending on the duration of the work experience placement, contracts of employment may need to be considered.

All this means that whilst there will be some additional requirements to consider when working with young people, most of the policies, procedures and paperwork should be very similar to those already in operation for other employees.

As well as generic information being available from websites such as the HSE and RoSPA on the types of policies and procedures that are required, a number of more industry-related sites have been created to provide more specific information and example documents. For example, [Lantra](#), the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector have launched a [Work Experience Portal](#) in partnership with Highland Council, Northern College and the Cairngorms National Park Authority to provide information and paperwork templates for two school-based work experience programmes – Skills for Work and the Scottish Progression Award.

SECTION 4

GOING AHEAD

This section refers back to the 4 key steps and provides links to information, forms and templates which are connected to each.

4.1 IDENTIFY:

Appoint someone to be in overall charge on the person on the work experience placement

It is recommended that anyone who will be supervising young people is disclosure checked, whereby checks are carried out on the individual's criminal history to enhance public safety.

There are [three levels](#) of Disclosure; Basic, Standard and Enhanced and it is recommended that anyone who will be supervising young people carries the Enhanced Disclosure level.

To be disclosure checked, an employer will need to: -

1. [Request an application form](#) from Disclosure Scotland
2. Complete and submit their application form together with the appropriate registration fee
3. Follow the [Application Guidance for Registered Persons and Employers](#)

If you are thinking of offering work experience placement/s to school or college students, you should consider asking the school or college whether they would be able to process your Disclosure Application on your behalf.

4.2 PREPARE:

Carry out “suitable and sufficient” risk assessments

If an employer is providing a work experience placement to a young person, they will need to complete risk assessments for any work the young person is to be carrying out.

These risk assessments do not need to be separate documents or on different forms to those that are completed for the existing workforce; they just have to take into account and record any special health and safety needs of the young person and include additional hazards and control measures that apply.

Whilst the look of risk assessment forms may vary from company to company, or business to business, they should all follow the [5 Steps to Risk Assessments](#) and cover similar areas of information.

Two examples of a risk assessment form can be found by clicking on the links below: -

[Risk Assessment template 1](#)

[Risk Assessment template 2](#)

When preparing the **risk assessment**, the employer should: -

1. Follow guidance on the [5 Steps to Risk Assessments](#). These 5 steps are also described by RoSPA on their [Risk Assessment at its very simplest](#) web page
2. Complete a Risk Assessment form in discussion with employees and keep under review
3. Make sure that any additional control measures required for young people have been clearly identified
4. Take account of any special health and safety needs which young workers may have as a result, for example, of any physical and learning disabilities, or health issues such as allergies, asthma and respiratory problems, heart disease, diabetes, colour blindness or use of prescription medicines
5. Clearly identify any work activities which young people should be prohibited from undertaking. A list of such activities can be found [HERE](#). There are also specific age restrictions that apply to the use of chainsaws. Details of these can be found [HERE](#)
6. Inform parents or guardians on the risks and control measures

When preparing the **workplace**, the employer should: -

1. Take all necessary steps to isolate or make safe dangerous tools, plant, equipment or substances
2. Consider what arrangements will be required for personal safety and freedom from sexual harassment and bullying
3. Make arrangements for appropriate supervision and induction training. This training should include information on: -
 - a. work activities and any associated significant risks
 - b. health and safety instruction and training
 - c. names of supervisors, health and safety representatives and any other people taking overall responsibility for health and safety during the placement

4.3 INFORM & CONSULT

When offering a work experience placement, effective liaison between all partners should be established and maintained.

One way of assisting this process is to draw up a “Partnership Agreement” between all parties. This agreement should describe the programme of work to undertaken during the work experience placement; state its aims and anticipated outputs; clarify the responsibilities of all partners and provide contact details.

An example of such an agreement can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

4.4 MONITOR & REPORT

Once the work experience placement has commenced, regular liaison between all partners should be maintained and monitoring/reporting of progress undertaken.

Regular liaison could be achieved through informal/formal meetings and discussions. Monitoring/reporting could be carried out by completing questionnaires or reviews, examples of which are given below: -

[Work Experience Placement questionnaire](#)

[Work Placement review form](#)

SECTION 5

FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 JOINING THE INDUSTRY

As stated in Section 1 above, work experience is considered to be one of the most important activities to establish links between employers and their potential future workforce and is a means to increase an understanding and appreciation of the industry in which the work experience is being undertaken. It should therefore be hoped that following their work experience, some participants would wish to take further steps to enter the forest industry.

Over the last few years, significant work has been undertaken to produce information on possible pathways into the industry and the possible career options that can be found within it.

Much of this information is now web-based and a new website [Forestry and Timber Careers](#) provides a great overview of the industry, the types of careers that can be followed and jobs that can be carried out and includes links to a whole host of industry and educational websites, thereby provided unparalleled access to a whole range of career-based information.

5.2 FURTHER INFORMATION & ADVICE

Lantra, working with the Lantra Trees and Timber Industry Group, have produced the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for employers thinking about offering work-related learning placements.

Frequently asked questions

Q: What insurance do I need to have before taking a young person into my organisation?

A: You should check your Employer' Liability and Public Liability insurance policies with your insurer before offering any work-experience, work-related learning placements or employment.

Q: Should a risk assessment be carried out before the young person arrives?

A: Yes, a risk assessment of the workplace in which the young person will be based is essential. This is a requirement of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999. The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify significant risks and then reduce or eliminate any such hazards in the workplace before the activity takes place.

The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) has confirmed that some occupational areas carry greater risks for work experience and work-related learning than others. This particularly applies for those of a certain age i.e. under 16. You are advised to seek clarification from the HSE on this matter.

The HSE publication 'The Right Start –Work experience for young people: Health and safety basics for employers' www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg364.pdf .

Q: Do my staff need to be CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked?

A: In a limited number of circumstances the employee responsible for supervising the young person may need a CRB check. This may happen if a young person (under the age of 18), is left in the sole care of a designated employee to carry out their work placement. A CRB check is usually needed when work experience placements last for 15 working days or longer.

For more information on CBR checks, see the guidance on the CRB website www.crb.gov.uk.

Q: Do I have to take account of employment law?

A: Yes, regardless of whether you are employing the young person, where possible, you should apply the same conditions as with other members of staff.

Q: What other areas of legislation apply, when we take a young person into our organisation?

A: You should particularly follow health and safety, equal opportunities and data protection legislation - in fact, the same as for any other member of staff.

In addition to the key documents, forms, templates, guidance and FAQs highlighted above, there are various other websites, publications and documents which provide advice and guidance on working with young people. The list below includes those highlighted throughout the sections above.

Websites:

Disclosure Scotland: <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>

Forestry Commission Scotland:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/fchomepages.nsf/hp/Scotland>

Forestry & Timber Careers: <http://www.forestry-and-timber-careers.com/>

HSE: Young People at Work: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm>

Highland Council: Learning Here: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/>

Lantra: Sector Skills Council: <http://www.lantra.co.uk/>

Lantra: Work Experience Portal: <http://www.northhighland.ac.uk/nhconline/lantra/>

RoSPA Young Workers: <http://www.youngworker.co.uk/index.htm>

Rural Development Initiatives: <http://www.ruraldevelopment.org.uk/>

Scottish Qualifications Authority (Skills for Work): <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5951.html>

Publications/Documents:

[Chainsaws at Work](#) (HSE)

[Disclosure Scotland - Application Guidance](#)

[Employers Liability Insurance - A Guide for Employers](#) (HSE)

[Employment Responsibility and Rights Workbook](#) (Lantra)

[Employer Safety Assessment Checklist](#) (Highland Council)

[Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#) (HSE)

[Partnership Agreement](#) (Highland Council)

[Risk Assessment template 1](#)

[Risk Assessment template 2](#)

[The Right Start: Work Experience for Young People – Health and Safety Basics for Employers](#) (HSE)

[Skills for Work - Suggested Implementation Timetable](#) (Highland Council)

[Work Experience Placement questionnaire](#) (RDI)

[Work Placement review form](#) (RDI)

[Working with Partners](#) (Highland Council)