

# Vocational training

## Guideline for providing working placements



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## **The sense/purpose of a working placement:**

**Work placement** is any experience that a person gains while working in a specific field or occupation, but the expression is widely used to mean a type of volunteer work that is commonly intended for young people — often students — to get a feel for professional working environments.

Work experience may be defined as: a placement on employer's premises in which a student carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks or duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.

To improve competitiveness, it is vital for education and business to work together to ensure that young people are better prepared for the world of work, with the necessary skills and motivation.

One important way in which employers can establish links with schools is through the provision of work experience placements. Work experience offers many benefits and opportunities. For students, it can enhance their knowledge and understanding and better prepare them for the world of work. For employers, it can provide the opportunity to help students develop an insight into the skills and attitudes required by business and to raise their awareness of career opportunities within the organization, schools and countries visited.

The success of a placement relies upon an effective partnership between the employer, the work experience organizer, the school and the student.

## **The preparation of a work placement (How to Ensure Quality Placements)**

Business depends for its success upon quality. This means investing in quality products, services and staff.

Similarly, for work experience placements, employers and schools will need to invest time and effort in planning their programmes in order to reach the desired standard and gain the maximum benefits. If the placement is to be a success, due account must be taken of the following elements:

- Aims and objectives;
- planning;
- Preparation and briefing;
- Induction; and
- Debriefing and evaluation.



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## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

A clear rationale is a pre-requisite for good quality programs.

Clarification of mutual aims and objectives. Possible objectives might include:

- to undertake a range of tasks as would an employee;
- to develop and show good understanding of the purpose of the post and how it relates to the work of the company;
- to help prepare for working life by learning to meet the appropriate standards of company behaviour, for example, time keeping, dress sense, conduct; and
- to appreciate the importance of good health, safety and welfare policy and practice.

Wherever possible, objectives should be supported by appropriate performance targets, as this will assist assessment.

Staff at all levels in the organization should be given the opportunity to be involved in the development of the program and demonstrate their commitment to it. Senior management will need to give it their positive backing, and all those likely to be directly concerned with the students must understand the purpose of the exercise. Supervisors should be clear about their roles and what is expected of them. Consultation with trades unions will ensure that the program has their support and encouragement.

## **What is expected from the provider of a working placement:**

### **(WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN OFFER)**

What employers can offer will depend on the nature and size of their organization or stable and the complexity of the work they do. Both employers and schools will also have to consider how the experience offered can be related to students' work at school.

Any program offered needs to be efficient and effective. Anything less will be counter-productive both for the students and the employers. Employers therefore need to consider:

- how much time and resources – both human and financial – can be devoted to the program;
- which departments, posts and tasks are suitable;
- the health, safety and welfare implications;
- how long it will take students to understand the task or tasks involved; and
- when students' placements will cause the least disruption to the normal routine.

If a work experience placement is to be worthwhile it must be well-planned. The better the activity is planned – and followed up – with the teachers, the more likely it is that students will benefit from the time they spend in a placement. Initial time spent on planning placements is an investment, as it reduces the time which needs to be spent planning subsequent placements.



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## What is the benefit for the provider of a working placement?

Work experience placements provide many opportunities and benefits to both employers and students. Those most commonly cited by employers are:

**a. Influencing the quality of future employees:** Employers can help improve the quality and preparedness of young people coming onto the labour market;

**b. Development of recruitment channels:** building links with the schools can help to attract school leavers into jobs and can reduce recruitment costs;

**c. Influencing career choices:** Many employers have found that work experience placements are the ideal way of raising the profile of career opportunities within their organization and, in some cases, of dispelling unwarranted stereotyped views;

**d. Promotion of vocational qualifications:** There is clear evidence that well-organized work experience placements enrich students' general education and help to improve the standard of their vocational work;

**e. Raising the community profile:** Many employers attach importance to raising their profile in the community. Work experience placements provide a valuable means of creating a positive image amongst students, teachers, parents and employees;

**f. Creation of management development opportunities:** The process of policy development, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of work experience programs gives scope for employees to develop their management and coaching skills, and widen their experience;

**g. Increased motivation of employees:** Companies participating in education-business link activities have found that such activities increase the motivation of their employees; and

**h. Understanding changes in the education system:** Closer liaison with schools helps employers to improve their understanding of modern learning processes and current educational qualifications, and enhances their relationship with teachers.

**i. Monetary:** Students may provide fresh perspectives, as well as providing an additional resource.



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### **Facilities:**

- The provider of a working placement has to offer proper facilities for the vocational training. These facilities must be in a condition that ensures that the student is able to learn the knowledge, skills and competences which are necessary to develop a professional ability to act between the school and frame defined by an equestrian stable.
- The stable/company must be managed as a full-time facility, as an independent operating unit or as a facility run by a public authority and managed under proper business principles. The economic results must be recorded in an official balance sheet.
- The buildings and the technical equipment of the training centre must fit to the needs of the training objectives, should be up-to-date with technical standards, fit the needs of animal welfare and shall be in proper condition.
- For the protection of the student the working circumstances in the stable have to meet and respect the rules and conditions of the different national laws.
- The stable has to be run with all necessary health and safety needs in order to prevent accidents.
- The stable has to offer a suitable accommodation with acceptable sanitary facilities.
- A training facility is unsuitable, if a bankruptcy or insolvency proceeding is opened.
- The stable has to be able to provide horses which are suitable for the training of the student.

### **The responsible people for the student:**

The responsible people for the student have to fulfil the following points:

- They should have the professional ability to educate students.
- They should be personalities which are able to act as a role model function for the students and they should also act like this role model themselves.
- They have to provide a certificate from the national police or responsible authority, that they have no criminal history.



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