



NESTON HIGH SCHOOL
CAREERS
ASPIRATION • COMMUNITY • RESPECT

Work Experience Student Handbook

LISTENING



SPEAKING



PROBLEM SOLVING



CREATIVITY



ADAPTING



PLANNING



LEADERSHIP



TEAMWORK



What is Work Experience?



Definition & Overview

Work experience is a structured period of time spent in a workplace, giving students the opportunity to observe and participate in real working environments. It provides valuable insight into a chosen career field, helping you develop professional skills and make informed decisions about your future.

Work experience can take many forms and is typically unpaid. It is arranged with the purpose of learning, not as a substitute for employment. Whether in-person or remote, it offers a meaningful first step into the world of work.

Types of Work Experience Placements

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|  Office-Based | On-site placements in professional environments such as law firms, hospitals, schools, or corporate offices. |
|  Remote Placements | Virtual work experience completed online, allowing access to employers regardless of location. Virtual experiences should only be used as a last resort. |
|  Industry-Specific | Hands-on placements tailored to a specific sector such as engineering, healthcare, media, or finance. |
|  Benefits for Students | Build real skills, explore career paths, and strengthen your CV and university applications. |

Every placement is an opportunity to ask questions, shadow professionals, and gain clarity on the direction you want your career to take. Use this time to explore, reflect, and grow.

What is NOT Work Experience

Not every professional activity qualifies as formal work experience. It is important to understand the difference so you can accurately represent your background to employers and on applications. The following do NOT typically count:

- Casual or paid employment — regular part-time jobs (e.g., retail, hospitality) are employment, not structured work experience placements.
- Non-qualifying volunteering — general community volunteering without a structured learning objective or industry relevance.
- Unpaid family help — assisting in a family-run business informally, without a defined role or supervision plan.
- Brief shadowing — observing a professional for only an hour or two, with no meaningful tasks or documented learning outcomes.

Standards and Expectations



Work experience is an opportunity to develop valuable skills, gain insight into the workplace and make a positive impression on employers.

During your placement, you are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour, professionalism and commitment that would be expected in paid employment.

By being invested and taking initiative, you will maximise the benefits of the experience and represent both yourself and the school positively.

Follow the below standards to be successful:

- Be Professional Dress: appropriately, communicate politely and conduct yourself in a way that reflects positively on both yourself and the school.
- Be Reliable: Arrive on time each day, complete tasks to the best of your ability and let your supervisor know if any problems arise.
- Be Positive: Show enthusiasm, be willing to learn and approach new tasks and challenges with a positive attitude.
- Be Respectful Treat colleagues, customers and workplace property with courtesy and consideration at all times.
- Be Safe Follow all health and safety instructions, use equipment correctly and report any concerns immediately.
- Be Responsible Take ownership of your actions, follow workplace rules and make sensible decisions throughout your placement.

Remember; you are representing yourself, your family and Neston High School. Be proud of what you can achieve!



Skills & Career Exploration



The 8 Essential Skills

Listening – Understanding and responding to information, instructions, and ideas shared by others.

Speaking – Communicating thoughts, opinions, and information clearly and confidently.

Problem Solving – Identifying challenges and finding effective solutions.

Creativity – Generating new ideas and thinking in imaginative ways.

Adapting – Responding positively and effectively to change and new situations.

Planning – Organising time, tasks, and resources to achieve goals.

Leadership – Guiding, motivating, and supporting others to achieve success.

Teamwork – Working cooperatively with others towards a shared goal.

Why These Skills Matter

Together, these skills help students learn effectively, build positive relationships, and achieve their goals in school. In employment, they enable people to communicate, collaborate, solve problems, manage responsibilities, and adapt to workplace challenges. Employers value these transferable skills because they contribute to success in almost every job and career pathway.

Developing the 8 Skills Through Work Experience

Work experience provides a valuable opportunity to develop the eight essential skills in a real workplace setting. Students strengthen listening and speaking by communicating with colleagues, supervisors, and customers. They develop problem-solving by responding to challenges and finding practical solutions. Creativity can be enhanced through contributing ideas, while adapting is developed by adjusting to new environments, routines, and expectations.

Students also improve their planning skills by managing tasks and meeting deadlines. Opportunities to take initiative help build leadership, and working alongside others develops strong teamwork skills. Together, these experiences help students understand employer expectations, build confidence, and prepare for future education, training, and employment. Work experience allows students to put their skills into practice and recognise how important they are for success in the workplace.



How to Find Work Experience

Finding the right work experience placement takes preparation and persistence. Use the strategies below to maximise your chances of securing a valuable opportunity:

- **Networking** Talk to family, friends, and teachers about your goals. Personal connections are often the most effective route to securing a placement.
- **Online Platforms** Use LinkedIn, Indeed, and Springpod to search for work experience listings. Create a professional profile to increase visibility with employers.
- **Career Services** Visit your school's careers adviser for tailored guidance, employer contacts, and help with applications and interview preparation.
- **Job Boards** Check dedicated work experience boards such as Unifrog, Plotr, and Not Going to Uni for curated opportunities matched to your interests.

Be proactive — reach out directly to companies you admire, even if no placement is advertised. A well-written email or phone call can open unexpected doors.

School & Community Resources



Your school and local community offer a range of resources to help you find and secure work experience placements:

➤ **Career Fairs**

Attend school and local career fairs to meet employers face-to-face and learn about placement opportunities in your area.

➤ **Local Businesses**

Approach local businesses directly. Small and medium enterprises are often willing to offer placements to motivated students.

➤ **Industry Events**

Look for open days, taster sessions, and industry events where you can network with professionals and discover new career pathways.

Keep a record of every employer you contact, including dates and responses. Following up professionally demonstrates initiative and commitment.

Direct Applications to Companies

Reaching out directly to companies is one of the most effective ways to secure work experience. Many placements are never advertised publicly, so a proactive approach can give you a real advantage.

- Research companies in your field of interest and find the right contact person.
- Write a professional email or letter tailored to each employer.
- Follow up politely if you have not received a response within two weeks.

A well-crafted direct application demonstrates initiative and genuine interest, qualities that employers value highly in students seeking placements.



Phone Call Script

Use this script as a guide when calling employers to request a work experience placement. Adapt it to sound natural and confident:

"Good morning/afternoon, my name is [Your Name] and I'm a student at [School Name]."

"I'm calling to enquire about the possibility of a work experience placement at your company."

"I'm particularly interested in [specific area/role] and would love to learn more about your work."

"Would you be open to hosting a student for [duration, e.g. one week] in [month/term]?"

"Who would be the best person to send my CV and a formal request to?"

After the call: Note the contact name, date, and outcome. Follow up with a formal email within 24 hours. If there is no answer, try again at a different time or leave a polite voicemail with your name, school, and callback number.

Subject: Work Experience Placement Enquiry

Email Template

Dear [Name/Sir/Madam],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a student at [School Name]. I am writing to enquire whether your organisation would be able to offer a work experience placement between [dates].

I am interested in gaining experience in [industry/area of interest] and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about the work you do. I am keen to develop my skills, gain an insight into the workplace, and learn from professionals in the field.

I am a reliable, enthusiastic, and hardworking student, and I would be grateful if you could consider my request. If you require any further information, please let me know.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

[Your Name]

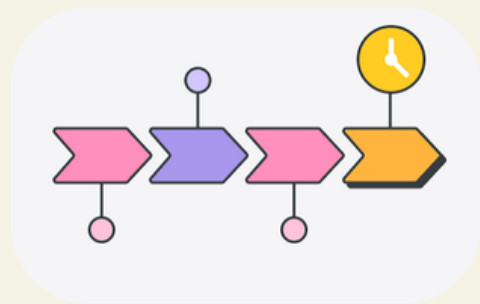
[School Name]

[Email Address]

Timeline: Sept – Jan

September — Research & Explore

- Research potential career paths and industries
- Identify your interests, strengths and goals
- Make a list of target employers and sectors



Confirm placement dates and contact details

October — Prepare Your CV

- Draft and refine your CV and cover letter
- Gather references and supporting materials

November — Contact Employers

- Begin reaching out via email and phone
- Use networking, job boards and school contacts
- Attend career events and information sessions
- Track all applications and responses carefully

December — Follow Up

- Chase any unanswered applications politely
- Send thank-you notes after positive responses
- Review and update your CV if needed
- Keep a record of all employer communications
- Stay organised with a dedicated folder or tracker
- January — Secure Confirmations

Timeline: February to July

The second half of the academic year is when your work experience plans become reality. Use this period to finalise arrangements, prepare thoroughly, complete your placement, and reflect on everything you have learned.

February – March	Finalise all arrangements with your employer. Confirm your start date, working hours, dress code, and point of contact. Notify your school and complete any required paperwork or consent forms.
April – June	Prepare thoroughly for your placement. Research the company in depth, prepare thoughtful questions, arrange travel and logistics, and practise your professional introduction.
July	Complete your work experience placement. Stay engaged, take initiative, ask questions, and keep a daily log of your tasks, observations, and key learning moments.

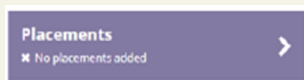


Logging on Unifrog

Unifrog is the platform your school uses to record and reflect on your work experience. Follow these steps to log your placement and reflections accurately.



Getting Started



Recording Details

1. Go to unifrog.org and log in with your school email and password.
2. From your dashboard, scroll down to the "Placements" tab
3. Select "Add a new placement" to begin entering your details.
4. Enter your employer name, placement dates, role title, and sector.
5. Complete the dates, contact details, objectives, and Employer details section and then submit!
6. Write Once uploaded, contact the Employer to let them know they will receive the email from Unifrog

Keep your Unifrog record up to date throughout and after your placement. Your tutor may review your entries, so be honest, detailed, and reflective in your responses.

IF YOUR PLACEMENT IS NOT LOGGED ON UNIFROG, IT IS INVALID, AND YOU CANNOT ATTEND!



Agreeing the placement is just the start...

If it is not logged on Unifrog, you cannot go!

Reflecting on Work Experience

Taking time to reflect on your placement is one of the most valuable things you can do. Reflection helps you recognise what you have learned, understand your strengths, and articulate your experience to future employers and universities.



Skills & Career Insights

Consider the skills you developed and what you discovered about the industry. Ask yourself: What technical or practical skills did I gain? What soft skills did I strengthen — communication, teamwork, problem-solving? Did this placement confirm or change my career interests? What surprised me most about the working environment?

What Went Well & Challenges

Honest reflection includes both successes and difficulties. Identifying challenges shows self-awareness and resilience — qualities employers value highly.

-  **Went Well** Tasks I completed confidently, positive feedback received, goals I achieved, relationships I built with colleagues and mentors.
-  **Challenges** Situations I found difficult, skills I need to develop further, moments I stepped outside my comfort zone and what I learned from them.

Use your reflections in CVs, personal statements, and interviews. Describe specific experiences using the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Log everything on Unifrog while details are fresh.





You now have everything you need to make your work experience a success. Here are the essential points to remember:

- ★ Start early — research, prepare your CV, and reach out to employers well in advance.
- ★ Be professional — in every email, phone call, and in-person interaction.
- ★ Stay curious — ask questions, observe, and make the most of every opportunity.
- ★ Reflect deeply — log your experience on Unifrog and document the skills you have gained.
- ★ Follow up — send a thank-you message to your employer after your placement.

Work experience is just the beginning. The confidence, skills, and connections you build now will support your future career for years to come. Good luck — we believe in you!

Key Takeaways

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Skills

www.skillsbuilder.uk

Website

<https://www.nestonhigh.com/school-life/careers/careers-home>
