



**CO-ORDINATED WORK EXPERIENCE**  
**IN CARDIFF AND THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN**  
**Careers Wales Cardiff and Vale**  
**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

### **Before the Placement**

You can help by checking that your son/daughter has all the necessary details on their placement, such as the contact name and address and telephone number. Any choice of placement will involve travel, meal and dress arrangements. Many employers expect students to contact them to arrange an interview before their placement. Your son's/daughter's teacher should be able to provide a printout of these details if the placement is on Careers Wales database. These printouts include information relating to health and safety and any special requirements the employer has specified.

### **During the Placement**

Students are often quite nervous during the first few days and they may also find the experience quite tiring, so it helps if you show you are aware of this. If your son/daughter fails to attend work on any day, because of ill health, please ensure that the school/college and employer are notified. If you or your son/daughter experience any serious concerns regarding the placement you should contact the school/college in the first instance.

### **After Work Experience**

Whilst work experience is discussed when students return to school/college, you can help by stressing the positive aspects of having undertaken a placement. Students should know more about the world of work, have a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and have practised or acquired important skills - including communication and team working. Most students get a very positive report from their host employer.

**Our Careers Advisers are also available in school or college to give further help and advice.**

**If you have any further queries regarding work experience you should contact your son's/daughter's school or college.**



### **What is Work Experience?**

Work Experience is a school (or college) organised educational activity that forms part of your son's/daughter's education. Work experience may be defined as a placement on an employer's premises in which a student carries out a range of tasks or duties, more or less as would an employee, but with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience. Most students attend work experience during year 10 or Year 11 and in the sixth form (Years 12/13) or whilst at college.

### **Why is it Important?**

As part of the curriculum work experience can contribute to a student's careers education, personal & social education and understanding of a particular subject or course.

In Years 10 and 11 the emphasis tends to be on acquiring key skills and personal and social development, with work experience being used as an opportunity to introduce students to the world of work.

In Years 12/13 (and in college) the focus is often more related to students' specific career ideas and/or their chosen subject or course of study.

Prospective employers, training providers and education admissions tutors (including universities) increasingly look for evidence that candidates have undertaken a satisfactory period of work experience. For this reason schools and colleges encourage students to maintain evidence of their achievements in a record of achievement or 'Progress File'.

### **How is it Organised?**

#### **The School/College's Role**

Schools and colleges are responsible for preparing students prior to work experience (for example by setting clear aims, objectives and tasks for students to complete), monitoring students' progress during placements, and reviewing the experience on their return to school/college. Schools/Colleges must take reasonable care to ensure that placements meet certain standards

in terms of health and safety and insurance arrangements. Each school/college decides when work experience will take place each year.

### **The Employer's Role**

Employers are asked to provide a planned programme of work which: introduces students to the workplace on the first day; shows them something of the daily routine; gives them an insight into the overall function of the organisation; provides them with tasks to do or observe, and allows them an opportunity to review their experience on the last day.

Before becoming involved in work experience employers need to ensure that they comply with all health and safety legislation and that they have appropriate insurance cover.

### **The Role of Careers Wales Cardiff and Vale**

Careers Wales works with teachers to organise work experience by providing: all local schools and colleges with access to an **Internet based database** of places and access to an **on-line booking service** (the first in Wales); information and talks to students; a programme of visits to employers' premises to advise companies regarding placements.

The website address is [www.work-experience.co.uk/cardiff](http://www.work-experience.co.uk/cardiff) but **please note** that access passwords to view the database are issued by the school/college and places can only be booked on-line through your son's/daughter's teacher or lecturer.

### **What are Students Expected to do on Work Experience?**

Although students are not paid, during work experience they will be treated like young employees:

- They will undertake or observe normal duties and, by mutual agreement, work normal hours
- They will be supervised by older, or more senior employees
- They will need to obey health and safety regulations
- They may be expected to complete a work diary, report or project set by their teachers.

### **When Does Work Experience Take Place?**

The length and timing of work experience is decided by your son's/daughter's school/college. In Year 10/11 most schools arrange either one or two week blocks, with many schools arranging their work experience for the end of year 10, during the summer term. Further opportunities for work experience are offered to sixth form and college students. Your son's/daughter's school/college will inform you of the exact dates and times.

### **How can Parents Help?**

#### **Choosing a Place**

One of the most important activities is helping your son/daughter to identify a suitable placement. The best way to start the process would be to discuss your son's/daughter's interests and how this might relate to career opportunities. You might also discuss skills or subjects for which your son/daughter has displayed a particular aptitude. Whilst almost any type of work can be considered for work experience choices have to be realistic and relate to what employers are able to provide and when places are available. Some employers also specify minimum age limits. Students, particularly in Year 10/11, should therefore be encouraged to think as broadly as possible – the more flexible they are the greater the chance they have of getting a suitable place. Teachers will notify you when this process starts.

#### **Finding a Place**

Students can ask their teachers to help them to make choices and book places via Careers Wales On-line Work Experience Database. This system is available in all schools and colleges. Parents with Internet access at home may also be able to help their children to choose a placement from the database. There are over 8000 students seeking places every year so teachers may also ask parents if they know of any employers who can offer placements. If you do know of any such employer please pass the details on to the school or college. The teacher can then check whether the employer is on the database and, if not, ask Careers Wales staff to visit the employer to obtain more details and to check health and safety and insurance arrangements. Usually, with their agreement, these employers can then be added to the work experience database.