



spark!
LONDON'S ORIGINAL
EDUCATION BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Employer Guide to Work Placements

December 2012

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Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to host students on work experience. Work Experience is a fantastic experience for all student(s) but it only works with the valuable support of employers.

We appreciate this may be a new experience for you or some of your staff. We have developed this guide for employers, drawing on best practice guidance from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and the Department for Education (DfE), as well as our 30+ years of experience.

The guide aims to help you offer student(s) a quality work experience placement, which we hope will benefit both their learning and understanding of the world of work, whilst at the same time benefiting you and your organisation.

The benefits of work placements

Work experience is a broad term which refers to any situation which involves a young person leaving the classroom and spending time within a place of work.

It provides an excellent opportunity to put into practice the values taught in the classroom and to demonstrate students are acquiring the vital employability skills needed in the work place.

Student's benefits

- Gain experience of the world of work and explore their interests or future career plans
- Able to practice and gain employability skills such as communication, team work, problem solving, IT, numeracy, creativity, confidence and customer service, etc.
- Strengthens their CV and personal statement when applying for college, university or employment
- Better understanding of the areas of work they could pursue after their studies
- Develops their maturity and attitude
- Greater confidence and become better able to manage their own learning

An employer can contribute to two types of work experience: placements of a one or two week period; or through extended placements that can be spread throughout the year, usually alongside a specialist area of study.

Benefits to your organisation

- Better prepared workforce and potential recruits
- Ensure the curriculum of education establishments is up-to-date and that education establishments are aware of business needs
- Positive PR and heightened community profile
- Staff motivation and development, through the 'feel good' factor of supporting local education establishments

Top tips when hosting a student

- Provide a detailed description of the duties the young person will be doing.
- Invite the young person to a preliminary interview/meeting. Give feedback on how the interview went- even when s/he is unsuccessful. Even if the student is personally known to you this is beneficial.
- Ensure your staff are aware that work experience is taking place, so that the student(s) can observe and take part in appropriate areas of work, ask questions and seek out information.
- Look out for a placement confirmation pack detailing the school contact and the telephone numbers plus emergency contact numbers for the student.
- Give the young person an induction to your organization – ideally on the first morning – setting out general expectations, safety procedures and company regulations. See detailed advice in this guide.
- Designate an employee to act as a supervisor or guide for the student and ensure the young person knows to whom s/he is responsible.
- Students should bring a Work Experience Diary/ Logbook with them on the first day.

- Alternatively, they might use the StudentStudio website.
- Provide as real and varied a working situation as possible.
 - Discuss and review with the young person their performance during the placement.
 - Teachers aim to visit all students during their placement or at a minimum check in with you and the student by phone. They should telephone you to arrange a visit time.
 - The student's supervisor should complete a work experience evaluation form at the end of the placement. This feedback will be an important part of the student's Personal Record of Achievement.

If you spot opportunities for improving our ways of working and the support we offer you, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Spark! team on 020 8560 9900.



Placement identification

High quality work experience placements are a powerful personal development activity for students. They have the support of the Department for Education, the CBI and the Institute for Education Business Excellence.

Spark! (formerly Hounslow Education business Partnership) was established in 1980 through the foresight of local business and education leaders. In 2011-12 over 2500 students went on work experience placements brokered by Spark, ranging over a huge variety of sectors such as, hairdressing, police, sport, retail, admin and arts organisations.

Spark! supports 12+ schools in West London, and works with over 800 local companies and community groups who participate in the programme.

Placements are arranged for students who are:

- Pre 16 and taking GCSEs
- Post 16 taking A-Levels and vocational subjects
- Aged 14-19 and need special support in undertaking tailored work experience

The Quality Standards for Work Experience (DCSF, 2008) have been adopted to achieve quality placements and support for students and employers.

Spark! liaises with colleagues from other boroughs and similar organisations to achieve positive outcomes for students that are travelling out of their local area for work experience.

Before and during a student(s) placement, participating employers will have the full support of Spark! Through resources such as this guide, we provide information on what student(s) are expected to do and guidelines offering advice and help in the event of any problems arising during the placement.

We aim to ensure that student(s) are offered a work placement that:

- Is co-ordinated efficiently and effectively
- Adds value to students education and meets individual needs
- Promotes equal opportunities and challenges gender and racial stereotypes within workplace environments
- Checked by Spark! for Health, Safety and Welfare issues that might impact student(s) undertaking a placement
- Has an associated risk assessment (completed by the employer) and job description provided by Spark!
- Assistance on offer from Spark! for any employer problems or enquiries

Student 'own found' placements

Spark! strongly encourage students to identify an 'Own found' placement. This is an important part of their personal development, equipping them with the same skills they will need to find a job in future. We provide a 'Student Guide to Finding a Work Placement' to support them in this process.

It may be through this route – a student contacting you – that you first made contact with Spark! If this is the case, you should have received a student cover letter, CV and 'own found' placement form for you to complete, sign and return.

If you have not hosted a work experience student for Spark, or one of our partners, previously (or it was a long time ago) this will prompt us to get in touch to arrange a visit (see 'Health and safety essentials' below).

Spark! found placements and our annual calendar

Students can, if they wish, select one the Spark! Learn About Work website after a date agreed with the Spark! team.

The Spark! Learn About Work website has a database of quality assured work placement providers from the non-profit, public and private sectors.

Every year, in late September/ early November, we write to employers that have previously supported our programmes inviting them to offer as many placements as possible to local schools in weeks featured on our annual calendar.

Health & Safety essentials

Students on work experience should be thought of as employees for the purposes of Health and Safety. Consequently all appropriate regulations covered by Health and Safety legislation must be adhered to. You are asked to give clear information about Health and Safety to the student as part of their induction.

Your offer of work experience will only be confirmed once your premises have been visited by a member of Spark! staff and a signed agreement has been obtained, that Health and Safety, Insurance, Legal and other requirements will be met. The placement will be given a risk banding in line with current Government guidance. Re-appraisal of risk banding will occur at either annual, bi-annual or four yearly intervals depending on initial assessment.

For more information on requirements read 'The Right Start – work experience for young people - health & safety basics for employers' (HSE, 2002). You may also find 'Five steps to risk assessment (HSE, 2006) helpful. These will help you, and those responsible for work experience in your organisation, ensure that young people have their health and safety protected while they are with you.

Insurance

Student(s) on placements must be covered by insurance as an employee whilst on your premises. The Association of British Insurers (ABI), the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association and Lloyds of London have agreed that, as a matter of convention, student(s) on Work Experience should be treated as employees for the purposes of insurance against personal injury – that is they will be covered by the Employers Liability Insurance policy. However this only applies if you as the employer have informed your insurers to let them know that student(s) will be participating in work experience placements, and advise them of the nature of the proposed activities.

Employers will also typically be required to have Public Liability insurance, as well as Motor Vehicle insurance if the young person will be travelling in a vehicle used for business purposes, during working hours.

Letter of Agreement

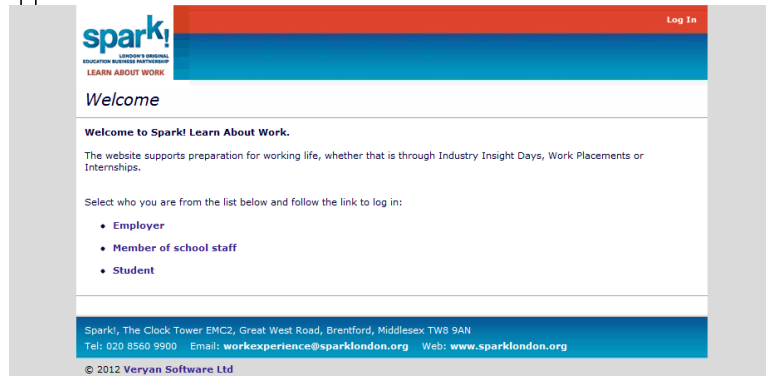
Responsibilities set out in this guide are summarised in the Letter of Agreement between Spark! and you as a host employer. Both parties sign this once you have passed our health and safety risk assessment and the location is considered suitable to host a young person on placement. The agreement should prevent any surprises and sets out clearly our mutual expectations.

Pre-placement preparation

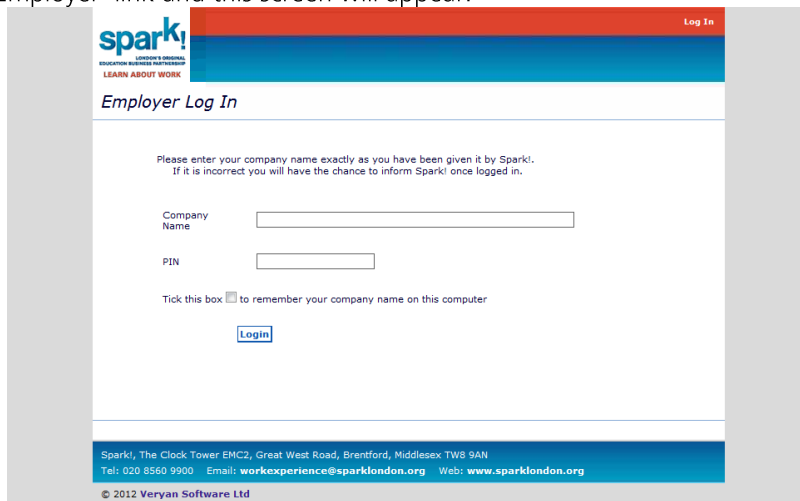
Learn About Work website

In your Placement Confirmation Pack cover letter you will find a Company username and PIN for the Learn About Work website. To access the website open your web browser and go to: <http://spark.learnaboutwork.net>

This screen will appear:



Click on the 'Employer' link and this screen will appear:



Enter your Company username and PIN, exactly as received from us, and this Welcome screen will appear:



Use the horizontal menu bar to access the follow areas:

- **My Company Details** – Allows you to quickly and easily view the contact information that we hold for your organization. Use the 'Contact Us' page to inform us of any changes.
- **Placement Opportunities** – Lists in one place the work placement opportunities your organization is currently offering. Click on a number in the 'Booked' column to see which schools have students on placement with you in the near future; and click on the 'View' button in the 'Details' column to access job descriptions and find out when the next Health & Safety visit is due.
- **Resources** – Explore this area to download various employer guides to work experience, including this one. You can get to know as much or as little about our processes as you like and also download information on insurance produced by the Association of British Insurers (ABI).
- **Health and Safety** – Visit this area of the site to access a quick reminder of Health & Safety essentials (taken from this guide), as well as links to download a range of more detailed resources about Health & Safety and Work Experience that we mention in this guide.
- **Emergency Procedures** – Click through to the area of the site and you will get a bullet point summary of what do to in case of an emergency whilst the young person is on placement.
- **Contact Us** – A form that allows you to quickly and easily submit an enquiries you may have to the Spark! team. If an enquiry is really urgent then please phone us.

Once you have finished using the Learn About Work website please click on 'Log Out' in the top right hand corner of the website to exit the site. Then you can close your web browser.

StudentStudio – placement activities and blogging

As part of your pre-placement preparation for hosting a young person, produce a schedule of activities for the student.

In 2012/13 we are piloting a new website called StudentStudio (<http://www.studentstudio.co.uk>) to support students and employer supervisors whilst they are on placement by providing specific activities and projects to pursue.

Employers can put in a request to the Spark! team before the placement starts for a supervisor and student username/ password on the StudentStudio website.

You, as the employer, will then be able to create a 'studio' in which the student follows specific programme of activities whilst they are on placement, recording their response in a 'walled garden' blog. Generic and sector focussed projects are available. The generic project includes a range of suggested activities and projects that can apply to a variety of work areas.

Students will need regular access to an internet enabled PC during their placement, but will have a detailed evidence of the work they have undertaken at the end of their placement. This can be useful for assessment purposed.

Should you need any additional help in planning activities for student(s) on work placement please contact the Spark! team.

Student interview

Carry out an interview with the student beforehand to ensure that this is the right work experience for them. This will also give you an opportunity to get to know them and discuss mutual expectations.

Here are some examples of questions you might like to ask the young person:

- What do you know about our company?
- How would you best describe a good team member? Do you work well under pressure?
- Do you have any prior work experience, paid or unpaid?

- What interests you about this work experience role?
- Do you have any experience using a telephone and/or email in a business environment?
- Have you ever dealt with customers that may be unhappy?
- What is your level of confidence using the Internet for research?
- How advanced are your skills in Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Access?

Planning for supervision and emergencies

Ensure that all relevant staff are aware that the student is coming, including security, reception, HR, line management and other colleagues.

Ensure that supervision arrangements are in place, including who will be responsible for the student throughout the placement and identify a substitute supervisor in case of staff illness.

Make sure that you have an emergency contact number for the school or college and parent or guardian of the student – if you are in doubt contact Spark!



During the placement

Welfare

You are asked to take responsibility for the social as well as physical welfare of student(s) on work experience. It is important that employee relationships with student(s) on work experience are conducted appropriately (see 'Safeguarding guidance' below). You are also reminded of your responsibilities under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Acts.

Safeguarding guidance

For adults working with young people, particularly those of compulsory school age, it is important to be aware of potentially difficult situations. By following the simple guidance outlined below it should be possible to ensure that the placement is a secure and productive environment for both the provider and the student.

1. Touch

There may be occasions when you need to touch a young person (e.g. When you are guiding them in carrying out a technical operation) but these should be kept to a minimum.

2. Behaviour

Whilst it is important to reassure a young person who may be nervous in a new placement and reliant on your guidance, you should avoid being over familiar. Never permit 'horseplay' which may cause embarrassment or fear.

3. Environment

Where possible avoid being on your own in an isolated or closed environment with a young person.

4. Travel

Ensure that there is a known destination and check-in times with a third party in situations where a young person will be travelling alone with an adult during the placement. It is a good idea to make available a mobile phone (or equivalent) in such situations.

5. Mentor

Those placed immediately in charge of young people should be competent in their work-role, mature in their attitudes, and yet, at the same time, be at ease with them.

6. Disclosure

Occasionally young people may disclose confidential information to a work colleague that gives rise to concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such situations you should speak to your line manager and share your concern with the school representative or Spark!

7. Disqualification

You are reminded that you are required by law to protect children from harm and that any employers are required, under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, to declare that they are disqualified from working with children.

Help your staff by distributing this aide memoire protecting young people in the workplace to people supervising or working alongside students and display in your staff room. This guidance has been produced with the assistance of the NSPCC and the East of England Region Work Experience Team Practitioners Group.

Induction

The induction should take place on the first day, ideally in the morning. Please bear in mind the young person may be immature and inexperienced. It should include:

General

- An overview of the organization and introduction to the supervisor and key staff
- A discussion about the purpose of the role and job description
- Expectations, including start & finish times, punctuality issues, Rules & regulations regarding use of emails/internet and confidentiality
- Procedures for Break/Lunch times
- Toilets/Kitchens & Smoking areas/ Drinking Water
- Support available during the placement
- Discussion around student(s) diary/ logbook requirements

Health and safety

- Highlight any relevant risk assessment outcomes i.e. Risks applicable to the job they are doing and the appropriate control measures
- Prohibitions i.e. areas, machines, substances or processes
- To whom to report any unsafe conditions, problems & equipment failure
- Security Procedures
- Safe use of all work equipment, including Visual Display Unit (VDU) Regulations and how to use/wear any special protective equipment/clothing
- Any Specialist H&S Instructions E.g. Health Risks/Hazards of Premises/Equipment and/or Noise/Dust/Fumes/Hazardous substances
- How to get first aid treatment: First Aid Box/First Aider
- Procedures for Accidents/Accident Book: How to report an accident, to whom an accident is reported and where/how an accident is recorded
- Emergency/Fire Alarms/Fire Exits/Evacuation Procedures: How to raise the alarm in case of an emergency, where the emergency exits are located and how to operate them, and where to assemble if they have to leave the building
- Student(s) personal responsibilities as outlined in the company Health and Safety policy
- Where appropriate, Safe Lifting Techniques/Manual Handling and Safe use of ladders
- The importance of housekeeping, e.g. keeping cupboard doors and drawers closed, ensuring wires are not trailing. Walking, not running in public areas etc.

Always double-check a young person's understanding after you have explained something- she/he may not have the confidence to ask questions. You may also want them to sign an induction checklist to confirm their understanding.

Supervision

- Ensure that the student is supervised at all times by someone who is competent in their work role and mature in attitude
- Always ensure that the student is aware of who is responsible for them
- Ensure that planned activities for the student are put into practice – perhaps using the Student Studio website

Hours of work

The Working Time Regulations 1998 and 1999 apply to students on work experience. However, the number and pattern of hours worked is normally agreed by you (the placement provider), parents, school and the student. If possible, normal hours should be worked, but students are not allowed to work outside any hours specified by legislation.

Where a placement involves Shift Work and the student wants to undertake shift work or night shift, as part of their experience, this can be allowed. However it must be agreed by the parents and you (the employer) and must not exceed the legal maximum.

Lunch and break periods

Parents are expected to discuss the arrangements for lunch and break periods with their son/daughter and make sure they are suitable. Where a student is to stay on the placement premises during breaks, then you (the employer) has a duty of care as for any employee.

If a student leaves your premises during lunch or break periods, no liability can be accepted by you (the employer) or the school for any incident that may occur.

Pay, Tax & National Insurance

Students on work experience have the status of an 'employee' for legal and insurance purposes, but must not receive payment for the work they do. Work experience is counted as school time. Employers can assist with travelling expenses or lunch costs if they wish. This is discussed during the pre-placement visit and incorporated into the Job Description.

A small acknowledgement of the contribution that the student has made is acceptable (e.g. this might take the form of a book token), but is by no means obligatory.

Performance review

Ask to see the young persons' work experience log book or diary and give them time during the day to complete it. This will help them to reinforce the learning that is taking place.

Provide the young person with regular feedback on their performance. They will benefit immensely from regular reviews of their work and feedback on what they have done well and how they can improve.

If you have concerns about the student, or if the student has a poor attitude whereby it effects the working environment, we would recommend that firstly you speak to the student and explain to them, that the placement will be withdrawn if they do not make a change (see 'Inappropriate behaviour' below).

Accident or Illness

If a student is injured or falls ill while in your charge please

- Give First Aid in the normal way, but check the permission section on the student's Work Placement Letter of Agreement before giving any medication
- Summon Medical Assistance if necessary.
- Inform the school or the college work experience co-ordinator or other contact and the parents (if a home phone number is available), as soon as possible.
- Enter details of the incident in your Accident Book and take any further action as required by the Law or any Codes of Practice which may apply.
- The school or college may advise you of any other steps, which should be taken.
- If you are unable to continue to look after an ill student who does not need hospital treatment then contact the school/college work experience coordinator or their parent/carer. School students should be taken home if they are under 18.

Reporting accidents

- If an emergency happens, then the student should be treated as any other member of staff, whereby this should be recorded in an accident record book or file.
- Please contact Spark! ASAP and we will fill in an incident report for our records and will also inform the student's school or college.
- If an incident happens that involves further investigation, please contact Spark! who will be able to help you with the matter. Student(s) will be withdrawn from the placement and sent back to their education establishment if necessary.
- For student(s) that have been given time off because of an injury due to an accident, then this should be reported to RIDDOR. Please check the HSE website for further information.

Student absence

- If a student fails to attend for work experience, please phone the school/college work experience co-ordinator or Spark! on 020 8560 9900. If you have received a telephone call from the student explaining that they are unwell, please also contact the education establishment to let them know.
- This also applies if the student fails to return from their lunch break.
- If you have not heard from the student at all, then the education establishment will initiate enquiries to ascertain the student's whereabouts and Spark! will be in touch to keep you updated.
- If for any reason you are unable to get in touch with the education establishment then please telephone Spark! who will also be able to help.
- Student's attendance records are kept by the school during work experience assignments.

Inappropriate behaviour

- Minor disciplinary matters should be dealt with in an appropriate way (by you or your representative). Please keep the school or college informed at all times.
- The students should have the opportunity of representation by a member of the school or college's staff in the same way that a trade union would represent an employee.
- If the inappropriate behaviour continues, or in the case of a major breach of discipline, then please contact Spark! and the student will be sent back to his/her school or college for the remaining duration of the placement.
- Where you wish to terminate the placement, the school or college must be informed immediately.
- They will liaise with you regarding the student's return to school. College students may be sent back to college, they need not be accompanied.

End of placement feedback

A positive way to end a placement is by asking students to present what they have learnt during their placement to your team on their last day.

Post-placement reflection

Employer's placement report

Please complete the 'Employer's report on work placement performance of young person' as quickly as possible and send this back to Spark's office by post.

This data is vital for Spark! and our partner schools when we assess the programme.

Performance indicators to assess the young person's 'employability skills' follow the CBI's employability skills model.



Celebration

Student certificates of achievement

All students that successfully completed their work experience, including the feedback form, are eligible. The certificates are signed by Spark's chairman businessman Will Tyler, as well as the head teacher at the student's school or college.

If you feel that the student should not be receiving this certificate please let us know in your feedback report.

Employer certificates of recognition

All businesses that support our work experience programme will receive a Certificate of recognition on annual basis. The certificates are signed by Spark's chairman businessman Will Tyler.

Many employers display these in their reception areas.

Education Ready™ quality mark

If you consider you have a robust work experience offer, and are working with Spark! and other providers supporting wider Work Related Learning opportunities, then you may want to securing recognition through the Education Ready™ quality mark. The standard has been developed to assess and recognise the quality of businesses' involvement in developing young people's employability. It identifies the core attributes that businesses need in order to offer effective support to young people, and help them prepare for a productive and fulfilling adult life.

Spark! Partnership Awards

If you believe a student you hosted – or indeed your own company – are great candidates for one of our annual awards in the Work Experience and Internships category please get in touch.



**Formerly Hounslow Education Business Partnership, Spark!
was founded in 1980 and has been working with young
people, schools and businesses creating new opportunities
and igniting careers for over thirty years.**

The Clock Tower EMC2, Great West Road, Brentford, TW8 9AN

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Spark! is the trading name of Hounslow Education Business Charity