



Work Experience Focus

Why is work experience so valuable?

Choosing a career is not something anyone else can do for you so give yourself the best chance at the future you want by making the most of work experience opportunities.

- Stand out from the crowd in a competitive market
- Develop new skills and learn what transferable skills you already possess
- Test the waters: discover what the job or industry is really like before committing to a career path
- Demonstrate to employers that you are motivated to learn and gain your own experience
- Make contacts and develop your network

How do I decide where to go?

If you're not sure yet what career you want, or even which industry sector appeals to you, a great place to start is to look at the subjects you enjoy and are best at in school.



You can use the 'Subjects Library' tool on UNIFROG to explore careers linked to your chosen subject. Just log into UNIFROG and find the 'Subjects Library' on your dashboard to search by school subject. Alternatively use the 'Careers Library' to explore industry sectors.

Similar information can be found via the National Careers Service:

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers>



But how do I get work experience?

- When you have decided on the job or industry that interests you, look for companies you'd like to work for. Do they offer work experience schemes? Are they local? Can you travel?
- Talk to your parents, family, friends, neighbours! Can they help you? Do they know someone who can?
- Prepare your CV or contact letter, tailored to each placement or company you are contacting. Include any relevant experience; your achievements in and out of school, clubs and teams. State why you want to work for them; Why you are passionate about the industry or career choice. Mention skills you already have and what you want to learn.



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- Show initiative. Research who to contact within a company. Look online or call the office administrator and get the name of the relevant person.
- Don't miss a deadline. Make sure you have applied on time if there is a closing date.
- Be proactive. Follow up on the letters you've sent with a call or email.
- Be interview ready. You may be invited to speak with or meet a company representative ahead of being offered a position. Consider what questions they may ask. Dress professionally.
- Persevere. Expect to contact 10-15 companies. Don't give up at the first hurdle. Ask for feedback if an application is rejected. Apply that next time around.

Do your research, aim high and don't be afraid to ask!

Virtual Work Experience

Fantastic strides have been made in the provision of meaningful virtual work experience in recent years. Many organisations now offer hybrid schemes to reach many more students nationally. Shorter insight programmes can be very helpful if you need to narrow your search criteria. Many employers will expect you to be able to demonstrate your interest in their sector so keep a log of your activity on your UNIFROG profile to refer to in future. The platforms listed here are a great place to start:



Springpod

From work experience with top organisations to degree tasters with leading universities, Springpod unlocks it all. Discover opportunities to gain valuable experience, secure a place on the course of your dreams or get hired straight out of school.

Website: <https://www.springpod.com/>



Speakers for Schools Experience

Levelling the playing field for young people by offering access to high quality VWEX

Website: <https://www.speakersforschools.org/vwex/>



Forage

Bite-sized 6 hour virtual work experience programs that give students a genuine career advantage with Fortune 500 companies.

Free for students as the partner companies are committed to ensuring equity, diversity, and access of opportunity for everyone.

Website: <https://www.theforage.com/>

Gordon's Padlet:

Remember to check out the Gordon's Padlet which is regularly updated with opportunities to include work experience placements and insight webinars.

More information on work experience can be found on the school careers website:
<https://www.gordons.school/page/?title=WORK+EXPERIENCE&pid=937>