

# Work Experience



**MERCHANT  
TAYLORS'  
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls  
aged 4 to 18 years



## Getting Started!

It is expected that students will organise their own one week work experience. This should allow students to test out career ideas. It can show commitment to the course that students may want to study at university, such as Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry as well as teaching. For certain courses it is an essential requirement to have completed relevant work experience before applying to study that course in Higher Education.

Many students last year felt that work experience gave them the chance to develop their confidence in working with new people, helped develop new skills such as a pleasant telephone manner, planning and organising themselves, together with the opportunity to show initiative.

## How can a placement be arranged?

All students will be asked to organise a placement themselves with the help and support of family and friends, as well as Mrs Mee.

An employer will need to be contacted giving reasons why the work experience with their organisation is desirable. Please see the CV pack on how to create a CV and a covering letter.

## Help & Advice

Mrs Mee [v.mee@merchanttaylor.com](mailto:v.mee@merchanttaylor.com)

## Contacting Placements

There are no fixed rules about the way to organise a placement - some suggested ways to begin are:

- Writing letters to potential employers, sending a CV
- Asking a family member to enquire at work
- Telephone or email companies or organisations

Once a firm offer is received either in writing or verbally, simply send the employer a copy of the self-placement form which is available from Mrs Mee or in the Work Experience file in the careers section of the website.

The employer should then return the work experience self-placement form to school. Alternatively, you can send the form via email which can be returned to the following email address [v.mee@merchanttaylor.com](mailto:v.mee@merchanttaylor.com)

## Be realistic!

Several letters may have been sent and numerous people telephoned before there will be any response. Think about the laws of probability: the more people contacted the more likelihood there is that someone will say 'yes!' Additionally, valuable communication skills can be developed which will be needed in this highly competitive job market.

The good thing about planning a placement is that a student is in control and this means that it can be completed at a suitable time to suit the individual student. It will also create a great sense of achievement when the student is accepted onto a placement and show employers that some essential life skills have been learned. Developing a CV and telephoning companies may seem daunting at first but these are skills that do need to be learnt!

## How to contact employers in writing

When writing a letter of application or sending an email enquiry about work experience placements, try to follow these basic rules:

- Write clearly, stating exactly what is required
- Write in paragraphs
- Draft the letter or email in rough first
- Check spelling and grammar by asking someone to proof read it
- Say why the work experience with this specific organisation would be beneficial.
- Avoid contractions such as I'm, can't don't or won't. Write the standard versions: 'I am' 'do not' 'cannot' and 'will not'
- Never use text language
- Letters should be sent using the correct name, job title and address. If employers are asked to return any forms, make sure a stamped, self addressed envelope is included so employers do not have to pay.

Remember - organisations can always be telephoned to find out to whom the letter should be addressed. Enquire about the person's job title and address of the organisation.

Remember that no two letters/emails should be the same. If applying to several organisations, each letter/email should be tailored to the individual organisation and referred to in letters/emails.

Keep a copy of letters/emails.

## Telephoning an employer?

This may seem terrifying at first but if these simple rules are followed it will be a positive and worthwhile experience:

- Make sure the telephone number is correct
- Make a note of all the important points to be raised. Have a pen and paper to hand to make notes if necessary
- Speak clearly and try not to sound too timid
- If unsure who to speak to then ask for the Personnel Department and say the call is in relation to Work Experience
- Be polite throughout
- Always thank the employer for speaking with you

Remember there is help available in school. If worried please get in touch either in person or by email.

## Unsure how to create a CV?

Please refer to CV pack, available on the careers section of the School website.

## Health and Safety

Health and Safety is vitally important, so we must ensure that every student's welfare is considered before attendance at a placement. We therefore may, on occasion, have to consider DBS Checks if the student is working alone with one person for a certain length of time. We may not be able to endorse the placement if it is out of the UK. Please understand that the school has to follow strict health and safety guidelines and for that reason we ask for a certain level of understanding if we need to discuss a placement in further detail.

For this reason, completing the self-placement form is of the utmost importance. Without this legal document being signed and returned to the Careers Department the student's placement has not been authorised by the School.

Have you any initial ideas about where you might like to go and who you could contact? Try the local search on Google for ideas.

Think about travel arrangements before you start contacting employers. Would you be able to get to the company? Try and look at journey planner <http://www.traveline-northwest.co.uk/cms/welcome.xhtml> - this is a website that allows users to plan journeys using public transport. You should not have to rely on family or friends!

**Careers Department**  
**Student Work Placement Report**

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**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Venue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

Write a report on your work placement, using the headings below as a guide.

1. Describe the duties which you undertook or observed during your placement.
  
2. Which aspect of your work experience did you find most interesting?
  
3. How did the work differ from your original ideas?
  
4. What impression have you gained of ..... as a career?
  
5. Following your placement, what do you consider to be the major differences between school and life at work?
  
6. Was the length of your placement: *Too long / too short / about right?*
  
7. Has / how has your work placement influenced your choice of career?
  
8. Any additional comments you wish to make.