

# Quality Standard for Work Experience



# Foreword

## Foreword by Jim Knight, Minister for Schools and Learners

Work experience has been and will remain an essential part of the curriculum, more so with our ambitious programme of reforms to the curriculum including the new Diplomas. It helps learners understand and develop the employability skills and positive 'can-do' attitude employers are looking for in a highly competitive economy. We also know that it has a more personal effect on learners. It helps them understand their own strengths, and areas for development, it builds confidence in handling new situations and in working within a team of adults. Like other forms of work-related learning it helps young people to connect their education with their future working lives, to understand the importance of working hard and doing well at school, and to be clearer about their future career options. It is therefore vital that work experience is delivered to the highest possible standards so that all young people are not just safe but get the fullest possible benefit from it and that we retain the enthusiastic support of the hundreds of thousands of employers that have made work experience the success it has been to date and needs to be in the future.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jim Knight'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

**Jim Knight**

Minister for Schools and Learners

**Foreword by Martin Ward,  
Deputy General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders**

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) is the professional association for leaders of secondary schools and colleges, with over 14,000 members across the UK. School leaders know that there are benefits in under-16s having an entitlement to high-quality work experience. Seeing adult working life contributes to understanding of the world at large and to maturity. It can help young people to understand the lack of openings in the modern, knowledge-based economy for those without qualifications. The association welcomes these standards, which should contribute to raising the standards of delivery in this important area.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Ward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

**Martin Ward**

Deputy General Secretary, Association of School  
and College Leaders

# Introduction

1. Work experience may be defined as: *a placement on employers' premises in which a learner carries out a particular task or duty, or range of tasks or duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.* Currently an estimated two million weeks of work experience take place per annum including block placements, extended placements and Young Apprenticeship placements.
2. People who are highly experienced in the field of organising work experience placements have developed the standard presented in this document. It is intended to ensure that work experience placements are delivered to a high standard so that learners are safe, achieve good learning outcomes and enjoy their time in the workplace. It is expected that everyone involved in organising, supporting and delivering work experience placements should have due regard to this standard as should learners themselves.
3. At their heart the standard is intended to be straightforward. It is common sense that good planning, quality delivery and a proper review on completion will lead to an effective and enjoyable placement for all concerned, including the development of employability skills. Effective leadership and governance together with sound administrative processes and procedures complete the picture. So the standard comprises six elements:
  - Policy.
  - Roles and Responsibilities.
  - Planning.
  - Delivery.
  - Review.
  - Systems and Processes.
4. Within each element are a number of criteria, some of which are essential and some desirable. It is expected that the essential elements are met and that the desirable elements should normally be met. The main party responsible for ensuring each criterion part is met is indicated in the tables setting out each element. There exists a range of documentation and other support materials to help people involved in work experience meet the standard and their legal obligations, for example for health and safety in the workplace. Some of these materials are referenced at the end of this document and further advice and support is available from Education Business Partnership Organisations. Education Business Partnership Organisations include any of the organisations that exist, wholly or in part, to support partnership between employers and education to help enable the delivery of work-related learning.

## Meeting the Quality Standard

5. There are a number of parties involved in the work experience programme – schools and colleges, EBPOs, parents and carers, employers and learners. Responsibility for meeting the standard overall rests with the school or college.
6. We intend that self assessment, which schools and colleges or their nominated partner should lead, will be the main method of meeting the standard. Self assessment has been shown to be a potentially powerful way of improving quality in schools and colleges more generally. It is flexible, relatively low cost and only as bureaucratic as organisations choose to make.
7. We have not, therefore, been prescriptive about how those involved should go about meeting the standard. It will be possible to evidence each element in a variety of ways, for example through written evidence, visits to employers' premises, and from feedback from learners, employers and others involved in the process. It is expected that schools and colleges will be able to evidence the extent to which they meet the quality standard overall. They should be able to demonstrate the action they are taking to make improvements where they judge they are falling short of any aspect of the standard and/or to go beyond them to create a truly excellent work experience programme.
8. Local Authorities will apply their own audit and oversight of that extent to which work experience programmes in their area meet the standard. OfSTED will take the standard into account during their inspections where institutions offer a work experience programme.

## Legal Requirements and Responsibilities

9. Within the elements of the standard, several references are made to legal requirements and responsibilities but those references do not represent an authoritative explanation of or interpretation of the law. Knowledge of the standard itself does in itself demonstrate that legal requirements have necessarily been met and it remains essential that those involved in work experience are aware of the legal requirements, understand their responsibilities and have received appropriate training in relation to them. Such knowledge and understanding is a vital aspect of the standard.

## Reviewing the Standard

10. We will keep the standard for work experience under review and welcomes any feedback or suggestions for their improvement or revision. Feedback should be sent to **[workrelatedlearning.feedback@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:workrelatedlearning.feedback@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)**
11. In addition, we will carry out a more formal review, by the end of 2009/10, through the network of work experience practitioners and with our partners, of the extent to which the standard has been used and had the effect of raising standards of work experience delivery and whether more formal inspection is needed.

# Elements

Element One – Policy		
	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 1A	Work experience policy forms part of the school/college development plan, and is regularly reviewed and updated.	School/college
E 1B	The school/college has committed senior managers who understand their legal and moral duties in relation to work experience.	School/college
E 1C	School/college governors are committed to work experience and understand their liabilities.	School/college
E 1D	The school/college ensures that there are adequate resources for work experience in terms of staff time and budget allocation.	School/college
E 1E	Service level agreements with any organisers external to the school are in place and reviewed regularly to take account of any curriculum, legal or guidance changes.	School/college
E 1F	Education Business Partnership Organisations have a policy for appraisal of members of staff which includes appropriate and specific training for teams and individuals.	Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 1G	Equal opportunities are promoted and gender stereotyping challenged.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 1H	All parties fulfill legal requirements and recognised guidance for work experience.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation/employers

### Element Two – Roles and Responsibilities

	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 2A	School/college staff have specific and clear responsibilities for work experience administration and organisation. A member of the teaching staff manages learning outcomes and curriculum support.	School/college
E 2B	Service level agreements between EBPO's and schools/colleges stipulate clear lines of responsibility for all parties.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 2C	Parents and carers are involved in the choice of placement including giving their consent.	School/college/parents/carers
E 2D	Employers are given all relevant information about any special needs or medical conditions the learner may have and which might impact on the health, safety and welfare of the learner in the placement, co-workers and the public.	School/college/parents/carers
E 2E	Employers understand they are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the learner during the placement and that the school/college retains a duty of care.	Employers/ school/college
D 2F	Education Business Partnership Organisations are used to provide expert support to schools and employers in developing and maintaining an effective partnership between schools, colleges and employers.	School/college

### Element Three – Planning

	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 3A	Learners participate in the process of identifying the types of placement that will meet their learning needs, including any employability and enterprise skills needs, capabilities and ability to get to and from the placement.	School/college
E 3B	The school/college and employer work together to prepare for the placement including discussing the learning objectives, including any employability and enterprise skills needs, of the placement in advance of it starting.	School/college
E 3C	Learners receive information, advice, and guidance about suitability of placement choices.	School/college (Education Business Partnership Organisation if part of service level agreement)

Element Three – Planning (continued)		
	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 3D	Learners are effectively briefed before the placement, including health and safety as part of work experience preparation.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation/
E 3E	The EBPO operates checks in line with HASPS standards.	Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 3F	The employer holds employers' liability compulsory insurance and public liability insurance and has advised their insurers they are involved in work experience schemes.	Employers
E 3G	The placement job descriptions are comprehensive and include "hands on" meaningful tasks. A job description is issued to the learner, parent, employer and placement supervisor before the placement starts.	Education Business Partnership Organisation/Employers/Learners/ Parents/carers
D 3H	Progression is built in for post- 16 learners taking account of earlier experience of work, including part time and voluntary work.	School/college/learners
E 3I	Special needs learners are carefully matched to placements by experienced staff and effectively supported during their placement.	School/college and Education Business Partnership Organisation if involved in the matching process
E 3J	Parents are notified of the specific arrangements for their child's placement, including dates, work times, dress code, contact details, location and activities to be undertaken.	School/college
E 3K	Emergency contact arrangements are in place between the appropriate parties, including out of school hours provision.	Schools, Parents/carers, Employers
E 3L	Schools/colleges and employers are aware of the requirements relating to the learner being appraised of (a) the significant risks of the work, (b) the control measures to reduce the risks, and (c) where learners are below the minimum school leaving age the placement is required to also inform the parents/ carers – all before they start work.	Employers/parents – might be through a Education Business Partnership Organisation or school or college
E 3M	Learners are provided with a means of completing a record of the tasks, achievements and challenges of their placement.	School/college

### Element Four – Delivery

	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 4A	Competent people support learners at all times during their placement.	Employers
E 4B	Learners are given clear instructions about what they are being asked to do during the placement. Competent people check they understand, bearing in mind the learners age, experience and maturity.	Supervisor/learners
E 4C	The employer or representative will conduct an induction on the first day of the placement including health and safety matters. This will include the location of the welfare facilities and evacuation procedures.	Employers
E 4D	The employer supports the learner in recognising and developing the skills and qualities regarded as important in the workplace. There should be a structured programme with variety and a number of “hands on” meaningful tasks.	Employers
E 4E	Learners, supported by employers, compile a record of tasks, achievements and challenges during their placement.	Learners/ Employers
E 4F	Learners behave in ways appropriate to the workplace and follow the instructions given to them by the employers.	Learners
D 4G	The school/college supports and monitors all types of placement through visits and/or telephone contact with both the workplace supervisor and the learner to discuss achievements, challenges, and to resolve issues.	School/college

### Element Five – Review

	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 5A	Feedback from employers, parents and learners is gathered and concerns and/or issues raised are followed up and resolved.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
D 5B	Employers contribute to end of the placement reviews in discussion with the learner to record achievements and areas for development.	Employers/learners
E 5C	Learner debriefings take place to review the extent to which learning aims have been met, employability skills developed and to make links back to curriculum subjects.	School/college/learners

### Element Five – Review (continued)

	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 5D	Employers are given feedback about the outcome of the placement including the extent to which learning aims were met, employability skills developed and any other results.	Learners
E 5E	Evaluation outcomes from schools and colleges, learners and employers are used as part of review processes to inform the next cycle of business planning.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
D 5F	Positive work experience achievements are celebrated within the school, with employers, and with parents and carers.	Schools/college/learners/ Education Business Partnership Organisation/parents
D 5G	Good practice is identified during the process of review and shared with others.	Schools/ Colleges/ Education Business Partnership Organisations

### Element Six – Systems and Processes

	Criteria	Who is responsible
D 6A	Schools, colleges and Education Business Partnership Organisations work together to forecast learner demand and to plan placements throughout the year in order to make best use of the placements available.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
D 6B	Employers are provided with timetables and schedules for school and college work experience programmes	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 6C	Systems and procedures are in place to ensure effective communication between work experience co-ordinators and others involved in work experience within the school/college.	School/college
E 6D	Processes are in place to match learners to placements that meet their learning needs, capabilities and the practicalities of getting to and from the placement.	School/college and /or Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 6E	There is a robust system to manage the approval of placements in terms of health, safety and learner welfare.	School/college and or Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 6F	Systems are in place to check and record that all learners have received a briefing, including health and safety, prior to placements commencing.	School/college
E 6G	Safeguarding systems and procedures are in place and where appropriate Criminal Record Bureau and ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority) checks are undertaken in line with national guidance.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation

Element Six – Systems and Processes (continued)		
	Criteria	Who is responsible
E 6H	Systems and procedures are in place to investigate any accidents or incidents in accordance with health, safety and welfare assessment for work experience placements.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation
E 6I	Processes are in place to ensure that employers understand the risk assessment requirements and where the learner is under the minimum school leaving age these are communicated to the parents.	Employers (supported by EBPO's, schools and colleges)
E 6J	Systems and procedures are in place to handle, record and process feedback and complaints from employers and others involved.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation/
E 6K	Systems and procedures are in place to assess that the quality of any Education Business Partnership Organisation used to support work experience is to the satisfaction of the school/ college.	School/college
D 6L	Systems and processes are effective in providing learners with a supply of work experience placements that meet their needs.	School/college and or Education Business Partnership Organisation
D 6M	Marketing and promotional materials are effective and well utilised.	School/college/Education Business Partnership Organisation

## Sources Of Further Information

### Websites

Department for Children, Schools and Families:  
**[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)**

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority:  
**[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)**

National EBP Network: **[www.nebpn.org](http://www.nebpn.org)**

Trident from Edexcel: **[www.trident-edexcel.co.uk](http://www.trident-edexcel.co.uk)**

Health and Safety Executive: **[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)**

LSC: **[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)**  
**[www.safelearner.info](http://www.safelearner.info)**

CBI: **[www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)**

Ofsted: **[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)**

### Publications

*Work Experience and the Law*, Anthony Johns with Andrew Miller

*Work-related Learning and the Law*, DCSF Publications

*Work-related Learning at Key Stage 4*, DCSF Publications

*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, DCSF Publications

*Health and Safety for work experience placements – a good practice guide*

*Building on the Best*, DCSF Publications

*Time Well Spent*, CBI



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