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Curriculum and learning: Curriculum (secondary):

Work experience: requirements and guidance

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Work experience isn't statutory at Key Stage 4, but is expected at Key Stage 5. Familiarise yourself with guidance on this, including for pupils with SEN, and take a look at what some schools do.

In-depth
article

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Work experience is one form of 'work-related' learning

Work-related learning is "planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work", as defined in guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), a predecessor of the DfE.

It says that one of 3 aspects of work-related learning is learning "through the experience of work". This can be provided to students in various ways, such as through work experience, part-time jobs and school-based enterprise activities.

This guidance is now hosted on the National Archives website.

[The work-related learning guide, National Archives – DCSF, see page 8 \(Adobe pdf file\)](#)

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/WRLG.pdf>

Not statutory in Key Stage 4

The Department for Education (DfE) explained to us that work experience is not, and has never been, statutory in maintained schools and academies for pupils under 16.

[Contact DfE, GOV.UK – DfE](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education#org-contacts>

Schools had a statutory duty to provide a standard amount of 'work-related learning' at Key Stage 4 (KS4), but this duty was removed in September 2012, in line with recommendation 21 of the Wolf report.

[Wolf recommendations progress report, GOV.UK – DfE, see page 10 \(Adobe pdf file\)](#)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262819/Wolf_Recommendations_Progress_Report.pdf

Work-related training expected for post-16 students

Students on 16 to 19 study programmes are expected to do work experience or some form of work-related training as part of their study programme 'non-qualification activity'.

This is explained on page 4 of non-statutory advice from the DfE on post-16 work experience.

[Post-16 work experience as a part of 16 to 19 study programmes and traineeships, GOV.UK – DfE \(Adobe pdf file\)](#)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416026/130332015_DfE_dept_advice_post-16_WEx_-_final.pdf

Ofsted's expectations

Ofsted inspectors will inspect the effectiveness of 16 to 19 study programmes, including the effectiveness of work experience. Inspectors will consider how well:

- Study programmes for each learner are planned and managed so that they meet fully the principles of the DfE's 16 to 19 study programmes by providing by providing progression, stretch, mathematics and English for all learners without GCSE legacy grades A* to C (reformed grades 9–4), as well as work-experience and non-qualification activities
- Learners develop personal, social, employability and independent learning skills, and achieve high levels of punctuality, attendance and conduct, including through the contribution of non-qualification or enrichment activities and/or work experience

This is outlined in paragraph 208 of the School Inspection Handbook.

[School inspection handbook, GOV.UK – Ofsted](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>

Pupils with SEN

Schools and colleges should "raise the career aspirations" of their students with SEN and "broaden their employment horizons" through approaches such as:

- Taster opportunities
- Work experience
- Mentoring
- Exploring entrepreneurial options
- Role models and inspiring speakers

Work-based learning is one of the most effective ways of preparing young people with SEN for employment. For example, this could be a traineeship, which includes "a high-quality work experience placement", or a supported internship.

When considering a work placement as part of a study programme, such as a supported internship, you should match students carefully with the available placements.

A good understanding of the student's potential, abilities, interests and areas they want to develop should inform honest conversations with potential employers.

This is explained in paragraphs 8.28, 8.32 and 8.33 of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice.

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years, GOV.UK – DfE and Department of Health, see pages 130-132 \(Adobe pdf file\)](#)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

Further reading

Founders4Schools is a free service which enables primary and secondary teachers to invite founders of businesses to visit their schools and inspire their pupils.

[Founders4Schools](#)

<https://wwwFOUNDERS4SCHOOLS.org.uk/>

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides guidance for work experience organisers, including schools and colleges:

[Work experience organisers, HSE](#)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/organiser.htm>

Examples of provision

Sixth form work experience in the summer holidays

All year 12 students at The Misbourne School in Buckinghamshire are encouraged to go on a "meaningful" work experience placement during the summer holidays.

The school explains:

All students are expected to find their own work placements. Taking personal responsibility for finding the placement and researching their further education and career path is an important part of the process.

[Sixth form work experience, The Misbourne School](#)

<http://www.misbourne.bucks.sch.uk/209/sixth-form-work-experience>

Flexible work experience provision

Wolgarston High School in Staffordshire provides work experience opportunities for students in KS4 and KS5.

The school recommends that students participate in at least one work placement, which can be taken during holiday periods or the final 2 weeks of the summer term. Students are able to take placements early in year 10 and/or in the sixth form if they wish.

Students are responsible for organising their own work placement, using a database to identify placements. The school also provides careers information through its website.

[Work experience, Wolgarston High School](#)

<http://www.wolgarston.staffs.sch.uk/student-information-2/work-experience/>

Special school work experience provision

Abbey Hill Academy Sixth Form, part of the Horizons Specialist Academy Trust, is a special school in Stockton-on-Tees.

It explains that all students have access to some type of work experience which is "relevant and meaningful".

Options for work experience include:

- A supported work experience programme, where students complete an enterprising project

- Work experience, where students are engaged on a full-time placement
- Volunteering
- Vocational experiences
- Supported internships and apprenticeships

[Work experience, Abbey Hill Academy Sixth Form](#)

<http://www.horizonstrust.org.uk/sixth-form-work-experience/>

Requirements for careers guidance

Another of our articles has more information on [requirements for careers guidance](#).

Next steps

- [Work experience policy](#)
- [DBS checks: work experience providers](#)
- [Work experience: health and safety](#)

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