

FINDING A WORK PLACEMENT

Do not leave finding a placement until the last minute!

Firstly you need to think about what sort of environment you might want to experience, for example, magistrates courts, office, primary school, shop! Also think about what type of work you want to do, for example, retailing, practical work, childcare, food preparation. You should discuss your placement ideas with your tutor so they can give you advice, support and encouragement. Begin by thinking about then discussing with your tutor what you want to do on work experience. You don't necessarily have to choose something that you want to do as a job. The aim is for you to experience life in a workplace. It might even be an advantage to do something different.

How to get contact details for the company:

Having decided what sort of company you are looking for, you can find contact details in a number of places:



- Use a search engine like Google to do a search on the Internet using search phrases that include the location e.g. "florists, cavan" or "computer shop, cavan"
- Have a look at business directory websites such as the Yellow Pages
- Look at the local papers such as the Anglo Celt and see what companies are advertising in there that might be of interest to you.
- Think about local companies that you know that you could contact and look them up in the phone book or on the Internet.

How to contact the company:

There are four ways to contact a company:

- in person
- by phone
- by letter
- by email



In a large company you are best to contact the **Human Resources department**. In a smaller company you will usually need to write to the **Manager**.

Email seems to be the most effective way to contact a company these days as it is very convenient for the company to reply to you. You will probably need to look at the company's website to get an email address.

If it is a local shop that you are interested in working in then it might be a good idea to **go along in person** when the shop isn't very busy and enquire about a placement.

It is best to contact several companies as often you may not receive a reply or they make take weeks to say "no". Don't get disheartened by this, it is nothing personal, they are usually just very busy! However because of this it is important to approach several companies so that you have a number of options open to you.

When you speak to the employer....

- Write down what you want to say.
- Have a pen and paper in front of you.
- Ask to speak to the person who organises work experience; take the name of the person you speak to.
- Introduce yourself and the centre you are from. Also explain why you are calling!
(Hello my name is John French and I attend I am ringing regarding my Work Experience which is to take place for a period of is it convenient to ask you a couple of questions?)



- Know the exact hours you need to work.
- Say why you are interested in the type of work the company is involved in.
- Ask for the name and address of where you need to send the placement providers booklet and the placement form for them to complete.
- Use the call/visit to answer any questions that you may have e.g. dress code/ name of supervisor/ expected hours of work / eating arrangements etc.
- Be cheerful, polite and clear.
- Thank them for their time and let them know that you are looking forward to your placement.

Suggested outline for a letter or email to ask an employer for a placement:

If you are sending an email and don't have an individual's name or email address at the company mark your email at the beginning or in the subject line "FAO Human Resources" or "FAO The Manager". If you are sending a letter it can be hand written or typed on the computer. Ideally it should be no longer than one side of A4 paper.

Remember – this is the first contact you will have with an employer and you therefore want to create a good impression so check that the following are correct:

- Presentation and layout
- Spelling
- Company name and address
- That you have the right dates for your work experience

Guide to Writing your Letter or Email

Person's Name or HR Dept or The Manager
Name and address of the Company

Your name
Your home address
Your email address
Date

Dear Sir/Madam (or the person's name if you know it)

Work Experience

1st paragraph

I am a student at and I am years old. I have the opportunity to go on work experience for from (give the date when your work experience

will start) and I wondered if it would be possible for me to work in your company/organisation (use the correct term).

2nd paragraph

Briefly say why you want to spend a week with the company or organisation and what you hope to gain from the experience.

- Ideas: you are a well-known national/local company ... I would like to gain an insight into ... I would like to pursue a career in ...

3rd paragraph

Give details of the subjects you are studying – say which subjects you particularly enjoy and why.

Give details of any activities or areas of responsibility you take part in.

- Ideas: sport, clubs, voluntary work, etc.

4th paragraph

Give details of any interests you have outside of school i.e. sports, part time work etc.

Finish

Finish the letter by signing off “Yours faithfully” (or “Yours sincerely” if you know the name of the person you are writing to).

Finally sign the letter with your name printed clearly or typed underneath your signature.



Questions a placement might ask you....

When contacting companies for a work experience placement, you are likely to be asked some questions. Below is an example of some questions you may be asked....

- Why do you want to do work experience with us?
- What do you hope to learn from your placement?
- What skills and qualities can you bring?
- Why might you be good at this job?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- What are you good at and what do you enjoy in your studies?

Before you contact a company think about what your answers will be if you are asked any of the above; that way you will be prepared.

Some things to think about.....

- Travel: Make sure you know how you are going to get to your placement. If it involves getting a lift or a bus do not forget to check the times and the cost.
- Clothing: Organise what clothes you will wear. You need to be smart and appropriately dressed. Ripped jeans might not be appropriate!



GOOD LUCK!