



# YEAR 10

## GUIDE TO FINDING WORK EXPERIENCE

This guide is for current Year 10 Comberton students looking for work experience placements for the period 2-13 July 2018.

We hope you will find it useful.

## Introduction

Our region is one of the UK's most vibrant in terms of employment. Happily this means that Comberton students find it easier to get work experience than those in many other parts of the country.

However, you need to find your placement in the way that will most likely lead to success. This requires early planning and action, speculative applications, networking and then persistence over several months, possibly in the face of a series of rejections.

We support you as best we can in this, but you do need to source and arrange your own placements. You can apply for two one week placements or one two week placement.

## Keys to success

1. Start looking early - as soon as possible this term!
2. Choose things that are right for you as an individual
3. Approach employers in the way that suits them
4. Begin networking

1 There is a lot of local competition for work experience placements, as a good number of the local schools have the same work experience period. So applying as soon as possible gives you the best chance of getting the placement you want. Try to spend part of Half Term choosing and approaching employers/other placement providers. If you get in early enough, you may get a placement signed and sealed before the majority start in earnest, just before and after Christmas.

2 What would be your dream work experience? Choose employers or other organisations to approach that could offer you a placement you would enjoy and that fits broadly with any future university/career ideas you may already have. It is rare to know exactly what career or job you want after leaving school when you are only in Year 10, but you can start thinking about what your interests, strengths and priorities are for your future working life, and then think of/explore places you could get matching work experience.

But beware: some types of work experience are very hard to get in Year 10, either because of workplace age restrictions, confidentiality, risk or work type. These include Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary, Law, Finance, Acting, Film and Broadcasting Media. Year 10 students aiming for careers in these fields often choose placements linked to these areas rather than directly in them.

3 Some employers like a formal application email, with a CV attached. Others prefer you to drop in yourself to see them, or prefer you to ring them. The more formal a workplace appears to be, the more likely it is that they will want a written application. But employers in customer-facing areas, such as retail, catering, beauty and hair, are often pleased if students ring and/or drop in to see them in person – it helps them get a feel for whether you would fit in well with the other staff there and whether you seem like the sort of person who would be helpful, polite, honest, reliable, pleasant to have around, etc.

Some employers have formal work experience schemes, which involve application forms, interviews and sometimes these occur quite late on, even some in May. It is frustrating for students having to wait so long in these instances, especially since only a minority of those

who apply actually win places on these particular schemes. These employers include Addenbrooke's, Papworth (moving to the Biomedical Campus), PA Consulting (in Melbourn), A14 (based near Swavesey) and ARM (in Fulbourn). Cambridge University Press has just announced they will not be doing work experience for Year 10, only for Sixth Formers, in 2018. And Marshall Aerospace stopped their scheme in 2017 because of cost. Most of our students do not get places on employer schemes, because there are only one or two places offered to CVC students (as the other local schools) each year. The majority of our students obtain other placements.

4 Networking sounds daunting, but it just means finding and making contacts with people who may help you with employment. You don't have to have family contacts already. You can make your own contacts by learning how to ring, email and visit employers. Once you have contacted an employer a few times, your confidence grows.

You may feel a bit shy at first but if you are polite, most people are helpful, and they like talking about their job and giving advice. Talk to friends, parents, older brothers and sisters, neighbours, friends' parents, teachers, etc and ask them for advice – do they know of opportunities where you may be able to help out for a placement for one or two weeks?

### Where to look

#### 1 Your existing contacts

Word of mouth is often a good way to find a placement. Sit down with family and do a mind map of all those people you know of who work somewhere suitable. You might be surprised at how many people you know who might help. Then ask them for their advice on how to apply for a placement where they work, or in their area of employment. They will most probably want to help you!

#### 2 Research

Don't worry if you don't already have any contacts in the career sectors or areas you are interested in. You can research online those organisations/people you would like to approach, based on your university/course/career aims, and then simply email or write to them directly, even though you do not know them. Research local employers as well as sector leaders which may be farther afield. Use company, organisation, university, sector and other websites. Sometimes recruitment websites are also useful for information on actual employers in your area, even if you don't want to apply for a job vacancy as such.

Think through the list of employers or organisations you would then like to apply to and then check where they are located. If you would like to work in a primary school, find out where it is, how easy it would be to get a bus, lift, cycle or walk there and back. If it would be possible, then you can approach them to ask if they would consider you for a placement.

Here is a list of the types of local organisations that have offered work experience to our students in recent years:

Primary schools

Care homes – useful for future medical applications (it is hard to get medical work experience when you are in Year 10, but care homes can sometimes offer placements)

Film, TV, Radio and Media

Sports shops

Sports coaches

Leisure centres

Conference centres

Farming – gamekeeping, farm office work

Golf clubs

Supermarkets

Playgroups/nurseries

Garden centres, gardening

Motor vehicle dealers

Design

Charities and charity shops

International development

Academic:

Cambridge University – colleges, departments/faculties, and the main university itself. The colleges can offer work experience in catering and sometimes in maintenance, gardening, development and conference management. Departments can offer placements in libraries, administration. The university has many management departments of its own – Estate Management, Safety, Computing

Anglia Ruskin University – departments and main university functional offices

Other higher education and similar institutions, like Judge Business School, Scott Polar Institute, British Antarctic Survey, the theological colleges

Churches, youth work and similar organisations

Museums and galleries – there is a Cambridge Museums work experience scheme

Finance

Accounting

Scientific

Technology

Consulting – management or specialist/technical such as PA consulting

Conservation - wildlife

Heritage – National Trust properties, IWM Duxford

Property

Estate Agents

Construction

Local government – council

Politics: Houses of Parliament scheme, shadowing MPs

Architectural

Medical

Veterinary

Solicitors, court service, legal departments in large organisations (placements in barristers' chambers are possible but rare)

Dental

Electrical

Industrial/technical/manufacturing

Gardening design/fencing/timber

Marketing/communications/digital media

Cycles

Punting

Aero Engineering (though note that Marshall ceased running their work experience scheme in 2017)

Animals – zoos, reptile and pet shops, pet care, riding/stables, polo club

Banking – retail and investment (Barclays, HSBC are the best retail providers of work experience)

Insurance

Computing

Dance and performing arts

Cafes

Restaurants

Hotels

Pubs

Catering

Retail – clothing, food, chemists, bookshop, post office, etc

Gym

Road construction, transport planning

Publishing

### More information on how to find target employers

These sites offer local business listings which help you find possible employers in your sector of interest, and their locations relative to where you live:

[Yell.com](https://www.yell.com)

[Thomson.Local](https://www.thomsonlocal.com)

The [Student Ladder](#) has good information on work experience, albeit for slightly older students.

### Looking ahead to university and beyond

It is important to try to get specific types of work experience during your time at school if you might be planning to:

- Apply for a course at university which requires a portfolio of specific work experience, such as Medicine, Dentistry and Vet Science, and other medical professions such as Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Midwifery, and Dietetics. Some ask for 600 hours of work experience, so it can take quite a time to build up the amount you need, starting in Year 10 if possible, and going on through Year 11 and 12. Most students in Year 10 get care-related work experience if they plan to apply for Medicine, and progress to medical experience in Years 11 and 12, as there are so few places on the hospital work experience schemes for Year 10 students.
- Apply for other professional or vocational courses such as Architecture, Law, Engineering, Journalism, Psychology, Planning, Surveying, Games Development, Digital Media and Marketing.
- Apply for courses not closely linked to school subjects for which subject interest and commitment should be clearly demonstrated in a Personal Statement, e.g. Finance/Accounting, Environment and Sustainability, Anthropology, Theology and Linguistics.
- Apply for jobs or apprenticeships in career areas not linked to school subjects, such as floristry, childcare, uniformed services, transport, farming, waste management, etc.
- **But don't worry** if you can't get course- or career-related work experience in Year 10. It can be very hard to do so, and other more straightforward placements (e.g. in cafés, charity shops, hotels) are easier to find at that age. You will have Year 11 and 12 in which to get the specific course- and career-related experience, when it is easier to secure. In these years, students normally do work experience placements in the school holidays, during term by agreement with the school, or in the period following exams.

### Insurance and safety

- Avoid placements in high-risk employment areas such as scaffolding and roofing, and the riskier areas of construction.
- Avoid placements where you are working only with one or two other people (though occasionally this can work if the employer is well-known to you and your family).
- When students arrange their work experience, parents/carers have to take responsibility and make sure they are satisfied that the provider has adequate risk management, and has insurance (Employer Liability Insurance, which covers those under 18, if that's relevant for you).

### Tips for how to approach employers

- If possible, email individuals rather than general email addresses, as you are more likely to get a reply. The general email addresses given on Contact or Careers pages of organization websites which are formatted 'careers@....com' or 'info@....co.uk' can work. But emails to them are often simply ignored or sent to spam. You can find individuals to email using LinkedIn, or by creatively searching online. For example, if you search for 'technical manager' and the name of the engineering company you would like to approach, you may get the name of just such a manager, and can then email them by phoning the switchboard to ask for their email address or even by guessing their likely email address format based on the company email address formats generally.
- You can ask for two weeks, but also make it clear that even one week would be greatly appreciated if they can't offer you two. If you get one offer you can then find something for the other week.
- Don't just fire off lots of emails to a big group of employers: do a list in order of preference and approach a few at a time.
- Make a shortlist of about five potential work experience providers. Then simply email the person you want to approach in each one, asking for work experience and attaching your CV. Or you can phone, write to or visit them, if that seems more appropriate.
- If you get no positive response, make a further list of target employers and ring or email a few at a time until you do get a placement arranged.
- Don't be put off or give up if you get many rejections. Most employers don't actually reply if they can't offer you anything, and you may feel ignored. And you may have to send twenty emails or more before you get a placement arranged. But everyone gets there in the end!

### Checking with parents/carers, and other factors

- Confirm with your parents/carers that they are happy with the workplace you are choosing.
- Check they are also aware of and happy with transport arrangements and costs. This can be particularly important if you will be travelling to London by train.
- Look for a placement where you will be overseen by a named person and that you will not be on your own/with one other person only in a private house or single office. This can be a problem with some placements and is to be avoided.
- Make sure you understand what is expected of you in terms of dress code and safety clothing, time to arrive, tasks to be completed, lunch arrangements.

### School resources

The following anonymised examples will be available from the Careers Office, which can be used as starting points for writing your own applications. They are based on the CVs of students who have been successful in gaining work experience.

- Examples Year 10 CVs and application form sections
- Example wording for a Year 10 covering email

### Forms

- Once you have agreed a placement, email a Word version of the school Self-Organised Placement form, or take a hard copy in person, to the employer, so they can complete and sign their section. They can do this via email if easier.
- Then get your parent or carer to complete and sign their section, and you then complete the student section before returning it to me in the Careers Office if possible by 31 January.
- Keep a copy for your own use so you can check working hours, clothing needed, lunch arrangements, contact at the employer, etc before you start.
- The employer might make you complete their own form too.

Happy hunting: your efforts now will pay off come next July!

### Further Help

Ms Taylor, Head of Careers   Itaylor@combertonvc.org   Mon – Wed   01223 262 503 x 270