Morrisby (https://www.morrisby.com)

Student guide to work experience

Modified on: Thu, 28 Aug, 2025 at 11:37 AM

Securing a work placement can give you valuable, real-world insight into a career area you want to explore, while also helping you develop skills and contacts that will strengthen future job or university applications. In many sectors, employers expect applicants to have some practical experience before applying for permanent roles. This guide outlines how to identify the right placement and how to get the best value from your time there.

Finding a Placement

Finding a work placement can be a challenge. Instead of searching for the perfect job title, focus on finding a role where you can develop useful, transferable skills.

- **Look at the wider career field.** For instance, if you aim to become a software developer but cannot secure a placement with a tech company, explore related opportunities. You might build relevant skills by working in an IT support department, a digital marketing agency, or a data analysis team.
- **Identify transferable skills.** If you want to become a doctor but cannot gain direct hospital experience, you might want to look elsewhere. Look for roles such as volunteering at a care home, supporting patients at a GP clinic, or helping with health awareness events. All require empathy, clear communication, and the ability to work well under pressure.
- **Align your search with your school subjects.** Here are some ideas to get you started. You can also use your Morrisby choices or speak with your careers advisor to get further support.
    - **Art/Design:** Galleries and museums, design studios and agencies, in-house design teams of large companies
    - **Business studies:** retail store's management team, marketing agency, manufacturing company's operations department
    - **Computer Science:** IT companies, tech start-ups, school IT departments, video game development studios, cybersecurity firms
    - **Drama:** Theatres, talent agencies, event management, events (for example, festivals)
    - **English/Languages:** Newspapers, publishing houses, libraries, language schools, translating and interpreting companies
    - **Geography:** environmental consultancy, national park visitor centre, geological survey team
    - **History/Classics:** Museums, archives, libraries, historic sites, academic and research institutions
    - **Law:** solicitor's office, barrister's chambers, Citizens Advice Bureau, legal aid charity
    - **Maths:** Banks, accounting firms, insurance companies, data analytics companies, market research companies
    - **Medicine/Biology:** Pharmacies, hospitals, dental clinics, care homes, vet clinics
    - **Psychology:** mental health charity, care home, school SEN department, university psychology research lab
    - **Science/Engineering:** Research labs, energy companies, science museums, renewable energy company sites
    - **Sociology:** social research organisation, probation service office, community outreach centre
    - **General:** Schools, retail stores, libraries, community centres, hotels and hospitality venues, charity shops, local councils, small businesses, national park or natural reserve

Reaching Out to Employers

Target organisations where your chances are strongest. Well-known national brands often have competitive application processes and may not accept students without experience. You may have more success with smaller local companies, independent traders, or community organisations.
Use your network to uncover opportunities. Friends, relatives, neighbours, and teachers might know someone who can offer you a placement or introduce you to the right person.
Check in with your school or college careers team. They may hold contact lists for businesses that have hosted work experience before and can help you approach them.
When you are ready to get in touch, take the lead. Send a concise, professional email or letter that:

- States the dates you are available, make sure to send this in advance, not last minute!
- Explains why you are interested in that organisation, showing you understand what they do.
- Highlights what you can contribute, even if it is simply support with everyday tasks.
- Shows enthusiasm and willingness to learn, employers value a positive attitude as much as experience. Make it clear you are eager to get involved and gain insight into their field.

Before sending, ask someone to **review your message** for clarity, tone, and spelling so you make the best first impression. **Use a professional email address;** your school email is a good option. Attach a well-written CV to provide more detail about your skills and qualifications. The **Morrisby** website offers useful tools and guidance for building a strong CV. You can also check out these examples:

- **How to Write a CV - Getting the Basics Right** (https://www.morrisby.com/blog/how-to-write-a-cv-getting-the-basics-right)
- **CV for legal work experience** (https://www.google.com/search?q=https://www.thelawyerportal.com/careers-advice/legal-work-experience/writing-a-cv-for-legal-work-experience-2/)
- **CV for financial work experience** (https://www.google.com/search?q=https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cv-for-finance-internship)
- **CV for medical work experience** (https://www.google.com/search?q=https://www.themedicportal.com/blog/how-to-write-a-cv-for-medical-work-experience/)

Preparing for Your Placement

Once your placement is confirmed, start getting organised so you can make the most of the experience:

- **Mark the dates and times in your calendar** so there is no risk of forgetting or double-booking yourself.
- **Know your school's work experience contact** - this is the person you can go to if you have questions or need support.
- **Record key details about your placement** like the company name, full address, your placement lead's name, and their email and phone number.
- **List all workplace locations** if your placement will take place in more than one site, and make sure you know which days you will be in each.
- **Plan your travel** in advance, checking transport routes, timings, and costs.
- **If staying away from home**, write down the address where you will be based during the placement.
- **Email your employer** a week before you start to confirm you are attending.

- **Clarify important details** such as dress code, start time, lunch arrangements, and who you should report to on your first day.
- **Prepare any documents you might need**, such as a passport, DBS check, or permission forms, and ensure they are up to date.

You will need all these details when completing your work experience placement form in Morrisby.

Additional steps

- Research the organisation – find out what they do, what they value, and the role of the department you will join.
- Write down a few questions to ask colleagues during your placement to show enthusiasm, such as:
  - What do you enjoy most about working here?
  - What are the biggest challenges in your role?
  - What advice would you give someone starting out in this field?

Staying Safe on Your Placement

Your safety is the top priority. Employers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe working environment for everyone, including work experience students.

- **Know your rights.** The **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** requires employers to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their workers. You can find more information in a guide for young people from the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** (https://www.google.com/search?q=https://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/faqs.htm).
- **Follow all instructions.** Always listen carefully and follow any safety procedures, especially when using equipment.
- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Pay attention to safety signs, fire exits, and emergency procedures. If you see something that seems unsafe, report it to your supervisor immediately.
- **Speak up.** If you feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or are asked to do something you don't think you should, speak with your supervisor or another trusted adult at the company. You can also contact your school's safeguarding lead, careers advisor or the work experience coordinator for support.

During Your Placement

Making a strong impression from the very start is key to a successful placement.

- **Arrive on time every day**. Being punctual shows respect for others' time and reliability.
- **Dress appropriately** for the workplace. Follow any dress code guidelines and aim to look neat and professional.
- **Be polite and approachable**. Smile, use good manners, and be friendly with everyone you meet, from colleagues to support staff.
- **Show enthusiasm and interest**. Ask questions, listen carefully, and demonstrate that you are eager to learn.
- **Take your tasks seriously**. Complete assignments thoroughly, meet deadlines, and double-check your work. Always thank anyone who supports or teaches you along the way.
- **Observe and learn from others**. Watch how employees handle tasks, manage time, and communicate. This will give you insight into professional behaviour and skills in action.
- **Keep a journal**. Record what you do, what you learn, and any new skills you acquire. Reflect on challenges you faced and how you overcame them. This is invaluable when writing personal statements, CVs, or job applications later.
- **Offer help when possible**. If you see a small task that needs doing, volunteer to assist. This shows initiative and teamwork.
- **Stay professional online**. Avoid posting about your placement on social media in a way that could be inappropriate or reveal confidential information.
- **Ask for feedback**. At the end of your placement, ask your supervisor for constructive advice on how you performed and areas to improve.

Following these tips will not only make your placement more productive but also leave a lasting, positive impression on your employer.

After Your Placement

Once your placement ends, take steps to make the experience count:

- **Send a thank-you message** to your supervisor and any colleagues who supported you. A polite email or note expressing your gratitude leaves a lasting impression and can help build professional connections for the future.
- **Reflect on your experience**. Consider questions such as:
  - What did I enjoy most about the placement?
  - What tasks or skills did I find most rewarding?
  - What new skills or knowledge have I gained?
  - Has this experience helped clarify my future career interests?
- **Record your reflections** in a journal, log-book, or digital file. You can also use the Journal in Morrisby; this is available under the Work Experience section.
- **Update your CV** with any notes, achievements, or examples of work completed during the placement.
- **Stay in touch** with contacts you made during the placement. A brief message every few months can maintain your network and may open doors for future opportunities.
- **Celebrate your achievements**. Recognise what you learned, the skills you developed, and the effort you put in – every placement is a valuable step in your career journey.

Taking time to reflect and document your placement ensures the experience continues to benefit you long after it has finished.

More like this: **Making the Most out of Work Experience** (https://www.morrisby.com/blog/making-the-most-out-of-work-experience)

Related Articles

- **Progress & Locker**
- **Student Letter - Work Experience Launch**
- **Employers - Hosting Work Experience**
- **Work Experience - Employer Letter Template**
- **Work Experience Parent Consent Letter**
- **Morrisby Profile - Advice for School & College Leavers**
- **Morrisby Work Experience Portal - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**
- **Morrisby Tracker - Information for schools & colleges**
- **Gatsby and Skillsbuilder**

- **The student experience: My Choices**

(https://www.morrisby.com)

Leading careers guidance for over 50 years

- (https://twitter.com/morrisby)
- (https://www.linkedin.com/company/morrisby-organisation/)

info@morrisby.com

Useful Links

Gatsby Benchmarks (https://www.morrisby.com/gatsby-benchmarks) **Practice questions** (https://app.morrisby.com/Practice-Questions) **Demos & Training** (https://www.morrisby.com/training) **Technical requirements**

Company

Pricing (https://www.morrisby.com/pricing) **Blog** (https://www.morrisby.com/blog) **About** (https://www.morrisby.com/about) **Testimonials** (https://www.morrisby.com/success-stories) **Contact** (https://www.morrisby.com/contact) **Data Sources** (https://www.morrisby.com/data-sources)

Morrisby Ltd Registered in England and Wales, No 1183700. VAT No GB 209260972
© 2026 Morrisby
by **Aries Themes** (https://ariesthemes.com)