



Abbey Vocational School



Work Experience Policy – Template Document

The completion of two weeks work experience during the academic year is a core requirement for students undertaking the Transition Year Programme at the Abbey Vocational School.

This placement allows the students to experience a workplace setting for a short duration. It may also provide the students with opportunities to explore various career interests they may have developed. The goal is to encourage them to learn by reflecting on their experiences.

There is widespread acceptance of work experience as a vital element of such programmes and of the fact that the educational benefits far outweigh any difficulties encountered.

Aim:

Students are educated through experience of adult and working life as a basis for their own personal development and maturity.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes:-

Students will through TY work experience;

- Gain an insight into a career or chosen occupation and experience day to day aspects of employment
- Learn beyond the confines of the organised curriculum through experiential learning and reflective practice
- Understand their own strengths and areas for development
- Build confidence and independence
- Make a connection between what they have learned and its application in a workplace setting
- Gain exposure to working within a team setting
- Develop skills of self-evaluation and reflective practice
- Demonstrate organisational skills
- Understand the importance of matters relating to health and safety, ethics and confidentiality in a workplace setting

Links with other policies in the School:

- *Health and Safety*
- *S.E.N.*
- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Excursions Policy*

Information for Students

A. *General*

1. Each student is required to complete *two* separate weeks of work experience.
2. Dates of Work Experience will be provided.
3. Students are expected to organise a different work placement for each of the weeks in question.
4. These placements should be discussed with and approved by the Guidance Counsellor.
5. The Principal will ultimately decide on the suitability of the work placements chosen.
6. The two placements should be in different areas of employment reflecting the interests of the student or the career path they wish to follow.
7. Placements may be *active* or *shadowing*. In an '*active*' placement the student will ideally work as a regular employee and carry out suitable tasks as per instruction; while '*shadowing*' placement allows the student to follow a professional for the week and see what their job entails. Shadow placements are common when a student wishes to work in an area where confidentiality is an issue.
8. **Students are not permitted to use part time jobs for work experience purposes and do not receive payment for work done.**
9. Indemnity Insurance is in place and covers most placements. (*See Appendix 1*)
10. Some students may find that they will be offered work placements outside of dates above. Each of these extra placement opportunities will be considered on a case by case basis at the time. Students need to be aware that they still need to secure placements for the official two weeks of Work Experience outlined above however.
11. In the event that an extra placement is authorised, the student must ensure that all the relevant placement documents are obtained from the school and completed, just as for their other two placements. The onus is on the student to complete and submit any coursework missed as a result of an extra work placement.
12. Students are encouraged to find placements independent of family/guardians to gain some exposure to the 'outside world'.

B. *Insurance*

13. Under the policy negotiated by The Department of Education with Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd. Employers are indemnified in the event of injury to a student. The policy does not extend to include certain activities. Please read indemnity insurance policy. (*See Appendix 1*)

C. *Preparation*

1. Start planning early and identify what type of placement you may wish to pursue.
2. Talk to family, teachers and previous Transition Year students for advice. (It is not your parents, guardians or teachers' job to find you a placement; however, we are here to help.)
3. Speak to this year's fourth years and ask them what work placements they most enjoyed and also what they did not enjoy.
4. Prepare your CV and cover letter with the advice of your Guidance Counsellor!
5. Students who **apply early** are more likely to get the placement they wish for and have in general a more noteworthy and constructive experience.
6. Details of your first proposed placement will be required by the school in mid-November so you need to get planning now.
7. Details of the second placement will be required by the school in mid-January.

D. *How to get started*

1. Consider jobs from many diverse (different) areas; Music, Art, Manufacturing, Engineering, Medicine, Education, Media etc. as very often a placement you might never have considered as a career can end up the one you most excelled in and go on to pursue.
2. Ask your Careers teacher to explain what types of placement are not covered by the work placement indemnity insurance. **Do not** apply for any jobs in this category.
3. Apply for jobs that are linked to your hobbies or subjects you like at school.
4. You will find contacts a number of ways;
 - Personal knowledge
 - Yellow pages / local directories
 - Asking family or friends
 - Asking last year's Transition Year students
 - Recruitment/Job Websites
 - Newspaper adverts
5. Contact the employer either in person, by phone or by email. This may take more than one attempt so persevere!
6. Have the exact dates of the work experience at hand.
7. If requested supply a cover letter of application and/or a C.V.
8. Remember the name of the person you were speaking with and get their contact details
9. Once you have an offer of a placement, ask the employer can they email it to you for your records.
10. Call the employer the week before the placement is to commence to confirm that you are still coming and to check with the employer regarding start time, attire, duties etc.

Work Placement Student Agreement

A. *Pre-Placement*

1. I will familiarise myself with the placement organisation / employer(s) through web searches, company literature, personal contacts, past students etc.
2. I will produce Garda vetting correspondence to the employer if requested.
3. I will clarify the learning outcomes and assessment criteria expected during placement.

B. *During Placement*

Students are expected to conform to all the conditions and rules that apply to employees in the appointed workplace with responsibility to meet the norms and expectations for professional conduct in the particular field of work. In particular I will:-

- 1. Take responsibility to maximise the learning potential of the placement situation. I will actively seek, identify and request learning opportunities and experiences and making suggestions as to how I could contribute constructively.**
2. Maintain punctual attendance for work on the agreed days & times.
3. Attire appropriately and behave in a professional conduct in line with the organisations expectations, norms and standards.
4. Familiarise myself as directed by the employer with all policies and procedures relevant to working in the organisation and comply with any training provided.
5. Follow the organisations policies & procedure in all aspects of the work, clarifying if unsure.
6. Regular liaise with my work placement supervisor / mentor regarding work progress and discuss any challenges, difficulties or issues arising from the work placement.
7. Contact the school in cases of concern or where any difficulties arise or if your place of work experience changes or does not take place.
8. Comply with assessment requirements by filling in your Daily Diary constructively each evening. (See Appendix 2)

C. *Post-Placement*

1. I will complete the *Weekly Reflection* document in a constructive manner.
2. I will submit the required assessment documents to the Careers Department of the Abbey Vocational School in a timely manner;
 - Five daily diary entries
 - The weekly reflection
 - The employer's grid (signed by your supervisor) *(Appendix 2)*
3. I will reflect on learning gained during my work placement and endeavour to integrate aspects of this learning into work / future programmes of study.
4. Maintain contact and engagement with the employer as appropriate.

I agree: _____ *(Student)*

Date: _____

Work Placement

Abbey Vocational School Agreement

A. *Pre-Placement*

1. Process Garda Vetting forms for students where necessary.
2. Provide Insurance Cover for students on placement.
3. Liaise with employers expressing interest in supporting work placement students to help them to identify relevant work commensurate with the students' ability and the programme of study, if requested and the required assessment, which is the five daily diaries, the weekly reflection and the employers' grid to the Careers Department of the Abbey Vocational School in a timely manner.
4. Clarify learning outcomes, reporting arrangements, record-keeping and assessment criteria expected during placement with both student and employer.
5. Obtain a permission note from home and a confirmation of work placement acceptance from the employer in the event that the student is working and staying away from home for the week.
6. Inform Students of the procedures and processes relating to this policy.

B. *Post-Placement*

1. Read/grade final placement reports together with the other pieces of assessment and process the student's grade.
2. Provide feedback to the students on their placement and to employers if necessary.

Work Placement Employer Agreement

A. *Pre-Placement*

Note: *Students are not to be paid for work placement; after all, you are providing them with a valuable experience.*

1. Identify relevant and meaningful work for the student, enough to represent 5 days of employment.
2. Work experience usually takes one of two forms:

“Work experience”: This is when students are actually involved doing the work. Students can be given "hands on" tasks according to ability. They should not be left unobserved with awkward or difficult tasks.

“Work shadowing”: This is when the student spends time observing or "shadowing" a skilled worker.

The form of experience which you provide will largely depend on the nature of the company. Hopefully they will be able to do a mixture of the two.

3. Appoint & prepare a mentor / supervisor to support the student in the workplace.
4. Discuss the proposed work with the student and guide the student in their proposed work placement. Consider discussing working hours, aims and objectives of the work, any special conditions to be fulfilled by either the student or the employer during the placement, plus any other relevant information.

B. *During Placement*

1. Provide relevant and meaningful employment and learning opportunities for the student as agreed in the proposal, which provides opportunities to use and further develop knowledge and skills and optimises engagement opportunities.
2. Provide suitable supervision and workspace arrangements.
3. As a partner and facilitator of the learning experience, consider what site-specific Training / Induction / Orientation activities would be necessary / useful to the student.
4. Provide a healthy and safe working environment for the student and ensure the student is made aware of all necessary legislation, ethical, confidentiality and security issues (data protection, intellectual property rights etc.), policies and procedures (e.g. bullying policy, harassment policy, etc.), training opportunities and any other site-specific issues appropriate to working in the organisation.

5. Maintain accurate records of the students work progress / supervision meetings as necessary,
6. Provide regular and constructive informal / formal feedback to the student to improve performance and stimulate learning. Feedback should be specific, relevant, and timely and include recommendations for improvement.
7. Contribute to the evaluation of the student during the placement by completion of evaluation forms etc.

C. *Post-Placement*

1. Provide student with an overview of their placement performance and areas they might improve on. The employer may also choose to invite suggestions from the student on how the placement opportunity might be improved.
2. Provide feedback to the Abbey Vocational School on the placement process by completing the assessment grid for the student and by making any other relevant comments and suggestions which might benefit the student in the future.

Adopted by BOM on 30th May 2016