



Leicestershire Education Business Company

# Work Experience Parent/Carer Guide



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## Introduction

Since 1992 Leicestershire Education Business Company (LEBC) has been creating successful links between business and education so that young people can learn more about business and working life.

We offer a range of services aimed at giving young people a focus on work and employability skills. We do this through work experience, primary and secondary enterprise and other work related learning activities as well as the National Citizen Service.

### **Work Experience**

Work Experience is such an important part of a student's life and is often remembered for a long time, meaning it is an invaluable process. The benefits of work experience include:

- First-hand experience of employment - an understanding of the routines and disciplines of professional practice
- Raised awareness of how their curriculum subjects, skills, interests and attitudes relate to the world of work
- A reference as evidence which will help in the future, as well as possible apprenticeship or part time work opportunities

In 2015/16 over 4500 students went on a work experience placement through LEBC. Of the students who completed our online survey we found that:

- 86% of students gained confidence
- 87% improved their communication skills
- 84% stated that their team working skills were stronger after work experience
- 92% felt more positive about the world of work
- 89% said that they were motivated to work harder in school
- 89% felt they had developed new skills
- 73% were clearer about what they wanted to do in their future education / career.

Students should think carefully about realistic work experience choices and sectors – even if they are sure of what they want to do in the future – and as much support as you are able to give in helping them to make these choices should ensure that they get the most out of the placement.

This guide should help you to understand LEBC's role in the work experience process and answer any questions that you may have. Any further queries should be directed to the work experience co-ordinator within school/college.

## **Choosing the Right Placement**

Students will be given an application form. This will probably be completed in school time using our Student Directory during a lesson but they will have to bring this home to be signed and approved by you. Please ensure that you read the application form fully and that you are happy with the choices and travel areas.

The more travel areas a student puts on their form the more chance they have of getting a placement within their first or second choice. Please also make sure that any medical conditions, special educational needs or any other known factors are included on the form. This will enable LEBC to find the most suitable placement to meet the needs of the student.

## **Deadlines**

LEBC have strict deadlines for the return of application forms. We work with many different schools meaning competition for placements is high. To ensure that all students have a fair and equal chance to access all of our placements we ask for all applications to be in for the same date.

## **Self-Placements**

Some sectors are self-placement only including dance, media, theatre, uniformed services and NHS. Information is available in the Student Directory about availability of placements and sectors where self-placements are advised. Please ask your work experience co-ordinator in school for a copy. Self-Placement forms must be in as close to the application form deadline as possible. As soon as we get the application forms in we will start looking for a placement. If you are sure that a self-placement will come through but you are unable to get it completed for the deadline then please make a note of this on the application form.

Information we need to be completed on the self-placement form is:

- Employer name
- Address
- A signature from the employer showing agreement for the discussed dates
- The job role
- Whether they have Employers Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance (both essential for a placement to go ahead)
- A contact name, telephone number and email address.

## The Matching Process

LEBC have an experienced team of co-ordinators working with a database of employers to place students on work experience. We take into account student's choices, travel areas and any known factors about the student to ensure the placement is the 'best fit'.

This part of the process starts as soon as the application forms are received. Sometimes employers may ask for more information about the student in the form of a CV or a covering letter. If this is the case we will liaise with the work experience co-ordinator in school to get this information to the employer.

## Health & Safety

Every employer that takes a student on work experience (including self-placements) is visited by one of our Employer Assessors for a health, safety and welfare check. They will also put together, with the employer, a job description and risk assessment for the placement. The level of risk of the placement is determined at the visit and a revisit schedule put into place accordingly. If a placement is deemed to be high risk they will be visited every year, lower risk placements are visited less often with the lowest risk placements visited every three years.

As part of the visit our Assessor needs to see certain policies are in place and also obtain a copy of the Employers Liability Insurance Certificate (ELI). This is to ensure that students are covered by insurance while they are out on placement. If we do not receive the ELI or the visiting Assessor is not satisfied with the conditions of the placement we will not be able to approve the placement.

## Paperwork

LEBC sends the work experience paperwork to the school co-ordinator once the majority of students have a confirmed placement. On occasions this can be delayed, for example if our Assessor has been unable to complete the health and safety visit, or there is some outstanding actions for the employer to complete. Do not panic if paperwork doesn't come through at the first deadline date. We will be liaising closely with the school work experience co-ordinator, please speak to them for any updates.

Students will get two documents. The first one is theirs to keep and it is called the "**Work Experience Placement Description**". This document gives all of the information that you will need to know about the work experience placement including the address, contact name and telephone number. It also gives a description of the job, any requirements e.g. good communication skills, what they should wear, what hours they will be working and the breaks that they will get. The risk assessment for the placement is also on the document. Please take the time to read through and familiarise yourself with this.

The second document is the “**Work Experience Agreement**”. This is the contract for the placement and needs signing by employer, student and a parent/carer. This needs returning to school fully completed before the placement start date. It has all of the information that is on the Work Experience Placement Description.

## **Spare Placements**

On some occasions LEBC may be unable to match a student to their first or second choice of work experience placement. Usually this would be because there was such a high demand for the sector that there simply were not enough employers in the local areas to take all of the students. At this point students will be offered a “Spare Placement”.

Spare placements are good quality placements with supportive employers who are able to accommodate students for the dates set by the school / college. It may be that these are in different sectors to a student’s first / second choice but are within their travel areas or it could be something that matches their choices but falls outside of their travel areas.

Some of the most successful placements and outcomes come from spare placements. Students can still gain skills and work experience through a spare placement and may also find a different career path to follow or part time work whilst studying. Please support your young person to choose a “spare” if they need to.

## **Interviews**

All students must make contact with their employer as soon as possible once they have received their paperwork, to arrange their pre-placement interview. This also includes students that have a self-placement. Most employers like to meet the students face to face before they officially confirm the placement and all placements are provisional subject to a successful interview.

Each interview is very different, this is completely down to the employer so can vary from student to student. Usually it will be an informal chat to ensure that the student is suitable for a placement with them, that they are keen and to settle any nerves and confirm details for the first day. Please support your young person to make the phone call but **do not do it for them**. Students should be making the initial contact and attending the interview by themselves. At interview the employer will make the risk assessment specific to the student and sign the agreement, which needs to be returned to school.

## **Placement**

The majority of work experience placements run smoothly. If there are any issues regarding the placement including queries over start / finishing times or problems within the placement then please contact the work experience co-ordinator within school. Any accidents / incidents must be reported as soon as possible to LEBC via your school work experience co-ordinator. During the placement a member of staff from the school may either call to monitor the placement or visit the student on placement.

At the end of the placement the employer should complete an “Employer Report” reviewing students timekeeping, teamwork, appropriate behaviour etc. It also has a box for general comments. Some employers also complete an official reference for students if they feel that have done particularly well.

Following the placement students may be debriefed in school and ideally will complete the online evaluation as a chance to reflect on the placement and give their valuable feedback.

## **Queries**

We hope that this guide has answered any questions that you may have about the work experience process. We recommend that any outstanding queries be directed to the Work Experience Co-ordinator in school who will be able to speak to a designated point of contact here at LEBC should this be needed.