

Contacting people to request a work experience placement

1. Research the top local firms in your chosen area of work – you should be aiming for a placement at a company that is linked to your career and/or higher education aspirations and approach companies that can offer you a high quality placement
2. Identify approximately 5 - 10 places you would like to contact for a placement – it is best to contact more than 1 company as, if your first choice cannot offer you a placement, by the time you get their reply it could delay getting another placement
3. Consider the most appropriate way of contacting them
4. Write down the date that you contact them so that you can follow up later after an appropriate period of time has passed
5. Include your age in your message – employers may sometimes have restrictions on offering placements so students who under 16 so it will be better to make them aware of your age from the outset. Plenty of employers do not have a problem with under-16s doing work experience though but you may have to persevere

How to contact the company

1. In person
2. By phone
3. By e-mail
4. By letter

In person: if you are planning to visit the company in person here are some suggestions of things to remember...

- ⇒ dress smartly – school uniform will be fine
- ⇒ go at a time when they will not be too busy, if possible call ahead to arrange an appointment
- ⇒ ask to speak to whoever is in charge of work experience placements
- ⇒ take paper & pen to make notes, especially if they give you a name of someone else to contact

By phone: if you are planning to call the company here are some suggestions of things to remember...

- ⇒ practise what you will say before you call –have a draft script to refer to
- ⇒ ask to speak to the person who deals with work experience placements and make a note of their name

By e-mail: if you are planning to visit the company in person here are some suggestions of things to remember...

- ⇒ your e-mail should be planned the same as if you were writing a letter – formal, spell-checked and with clear contact information including the correct dates of work experience
- ⇒ ring or e-mail the company's general number and ask for the e-mail address of the person who deals with work experience – you should only send an e-mail to the general e-mail address after you have tried to find a direct contact e-mail.
- ⇒ make sure you know whether the person you are contacting is Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (if unsure write Dear Sir/Madam)

By letter: if you are planning to visit the company in person here are some suggestions of things to remember...

- ⇒ your letter needs to be a formal letter with all the information clearly set out and spell-checked
- ⇒ you need to include the correct dates of work experience
- ⇒ ring the company to ask for the name of the person to address your letter to – a direct approach to the correct person is always best but if you cannot find that information then address the letter to the manager or HR department

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

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

Your home address

Date

Dear (or Sir/Madam if you were unable to find out who to write to)

Work Experience placement request

1st paragraph

I am a student at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells. I have the opportunity to go on work experience (give the date when your work experience will start), when I will be years old 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 (additional/extra)

Give details of the subjects you are studying – say which subjects you particularly enjoy and why. If possible link the skills used in these subjects to the type of work you may do on your placement.

Finish the letter by signing off “Yours sincerely” (or “Yours faithfully” if you do not know the name of the person you are writing to)

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