



How to find a Work Placement



INTRODUCTION TO WORK PLACEMENTS

Work placements provide you with invaluable experience, helping you gain practical insights into the world of work. They not only enhance academic knowledge but also develop essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. Many industries offer placement opportunities, ranging from healthcare and engineering to media and business, but you have to do the work to find them. This guide will help you navigate the process of finding a work placement, offering tips, resources, and a Q&A session to address common queries.

WHY WORK PLACEMENTS MATTER

Work placements give you a taste of what it's like to work in a real job. They're a great way to explore careers you're interested in and build skills that look amazing on your CV. Whether you're into tech, healthcare, media, or something else, placements can help you figure out what you like and don't like. Plus, it's a chance to meet new people and see how things work outside of school.





HOW TO FIND A PLACEMENT

1. Start with Your Interests

Think about the subjects you enjoy or the careers you find cool. This can help you narrow down where to look for placements. Chat with your teachers, career advisors, friends and family about your interests—they might know about opportunities you haven't considered.

2. Use Your Network

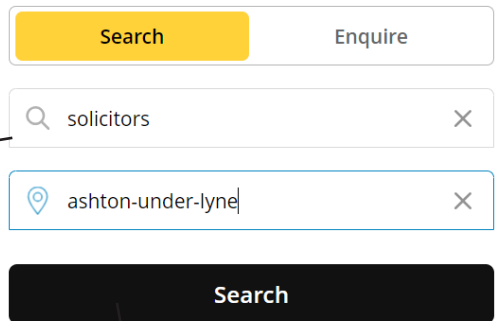
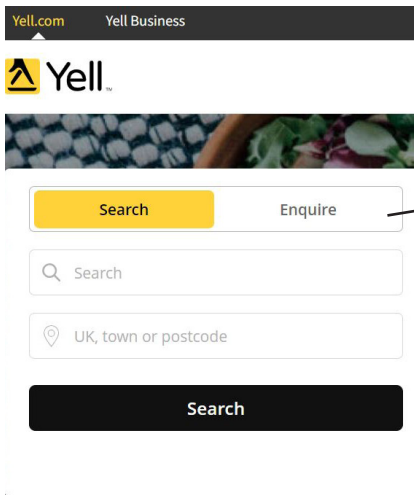
Ask around!

Sometimes the best placements aren't advertised. Talk to family, friends, or even your friend's parents or neighbours. Ask as many people as you can, they might have connections.

Almost 80% of placements are found through networking. (Networking is basically contacting people and making new connections) Also, keep an eye out for career fairs or open days at local businesses or universities where you can ask about placements.

3. Cold Call

Get on your mobile and call around. Ask open questions e.g. Not "Do you have any work placements available?" Instead ask, "What do you think of the idea of having someone to help you for a week during the summer?" Use **yell.com** to find local companies and go through as many as you can. You can search by postcode and distance from your home (for approximately every 10 calls you make you may get one positive answer)



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Cold Call Continued:

Handling conversations with gatekeepers can feel like threading a needle. It's a fine balance of politeness, persistence, and purpose. Here's a more in-depth look at some essential tips for handling interactions with these crucial contacts effectively.

Firstly, always bear in mind that receptionists and assistants are there to screen calls. It's their job, and they're not out to make your life difficult.

Understanding this can help set the right tone for your conversation. When they ask about the purpose of your call, give a direct, concise answer.

For instance, if they ask...



What's the call about?

Respond with something straightforward like...



It's about new opportunities

Courtesy goes a long way!

Always use **"please"** and **"thank you."** These small words show respect and can make your conversation more pleasant.

Persistence is key, but it should be polite persistence. If the gatekeeper can't put you through, ask if there's someone else in the same department who might be able to help. This tactic not only increases your chances of getting the information you need but also allows you to gather additional names that might be useful later.

If a gatekeeper proves particularly tough to get past, don't take it personally, it's just part of their role. Instead, move on to the next call with a positive mindset. Persistence and a positive attitude can often lead to success.

Write a script for yourself and rehearse it. Remember to ask open questions, not closed one.

My name's Loise, and I'm currently studying A levels at Ashton 6th Form. I'm really interested in gaining some hands-on experience and was wondering what opportunities might be available for a keen student like me to get involved.

How do you typically support students looking for work experience, and what qualities do you think are important for someone to make the most out of such an opportunity?"

4. Explore opportunities in person

Go around town or industrial areas and seek out opportunities. Nothing beats the impact of a face-to-face interaction. Visiting businesses in person shows initiative, determination, and a proactive attitude—qualities that many employers value highly. By physically going to different locations, you're also more likely to uncover opportunities that may not be advertised online.

Dress smartly and professionally. First impressions matter, so make sure you're dressed appropriately for the industry you're targeting. A smart appearance shows that you are serious about the opportunity and respect the professional environment. Even if the workplace has a casual dress code, it's better to be slightly overdressed than underdressed when making an initial contact.

Carry multiple copies of your CV. Always have several copies of your CV ready to hand out. Your CV should be updated, well-organised, and tailored to the type of work you're seeking. If you're visiting various types of businesses, you might consider bringing slightly different

versions of your CV that highlight the most relevant experiences or skills for each industry. Having your CV on hand allows you to leave a professional impression, even if the conversation is brief.

Ask to speak to the manager or decision-maker. When you arrive at a business, always ask to speak to the manager or the person in charge of hiring. It's important to be polite yet confident when making this request. Introducing yourself directly to someone with hiring power increases your chances of making a memorable impact. If the manager is unavailable, don't hesitate to ask when they might be back, or if there is another time you could return to speak with them directly.

Present yourself with confidence and a smile. When you meet the manager or decision-maker, greet them with a firm handshake, a big smile, and a positive attitude. This can go a long way in making a good first impression. Be sure to introduce yourself clearly, and briefly explain what you're looking for in a work placement. For example, you might say, *"Hi, my name is Deepak and I'm really interested in gaining some work experience in accounting. I was wondering what your thoughts on work experience are"*

Leave a CV if the manager isn't in. If the manager or decision-maker isn't available, don't be discouraged. Leave a copy of your CV with the receptionist or whoever you spoke to, and politely ask them to pass it along.



GET YOUR APPLICATION READY

When looking for a placement you may need a CV and a cover letter. Don't worry if you don't have work experience; highlight your skills, school projects, hobbies, and any volunteering you've done. Tailor your cover letter to show why you're excited about that particular placement.

INTERVIEWS

If you are asked for an interview, go as smart as you can, be polite and positive and prepare for any questions in advance. Don't forget we can provide you with a mock interview if needed. It's a good idea to prepare some questions in advance in case they ask you any.



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR PLACEMENT

1. Be Professional

Treat your placement like a real job. Be on time, dress appropriately, and show respect to everyone you meet. Even if you're given simple tasks, do them well. A good attitude can make a big difference.

2. Build Connections

Use this time to meet people in the industry. Be friendly, ask questions, and show you're interested in learning. The people you meet can offer advice, become mentors, or even help you with job opportunities later.

3. Learn and Reflect

Keep a journal of your experiences—what you did, what you learned, and what you found challenging. This will help you understand your strengths and areas for growth. Plus, it's great material for future job interviews or university applications.



Q&A SESSION

Q: When should I start looking for a placement?

A: Start looking at least six months before you want to begin. This gives you enough time to find a good fit and get everything sorted.

Q: What if I'm not sure what career I want?

A: That's okay! Choose a placement based on your interests or something you want to explore. It's all about learning and experiencing new things.

Q: I don't have any work experience. Is that a problem?

A: Not at all. Highlight your skills, school projects, hobbies, and any volunteer work. Employers understand you're just starting out.

Q: What should I do if I can't find a placement?

A: If you can't find a formal placement, consider volunteering, shadowing someone in a job, or attending workshops. These experiences are also valuable.

Q: How do I make the most of my placement?

A: Be curious, ask lots of questions, and show enthusiasm. Take notes on what you learn and use this time to figure out what you enjoy and what you don't.

Q: I have a part-time job, can I use this for my placement?

A: Ideally it would be better if you can find something different, but if you can't then approach the company you work for but ask if you can shadow someone in a different role.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Finding a work placement is a fantastic way to explore careers, gain new skills, and make connections. Whether you're sure about your placements are a great step. Remember, the effort you put in now can open doors for your future success.



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If you have any questions please contact placements@asfc.ac.uk



