

## Finding a work experience placement – steps to take

**STEP 1: Research some companies and organisations that you would like a placement at,** see below for advice on researching organisations:

### Where to look...

#### **Your existing contacts**

Word of mouth is often a good way to find a placement. Sit down with family and do a mind map of all those people you know of who work somewhere suitable. You might be surprised at how many people you know who might help. Then ask them for their advice on how to apply for a placement where they work, or in their area of employment. They will most probably want to help you!

#### **Online Research**

Don't worry if you don't already have any contacts in the career sectors or areas you are interested in. You can research online those organisations/people you would like to approach, based on your university/course/career aims, and then simply email or write to them directly, even though you do not know them.

Research **local employers** as well as **sector leaders** which may be farther afield. **Use company, organisation, university, sector and other websites.** Sometimes recruitment websites are also useful for information on actual employers in your area, even if you don't want to apply for a job vacancy as such.

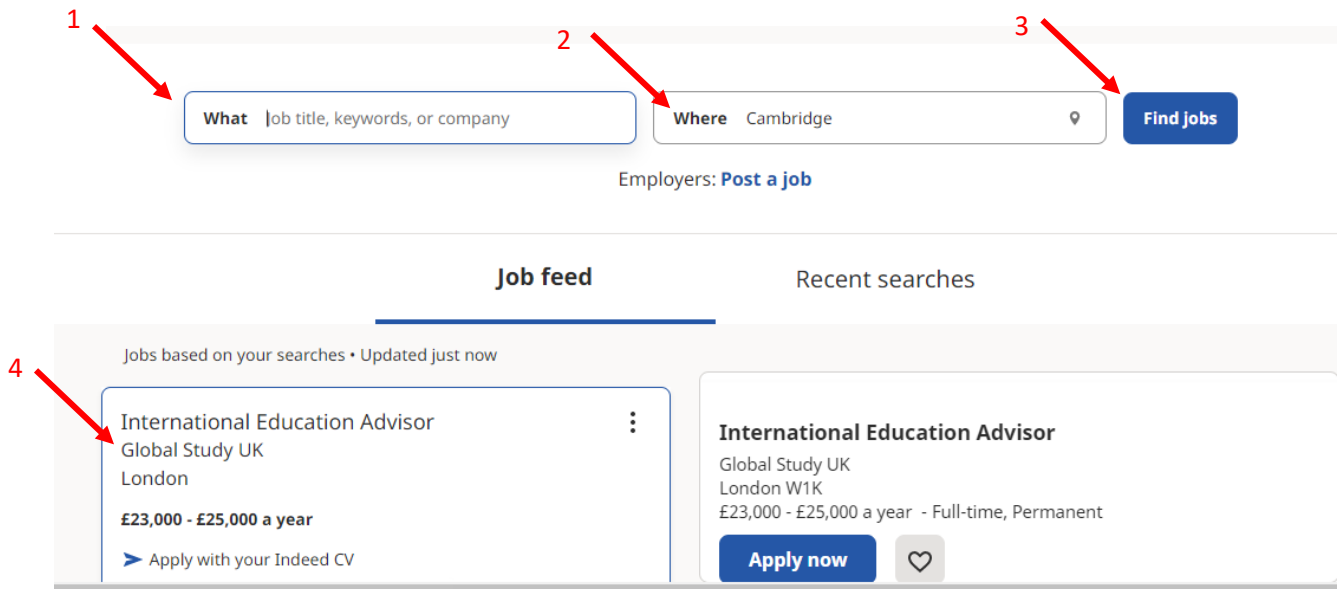
Think through the list of employers or organisations you would then like to apply to and then **check where they are located.** Check how easy it would be to get a bus, lift, cycle or walk there and back. If it would be possible, then you can approach them to ask if they would consider you for a placement.

These sites offer local business listings which help you find possible employers in your sector of interest, and their locations relative to where you live:

[www.yell.com](http://www.yell.com)

[www.thomsonlocal.com](http://www.thomsonlocal.com)

Recruitment websites such as [Indeed](https://www.indeed.com) are useful for finding business and organisations that are linked to your interests.



The screenshot shows the Indeed search interface. At the top, there are three input fields: 'What' (job title, keywords, or company), 'Where' (location, currently 'Cambridge'), and a 'Find jobs' button. Below these is a link for 'Employers: Post a job'. The main section is titled 'Job feed' and shows 'Jobs based on your searches • Updated just now'. A job listing is highlighted with a red arrow labeled '4'. The listing is for 'International Education Advisor' at 'Global Study UK' in 'London', with a salary of '£23,000 - £25,000 a year' and an 'Apply with your Indeed CV' button. To the right, a detailed view of the same job is shown, including the salary and a full-time, permanent position, with an 'Apply now' button and a heart icon for saving.

- Open Google
- Search Google Maps
- Search for local organisations and businesses that are related to your future interests e.g., search for 'architecture firm' or 'web design'
- A number of results will appear
- Go to the organisation's website (note the web address down)

## STEP 2: Establish a contact at the organisation

Look through the website and find a contact email, phone number or postal address for the organisation. The contact email address can be generic (e.g. [hello@justforpets.com](mailto:hello@justforpets.com)) or named ([Davejones@justforpets.com](mailto:Davejones@justforpets.com)) named is better if possible (but this information is not always available on company websites)

## STEP 3: Write an email or letter requesting a work experience placement.

Please see template and guidance below;

[Work experience letter/email template](#)

[Date]

[Employer's name]

[Full address]

[Postcode]

Dear Sir/Madam [or name],

I am a [year group] student from [school name], studying [list of subjects].

I'd like to enquire about a potential work experience placement at [company name], which I will be available to carry out for [amount of time] from [start date] to [end date].

I'm keen on gaining some practical work experience in [chosen field of work], because [reasoning for pursuing a placement with this specific company and field].

I'm a [relevant skills and attributes], which can be shown in my [real-life examples that demonstrate your skills].

In my spare time, I like to [list relevant hobbies and interests], and I've also had some experience in/am a member of [list any groups/clubs/other work experience].

As an enthusiastic student with a keen interest in what your organisation does, as well as a passion to progress within this industry, I would be very grateful to be considered for an opportunity at [company name].

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours [sincerely/faithfully]

[Your name]

## Writing the letter/email...

### Opening the letter

#### **Cover: *Who are you, and what are you looking for?***

In other words, covering the basics.

This section should be short, to the point, and most importantly – accurate.

Always double-check to make sure you've got the right address and name, and don't forget to edit it for each organisation you send your letter to. Because (unsurprisingly), work experience letters addressed to the wrong person won't impress any employer.

And, as work experience placements are rarely formally advertised, it'll be up to you to make your own offer. So also give the employer a brief outline of who you are, what you're doing (e.g. at school, university, or working), and explain what you're looking for.

**Example:** *I am a Year 10 student from Secondary School, studying GCSEs in Maths, English, and Science, alongside my chosen subjects of Textiles, Graphics, Geography, and Art.*

*I'd like to enquire about a potential work experience placement at Company Name LTD which I will be available to carry out for two weeks, from Date X-Date Y.*

### **Third paragraph**

#### **Cover: *What are your career goals?***

This section should express a genuine interest for your chosen company and field of work, which should coincide with your career goals and ambitions.

And, as it's likely that many local organisations receive a large number of work experience requests, you'll need to place emphasis on your enthusiasm if you want to land your perfect placement.

To really stand out, show you've done your research, and express an interest in the company's recent developments and successes.

Whether the organisation has recently launched a marketing campaign you support, you're a big fan of their products or services, or you have a keen interest in the brand and what they stand for – expressing why you want to work for a particular organisation will help boost your chances of being considered.

**Example:** *I'm keen on gaining some practical experience in a creative environment, as this is the field I'm looking to pursue a career in in the future. I'm particularly interested in working for Fashion Retail Company LTD – being an avid fan of your products (having used many of them myself). I also feel you*

*provide excellent service and the atmosphere is positive and welcoming whenever I visit the store.*

#### **Fourth/fifth paragraph**

##### **Cover: *Why are you suitable for the placement?***

This is your chance to sell yourself.

List all of your relevant skills, and think of a real-life example to back each of them up. The examples can be from any area of your life (work, school, university), but it's important that they accurately quantify your skills.

Then, consider your [hobbies and interests](#), and assess what value they could add to your application. Are they related to the placement? Do they demonstrate any of the above skills? And are they unique enough to gain a positive reaction?

**Example:** *I'm a motivated hard worker, with a creative mind and an excellent attention to detail. This can be shown in my most recent assignments for Textiles and Graphics, where I used both creativity and attention to functionality to create an children's dress and an interactive board game – achieving an A\* for each.*

*In my spare time, I volunteer at a local dance group, where I help to look after 10 children alongside a qualified dance teacher. This demonstrates my leadership skills, and ability to work well with others.*

#### **Closing the letter**

##### **Cover: *Everything again (AKA Reiterate)***

Close the letter by summing up your suitability and interest in the field, and always express your gratitude for their consideration.

After all, an employer isn't obligated to give anyone a work experience placement. You may be helping them out by offering to work, but they're doing you a favour too – especially if gaining experience in the field you're looking for work in will help with your overall career goals.

Keep this section short (one or two lines max), and abide by the standard letter rules when you sign off (*yours sincerely* if you know their name, *yours faithfully* if you don't).

**Example:** *As an enthusiastic student with a keen interest in what your organisation does, alongside an ability to learn new things and progress in this industry, I would be very grateful to be considered for an opportunity at Retail Fashion Company LTD.*

*I look forward to hearing from you soon.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*[Your name]*

**STEP 4: Send the email that you have prepared to the contact email address that you have found in step 2 OR send the letter to the postal address you have found OR phone the telephone number that you have found and ask if they can offer you a work experience placement.** Please see a telephone script below:

**Telephone script:**

Hi

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am calling from Cambourne Village College and wondering if it is possible to speak to somebody about the possibility of doing some work experience with your company.

Or

Hi

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am calling from Cambourne Village College and wondering if it is possible to \_\_\_\_\_ about the possibility of doing some work experience with your company.

\*I'll just put you through/ I will take your details and they will call you back\*

*Then...*

I was wondering if your company did any form of work experience programme?

Our work experience is taking place between 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> July.

*Then...*

Do I need to come in and meet with you?

I will need to complete a work experience form which includes some details that your company needs to input- would it be possible to send this to you? What is the best way? (Email? Post? Hand?)

What will the dress code be?

Times of working?

Many thanks for your help... bye!

**STEP 5: Repeat this process for another organisation/business that you are interested in\_**– contact as many organisations as you can – this will increase your chances of securing a placement.

Remember to edit your letter or email to make it relevant to the organisation that you are contacting. i.e. don't mention wanting to work with animals if you are contacting an Architectural firm.

**STEP 6: Wait two weeks for a reply – if you don't receive one, follow up with a second email, letter or phone call.**

**STEP 7: If a company offers you a placement, send them our student self-organised work experience form and ask them to complete it and return it to you.** You then need to sign the student section and you parent/carer needs to complete the parent/carer section. Please then return the form to the careers office on the top floor of the pink corridor or email it to [vmccormack@cambournevc.org](mailto:vmccormack@cambournevc.org).

Our work experience form is available from reception, the year 10 office, the year 10 page of the school website or from the careers office.