



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEET BEGIN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

### How do I choose a career?

Deciding on your longer term career choice is a challenging task for many students. You may or may not already have an idea of what you want to do. If you do, it is important that you research your chosen career. If you are not sure what you would like to do, then the following steps may help you:

- Consider taking a careers test to help suggest careers that might suit you:  
<https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/>
- Speak to your teachers about what subjects they feel you are better at;
- Have a chat with your school careers advisor;
- Talk to friends and family about the job they do;
- Attend your school careers fair and other careers events that may be organised at school (in this climate you can complete tasks sent by your careers advisor);
- Make a list of your key skills, speak to friends and family and ask them what they think you're good at and what your key strengths are;
- Look at job profiles online to read up about different jobs. For example, if you enjoy computing or sport, do a search on what careers these subjects could lead into;
- Think about attending an external careers fair to speak to employers and get some more career advice and support about your chosen career (in this climate this can be done online);
- Think about getting some work experience in your chosen field. If you are thinking about being a sports coach, have a look at what volunteering opportunities might be available in your local area (in this climate you can join virtual experiences and workshops);
- Expand your hobbies, if you enjoy watching movies, could you write an online film review for other students to see? If you are considering becoming a doctor or a dentist, then could you speak to your own consultant and see if you can interview them about what they do? Perhaps in the interview ask them if you can have an opportunity to complete some work shadowing with them;
- Speak to external careers services, national careers service advisor or the apprenticeship advice line;
- Create a careers folder or spreadsheet to help you keep a record all your career links. For example: websites; work experience contacts; details of careers fairs and key dates for your diary;
- Research 'day in the life' videos, for example what does a veterinary nurse, paramedic or a ccivil engineer do in their job day to day?

### Useful links

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles>

<https://careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/subjects>

<https://www.whatcareerlive.co.uk/>

<https://vinspired.com/volunteer>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/contact-us>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/collections/job-profiles/1>



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEET GAINING WORK EXPERIENCE

### **What is a work experience placement?**

A work experience placement is a temporary role, which allows people who are looking for employment in a specific field to gain practical experience and find out what it's really like. The type of work you'll be expected to do will vary depending on the individual workplace and type of placement you choose, although it will normally involve a large amount of observation or work, 'shadowing', alongside assisting with day-to-day tasks and duties. (In this climate, it would not be possible to take part, however you can plan and put in place something for when isolation is lifted).

### **When can I do one?**

Although work experience placements are most common during summer holidays, it's possible to find a work placement at any time of the year. Not all companies are in a position to offer you a role, but most local businesses are accommodating when it comes to providing opportunities. Just make sure you get in touch with an employer or apply for a vacancy in advance of when you're looking to start, so the employer has time to organise dates and work out the formalities. If you give little notice, you're unlikely to be considered.

### **Who is eligible to apply?**

Anyone can apply for a work experience placement, no matter what stage of their career they're at. Students in year 10 and 11, often choose to take part in work experience as part of their study, and to help prepare themselves for the working world when they leave school.

### **What are the benefits?**

Aside from gaining new skills and experience, a work placement provides you with a valuable insight into how a particular industry works and helps decide if the role is right for you. Work placements could also give you the ability to expand your network of contacts within an industry, meaning you could gain positive references to use for future jobs, and other roles might become more obtainable. All in all, work experience is a great way to quantify your skills and prove your enthusiasm and dedication to a particular field of work. Your CV will look more impressive, and you'll become more employable as a result.

### **Will I get paid?**

Whether you are paid for your placement will be dependent on the type of role you take on, the organisation, and the length of time you'll be working there. Generally speaking, work experience placements are unpaid roles, as they span over a short period of time and are classed as volunteer work – although you will often be given subsidised for travel and/or lunch costs.

### **What kind of work can I do?**

Work experience is available within most sectors and industries, although the most popular placements are based in media and digital, fashion, finance, art and design, and teaching. Placements in retail are also popular, especially for those looking to leave school and gain some initial work experience and start their career, instead of choosing to take on further study.

### **How do I get one?**

Securing a work experience placement is similar to finding a job – although the roles might not be advertised as widely, and you may need to ask around or get in touch with a company directly. Once you've found an available opportunity, or a company you'd like to work for, the next step is to write a work experience letter to attach to your application.

Source: <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/work-experience-placements-what-you-need-to-know/>



### **How do I go about gaining work experience?**

- Talk to your teachers about work experience opportunities that might be available to you through school;
- Consider volunteering, Vinspired is a volunteering website for young people. Work experience does not need to be linked to your chosen career. Anything that allows you to develop your confidence, communication or organisational skills will be attractive to a future employer;
- Speak to your friends and family about work experience/work shadowing opportunities. This could be gained through a family business or through an extended family member;
- Look for opportunities through your hobbies, for example if you play football, can you find any work experience opportunities. Perhaps coaching younger players?

### **Useful links**

<https://successatschool.org/advisedetails/506/Work-Experience-Ideas>

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/work-experience-0>

<https://www.getmyfirstjob.co.uk/Choices/WorkExperience.aspx>

<https://vinspired.com/>



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEET APPRENTICESHIPS

### What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a government funded programme that allows you to work and study at the same time, they are often referred as 'work based' learning programmes. Entry requirements for each apprenticeship may differ and you will need to check what an employer is asking for before you make your application. For example, you may need to have English and maths GCSE at grade 4 for a business administration apprenticeship at level 2. Apprenticeships are available from levels 2 to 7:

- Intermediate level 2 is equivalent to 5 GCSEs;
- Advanced level 3 is equivalent to 2 A levels;
- Higher levels 4 & 5 are equivalent to foundation degrees; and
- Degree/master levels 6 & 7 are equivalent to degree level qualifications.

As an apprentice you will attend college or a training provider to gain an employer recognised qualification in your chosen subject. These programmes have been developed with employers, therefore you will be gaining key workplace skills future employers in your chosen profession will be looking for.

You can progress from a lower level of apprenticeship to a higher level one, for example, working your way from level 2 and 3 apprenticeship qualification, then a higher apprenticeship at level 4 and finally complete your studies by completing an apprenticeship at level 6, where you will gain a degree level qualification.

### How do I apply for an apprenticeship?

Like a job, you will need to apply for an apprenticeship, this can be done through the National Apprenticeship website, recruitment or specialist career websites or directly through an employer. There are several approaches you can take to ensure your application looks professional and stands out from the crowd:

**Do your research** - Ensure you apply for vacancies that are suited to your skills, experience and interests. Make sure you spend time creating well written, thoughtful applications, that will catch the eye of a prospective employer.

**Make each application unique** - You may be applying for more than one apprenticeship and therefore it is very tempting to use a 'copy and paste' approach. To give the impression that you have spent some time looking into the vacancy, try to make reference to the company's operations, or how your skills, experience or interests may make you a good candidate. Matching your skills and experience can be effective in both online and paper applications, as well as CVs.

**Experience, hobbies & interests** - It's a good idea to write out a list of everything you might want to include in an application and match your experience with what the employer and training provider are looking for in their job specification. This will show them that you know what they are looking for and have tried to tailor your application accordingly. Backing up everything you talk about in your application with examples, will lend weight to it and make potential employers more likely to be interested in you as a candidate.

**Pay attention to detail** - Your application is as important as your interview. If you are an ideal candidate with the right qualifications and lots of enthusiasm, but your application is let down by being badly written or lacking in information, you could be missing out on an opportunity. Let others read your CV and application before you send it. Ensure there are no grammatical or spelling mistakes, and make sure it sounds positive and confident. Don't be let down by small mistakes, such as forgetting to list contact information.

**Create an eye-catching application** - Employers receive many hundreds of applications, so it is important to make yours stand out from the crowd. What unique and relevant qualities set you apart



from others? You could provide examples of projects you have worked on that specifically relate to the tasks you might face if you got the job? Consider using examples of instances in leisure or study time when you accomplished tasks similar to those required in the vacancy. Think about what a prospective employer might want from a candidate, good communication or organisational skills for example.

**Proofread carefully:** Remember that this doesn't just mean using spellchecker - instead, read through it carefully several times, and ask someone else to do the same in case you miss anything. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are all important, and you don't want to be rejected because of a few simple mistakes.

**Having taken these tips and pieces of advice on board, you will be better prepared to start applying for apprenticeships!**

Most employers will tell you what steps you need to take on the apprenticeship vacancy posting. There may be a link to an application form, but if they only provide an email, you can presume that they expect you to send in a cover letter and CV. Check if the application has a closing date!

**Source:** <https://www.studential.com/apprenticeships/how-to-apply>

#### **Useful websites**

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

<https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/advice/apprenticeship-cv>

<https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/top-employers>

<https://www.ucas.com/understanding-apprenticeships>

<https://www.reed.co.uk/jobs/apprenticeships-jobs>

<https://www.indeed.co.uk/Apprenticeships-jobs>

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/apprenticeships-and-school-leaver-jobs>

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentice/what-is-an-apprenticeship>

<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/jobs-for-16-year-olds/>



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEET SIXTH FORM OR COLLEGE?

### Sixth form

Deciding on whether you should apply for sixth form or college can be determined by your career choice and how you learn best. If you prefer classroom-based learning and are happy to sit exams, then this is a good route for you. A level study follows a very similar style to your GCSEs.

For certain professions A levels might be a necessary option. For example, if you are thinking of a medical or science-based career, you may require chemistry, biology or physics A level to apply for a university course. To apply for A levels, you will need to gain 5 GCSEs grades 9 – 4 (including math and English). You will need to research your career path to ensure you are choosing the right A levels. Also, you will need to find out what the application and interview process involves.

Students who are not sure exactly sure what they'd like to study further may choose broader A levels known as facilitating subjects. Facilitating subjects are the subjects most commonly required or preferred by universities to get on to a range of degree courses. They include:

- English literature, history, modern languages – e.g. French, German, Spanish etc;
- Classical languages – e.g. Latin, Ancient Greek;
- Math and further maths;
- Physics, biology, chemistry and geography.

### Colleges

Colleges provide both vocational and more academic learning opportunities. Some offer A levels and the opportunity to learn more practically through a BTEC or NVQ course. Courses start at entry level, you then have the opportunity to progress to levels 2 and 3. These courses offer the opportunity to study and learn the practical skills needed for your chosen career. For example, you may be considering a career in mechanical engineering. A BTEC level 2 or 3 in this subject will be a mixture of practical learning, assignments and projects. There may also be the opportunity to undertake some work experience. Before making a final choice, it is important for you to:

- attend college open days so you can get a feel for the place of study and to speak to tutors about what you'll be learning (in today's climate you can do this online);
- research the course choices at different colleges, most will allow you to make at least two course choices. Ensure you apply for one that requires slightly lower GCSE grades just in cases you don't get the required grades for your first choice. Find out what the application process involves and also when you might be invited for an interview;
- It's important to plan ahead and think about what you hope to do next once you finish your course. What opportunities will be available to you? Employment, higher apprenticeship or degree? If you are thinking about university make sure you speak to the college to ensure the course gives you the points you need to be able to apply for a degree course.

### Useful links

<https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/choosing-where-study-or-train>

<https://www.studential.com/further-education/sixth-form-or-college>



## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEET PREPARING FOR A COLLEGE OR WORK-BASED INTERVIEW**

**Research the organisation/college** - Most interviews will include a few questions about the organization, so make sure you've done your homework. Most candidates will have read the 'about us' section on the homepage so go a little deeper and find out about what the organisation has planned for the future. Understanding the company will also help you explain why you want to work there.

**Read the news** - It's quite common for interviewers to ask you whether you've read anything in the news recently that would impact on the work the organisation does. Be prepared by reading a few relevant articles and picking out stories relevant to the sector you're applying for.

**Find out about the interview** - Find out as much as you can about the style of interview before it happens. How many people will be interviewing you? Who are they? Knowing these things will help you prepare and feel more relaxed on the day. Take your letter of application and CV with you so you look prepared. If you're worried about forgetting things or not getting your point across, take a few bullet points on reminder cards to help jog your memory if you get a bit stuck.

**Dress appropriately** - It's always better to be overdressed than underdressed for an interview. Be smart and pay attention to detail by making sure you iron your shirt, wear smart shoes, wear subtle accessories etc.

**Ask good questions** - At the end of the interview, you'll most likely be asked whether you have any questions. Make sure you are prepared for this by asking questions that also offer up some new information about yourself at the same time. For example, saying 'I'm a keen runner, do you have any sports facilities on site?' is far more effective than simply asking if there's a staff gym.

**Be self-aware** - Think about your body language and the way you're coming across on the day. Greet each interviewer individually, be positive, smile and make eye contact. This will make everyone feel more relaxed!

**Don't fill the silence** - Interviewers will often pause once they think you have finished giving your answer to see whether you will keep talking to avoid a silence. Answer the question fully and to the best of your ability and then stop. Ensure you are being honest with your answers! Build a strong reputation for yourself as someone who always tells the truth and can be relied on.

### **Don't talk too much**

Answer all the questions fully, but make sure you are not talking so much that you forget to listen. Listening carefully and understanding the questions properly will improve your answers.

### **Source:**

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/tools-resources/finding-job/interview-tips>

### **Useful links**

<https://barclayslifefskills.com/i-want-to-prepare-for-an-interview/school>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/get-a-job/interview-advice>

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/interviews-0>