



Australian Government



# Organising work experience

This workbook will help you to find and arrange your own work experience placement.

When work experience is well organised, and you and your host employer both have the same idea about what you are there for, you will both find it worthwhile.

To get the most out of your work experience placement, do some research to find an industry and employer that suits you.

## What do you want out of work experience?

**I am interested in the following job/industry/occupation:**

.....  
.....

**I would most like to do work experience that:**

.....  
.....

**I can do this by undertaking the following type of work experience:**

.....  
.....

If you need help in answering any of these questions you may like to refer to the Job Jumpstart workbook 'Understanding the different types of work experience'.



## Getting started

Step one is to identify the job or industry you would like experience in and the type of placement that's best for you. The next step is to think about how you can organise a work experience opportunity.

### What are my options?

Start by thinking about the obvious options:

- Do you know anyone who works in the job/industry you can talk to?
- Do you have an employer you would like to work for?
- What local businesses employ people in the job you are interested in?
- What local businesses are from the industry you want to know more about?

If these prompts don't give you any ideas, try searching online for businesses operating in your industry of interest or employing people in your job of interest.

You may need to think a bit creatively about where you could get work experience. For example, if you are interested in a career in fashion, work experience in a small local boutique may be a great way to get a sense of the fashion world.

**I have identified the following businesses as possible options for work experience:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



## Making it happen

If you are a student, your school based careers adviser, registered training provider or university may be able to help you arrange a work experience placement.

For job seekers who are receiving assistance through a jobactive provider, you should discuss work experience opportunities with your provider. You will need to make sure this fits in with any participation requirements you may have.

## Preparing to contact employers

You might feel nervous about approaching an employer to ask about work experience. However, contacting employers directly will improve your confidence and make it easier to find work experience opportunities in your chosen field.

You can make contact with an employer by phone, email or in person.

Here are a few exercises you can do to prepare yourself to approach an employer to ask about work experience, including tips to make the conversation more worthwhile.

## Exercise - Do some research and prepare your pitch

If the business has a website, check it out to get an understanding of what they do. If they don't have a website, think about other ways you can find out more about them. For example, check out their social media channels, google them or ask people who work there about the business.

Use the following questions to develop some key points for your pitch to your potential work experience host. This could be a verbal pitch or something to include in a letter or email:

**What type of work experience are you after?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**What is your ideal length of time for the placement?**

.....

.....

.....

.....



**What do you hope to achieve by doing work experience?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Why you have chosen their business? What sounds particularly interesting?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**What else do you want to ask or tell them about yourself?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



## Contacting employers

### Tips:

- **Be friendly, respectful and polite** when you enter a workplace, whether it's by email, in person or by phone. Remember, you are placing yourself in the middle of a paid worker's busy day. Be diplomatic and don't expect everyone to stop what they are doing to talk to you. Also, be confident and ask for a little of people's time.
- **Find the right person to talk to.** Ask for the person who takes care of recruiting new staff. Find out if and when they might be available to provide a little background on how they go about recruiting and any work experience opportunities.
- **Provide a little background.** If you've found the right person and they are willing to talk to you or answer your emails, then take the opportunity to provide a little more information about yourself. This is a good time to hand in a short résumé, with a cover letter explaining what you have to offer the business and what you are looking for in a potential work experience placement.
- **Do they seem interested?** How did the employer respond to your pitch? Did you feel a positive response?
- **Follow up.** If you think you made a positive impression, but you haven't heard back from the employer, then it's worth following up.

### What else can you think of?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



## First impressions count

Personal presentation is very important when talking to employers. Taking care with your personal presentation will help you make the right impression.

Personal presentation includes:

- physical presentation (clothing, grooming and hygiene, body language and punctuality), and
- how you speak to, and get along with, others and
- your digital profile and how you are portrayed online. If you aren't sure how positively you feature online, google yourself and see what comes up.

Employers will use your personal presentation as an indicator of your suitability for their business.

Make sure you match your appearance and behaviour to the workplace. It is important to dress for the industry or employer you are targeting for work experience or a job.

**Prepare yourself for engaging with employers by making sure you know:**

- what clothes you should wear when first introducing yourself and also what you should wear in the workplace
- how to be polite and appropriate to all the people you meet in the workplace
- how to confidently answer common questions you might be asked
- what your body language says about you and how you can use it to make a good impression
- how to appear calm and focused when presented with a challenge or problem
- how to make your social media profile employer-ready, and
- how to answer phone calls from an unknown caller with an appropriate message or greeting.

**What else will you do to make a good impression?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



## Do I have what I need for my work experience placement?

If you are successful in finding work experience, make sure you talk to your host employer about what you may need prior to starting. This may include any relevant training, for example, a work, health and safety course.

**You should also make sure to check the following:**

- ❑ **The minimum payment and entitlement arrangements for your work experience.**

With some work experience arrangements it's ok not to be paid for doing the work. With other arrangements, you are an employee and should be paid.

Fact sheets and guidance, including examples on what is lawful unpaid work in Australia are available on the Fair Work Ombudsman's 'Unpaid Work' webpage ([fairwork.gov.au/pay/unpaid-work](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay/unpaid-work)). If you have any queries or concerns about a work experience placement contact the Fair Work infoline on 13 13 94.

- ❑ **Does the workplace meet national workplace health and safety standards?**

Australia's workplace health and safety legislation requires employers to maintain a safe work environment, not only for employees, but also for those visiting the workplace, including people doing work experience.

More information on work health and safety can be found via the Safe Work Australia's website ([safeworkaustralia.gov.au](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)).

If you have any queries about whether a workplace is safe, please raise this with the Safe Work Australia by calling 1300 551 832.

- ❑ **Does the work experience placement adhere to the relevant State and Territory working age laws?**

Some state and territory governments have restrictions about the age that young people can start working, the type of work they can do and when they can work.

The Fair Work Ombudsman's 'What age can I start work?' web page provides information on the working age requirements that apply for each state and territory ([fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/young-workers-and-students/what-age-can-i-start-work](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/young-workers-and-students/what-age-can-i-start-work)).

If you have any questions about state and territory working age laws, please contact the Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94, or your state or territory government.

- ❑ **Will you have appropriate insurance coverage while doing work experience?**

It's important to talk to your host employer about whether you'll be covered for any injuries that you incur, and for any liability arising from injury to another person or property that you may cause, while on work experience. If the employer's insurance does not provide adequate coverage, there may be insurance products that you can purchase privately to ensure that you have adequate coverage.

If you are a student undertaking a vocational placement as part of your study, you may be covered by insurance through your educational institution. Please speak to your school or educational institution for more information on the level of insurance cover they provide for students on vocational or other work experience placements.

For job seekers who are receiving assistance from a jobactive provider, you may be covered by insurance, depending on whether the work experience is being undertaken as an activity to count towards your participation requirements. Please speak to your jobactive provider for more information.

Disclaimer: The content of this workbook is intended as general information only and does not replace professional advice. It is derived from a variety of sources and has been prepared without taking into account your individual objectives, situation or needs. You should consider your personal circumstances, and if appropriate, seek independent legal, financial or other professional advice before acting. The Department has endeavoured to ensure the currency and completeness of the information in this workbook at the time of publication; however, this information may change over time. Provision of links to external websites are provided for convenience only and should not be construed as an endorsement or approval of the third party service or website by the Department. The Department expressly disclaims any liability caused, whether directly or indirectly, to any person in respect of any action taken on the basis of the content of this workbook.