



Australian Government



# Understanding the different types of work experience

Doing work experience is a great way to learn about the world of work, and explore or gain experience in a job or industry.

There are many different types of work experience. Some types of work experience focus on the exploring aspects and information on the job you are interested in. Other work experience allows you to get into a workplace, try out the role and pick up some skills.

The type of work experience that is best for you depends on:

- where you are at in your job search and career planning and
- what you want to get out of the work experience.

This workbook provides information and exercises to help you identify what type of work experience that will get the information, skills or experience that you want. Once you know this, you can start looking for and organising your work experience.



## Choosing work experience

Firstly, take some time to consider the following question:

Is there a particular job, industry or occupation you are interested in? If so, write down your preferences:

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Once you have decided on the job, industry or occupation that interests you, select the tick boxes that are most relevant to you.

### 1. I want to do work experience to:

<input type="checkbox"/> Find out more about the job or industry I am interested in	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve my understanding of the workplace environment and what employers expect
<input type="checkbox"/> Find out the different ways to enter the job or industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Immerse myself in the day-to-day realities of the job
<input type="checkbox"/> Find out what employers are looking for and what it takes to be successful in the job	<input type="checkbox"/> Get some hands-on experience of the job or industry
<input type="checkbox"/> Gain insight into how I can build a rewarding career in this industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Get practical training and experience in this job
<input type="checkbox"/> Find out where the job opportunities are in the industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Find referees who I can ask to provide references for future job or study applications
<input type="checkbox"/> Build a network of contacts for future study and career advice	



Now review the following types of work experience to work out which best suits your needs.

**Doing a career taster**

**How?**

You can visit an employer's premises or work site and be shown around. Ask your teacher for details or contact a large employer for more information.

You can attend career talks by employers and workers – your school or educational institution may be able to organise these. Or you might be able to find the right people to talk to at career or jobs expos.

**How long will it take?**

It varies, but plan on having at least an hour to listen and ask questions.

**Further information**

Please refer to the Job Jumpstart 'Career Taster' tipsheet.

**Interviewing a workplace expert**

**How?**

You can contact an employer or someone in your personal network. Ask them to speak to you about working in their field.

Or, if you are at school, your teacher may be able to arrange for you to speak with someone about working in a specific job or industry.

**How long will it take?**

It varies, but plan on having at least half an hour to conduct an interview.

**Further information**

Please refer to the Job Jumpstart 'Interview a workplace expert' tipsheet and workbook.

**Job shadowing**

**How?**

Job shadowing involves spending time 'in the shadow' of a person doing their job. It means visiting a workplace and observing a person or people as they do their work.

You may be able to arrange this through your school, TAFE or university, or you could contact an employer or someone you know directly.

If you are with a jobactive provider talk to them about doing a National Work Experience Programme placement.

**How long will it take?**

It varies. It could be a few hours, a day or up to a few weeks.

**Further information**

Check out the Job Jumpstart 'Job shadowing' tipsheet.



## Vocational placement

### How?

A vocational placement is work experience that is required as part of an education or training course. This can be part of a compulsory or elective subject. You will usually be supported by your TAFE, training organisation or university to organise your vocational placement.

### How long will it take?

It depends on what course you are undertaking and the course schedule of your training institution. However, as a guide, a vocational placement will usually last a few weeks.

### Further information

Refer to the Job Jumpstart 'Vocational placement' tipsheet.

## Volunteering

### How?

You can volunteer with a community organisation or charity. You might help out with fundraising, organising events or collecting donations. You could serve in other ways like clearing up after storm damage as a member of your state or territory emergency service or serving customers in a charity shop.

### How long will it take?

It depends on the type of volunteer work you do and when and how often you want to do it. You could do a few hours of fundraising a year by registering as a doorknocker with a charity. You could spend a few hours a week over a couple of months rebuilding your car club's website. Once you know where you want to volunteer you can contact them about the opportunities available.

### Further information

Check out the Job Jumpstart 'Volunteering' tipsheet.

## Doing paid work experience

### How?

It's a paid job.

Getting a part-time or casual job in an industry you are interested in can give you an idea of what it's like to work there and whether you are a good fit for the field.

### How long will it take?

You could consider getting a casual or holiday job while you are at school. You could combine paid work with your university or TAFE studies or do paid vacation work during your study breaks.

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