

Information for students

Work experience is a compulsory part of study programmes for students (aged below 19 on the 31st of August during enrolment) and is just as important as the core subject and the maths and English qualifications.

Work experience is:

- A fantastic opportunity for you to work with an employer/organisation. For many students this will be the first time working with other people, taking instruction and having a taste of what it is like to be in a work environment.
- Usually linked to your course or your long-term career aspirations however, sometimes it is hard to get a perfect match. For example, if you are on a construction course it would be possible for you to undertake your work experience placement in a builder's yard as getting onto a construction site under the age of 18 is extremely difficult.
- A great opportunity to 'shine' and this sometimes leads to part-time work or could even lead to full-time employment/apprenticeship.
- Unpaid, however some employers may contribute to your travelling costs, or perhaps offer a free or subsidised lunch.
- Being treated like an employee of the firm.

Work Experience is NOT:

- Something that you can opt out of; you must complete your work experience as it is a compulsory part of your study programme.
- 'Taking advantage' as work experience must have a structure, have outcomes and feedback is also required. The College logs all work experience placements and this is subject to audit by Ofsted.
- An opportunity for you to become the Managing Director of the company. Like any new post/job, you tend to start at entry level. It is not a reflection on your age or ability if you are asked to make the tea!

Work Experience CAN:

- Vary in length which will depend on your course and level. Some placements can be as short as 10 hours, but on average work experience is for 30 hours and conducted over one week across Monday – Friday. Longer placements for some Level 3 courses engaging in industry placements maybe one day a week for the duration of the entire two-year study programme.
- Sometimes be outside of the normal Monday-Friday '9-5' such as hotels, catering, theatre, events and sports. Remember work experience is to give you a taste of the real world of work and that means working the usual hours for that industry sector.
- Be a great way to boost your CV (Curriculum Vitae) for when you start looking for jobs. Employers like to see details of work experience, especially if you can evidence good feedback from your placement.

Northampton College has a team of Work Placement Coordinators who can answer your questions on work experience.

They can be contacted on **01604 734 183** or email at workexperience@northamptoncollege.ac.uk