

# Young People at Work - Work Experience Placements

## Introduction

Work experience placements provide young persons the opportunity to gain experience in a work environment and are an extremely valuable part of a young persons education. Many Schools and Departments in the University offer work placements to young persons and these are usually organised via the local education authority.

There are specific requirements placed upon both those who send young persons on work placements and on those who offer young persons work experience placements. Guidance for Schools, etc who send young persons on work placements as part of their studies at the University is available at [Health, Safety and Welfare of Students on Placement](#).

## Definitions

- Young Person - Anyone under the age of 18
- Child - Anyone below the minimum school leaving age (MSLA) - just before or just after their 16th birthday.

For the duration of the work placement, the young person is regarded as a University employee, under health and safety law<sup>9</sup>.

The University must ensure suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the health and safety of the young person **BEFORE** they start work at the University. Schools will need to consider the risks to which these young persons may be exposed and what measures will be required to control these risks, so that they do not put themselves or others at risk.

## Risks to Young Persons at Work

Although many of the hazards to young persons may be no different to those which may affect adults, it is important to look at the workplace, equipment, and activities from a young person's point of view, and try to identify hazards which may not be obvious, or which present specific risks to young persons.

## Psychological Factors:

Consider the young persons inexperience and lack of maturity and their possible lack of awareness or perception of existing or potential risks. These may differ from one young person to another and will affect the nature and extent of health and safety training and supervision necessary.

Young persons may be less well equipped to deal with violent or aggressive behaviour, or working in stressful environments.

## Physical Factors:

Consider the stature, strength and reach of young persons and their ability to operate controls and participate in manual handling tasks. Young persons may not have fully developed muscle strength and may be more prone to peer pressure to take on tasks that are outwith their capability.

Physical factors should be considered in the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure appropriate fit.

## Risk Assessment

1. There is a specific requirement to assess the risks to young persons, **BEFORE** the young person commences work, taking into particular account their lack of experience, immaturity and lack of awareness to existing or potential risks.
2. This risk assessment should form the basis for any decisions regarding additional health and safety precautions, or possibly prohibiting a young person from doing certain work, such as activities where there are significant risks which can not be eliminated. Specific factors should be addressed in the risk assessment and any tasks or activities from which the young person should be prohibited must be clearly identified.
3. Risks must be reduced to their lowest possible level and suitably managed and controlled. It is likely that increased supervision may be necessary in certain areas / activities.
4. This assessment must be recorded.

There is no specific form for this risk assessment, however, many of the activities which are involved should already be subject to a risk assessment by the School etc, and you may therefore wish to adapt the assessments already in place to cover any of the issues relevant to young persons.

Alternatively you may wish to complete a separate risk assessment, specific to the activities which the young person will be involved in.

Model Risk Assessment forms to assist with this are available from <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/risk-assessments-checklists/risk-assessments>

5. The young person will require to be given information on the risks involved and the control measures required to ensure their health and safety before the placement commences. Parents or guardians of children below the minimum school leaving age must be provided with information on these risks.

Young persons must not be allowed to participate in any work which:

- i. Is beyond their physical or psychological capacity;
- ii. Exposes them to toxic or carcinogenic substances;
- iii. Exposes them to radiation;
- iv. Exposes them to extreme cold or heat, noise or vibration.

Young persons above the MSLA may under certain circumstances be permitted to be involved in the work (i) - (iv) above where it is necessary for training, where the young person will be supervised by a competent person; and where any risk will be reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

These restrictions are not intended, however, to apply to a situation where the young person concerned is over school-leaving age and is carrying out work as part of an essential training programme which is properly supervised and the risks have been reduced as low as is reasonably practicable.

## Induction Training

Suitable induction information must be provided to young persons on their arrival in the University and consideration given to appropriate levels of supervision and training, depending on the activities in which they are to be involved.

Induction information, which should be provided by School personnel, should include:

- Emergency procedures (including location of fire exits)
- Accident reporting procedures and first aid arrangements
- Relevant contact details of key local staff.
- Location of welfare facilities (toilets, canteen, staff room, locker area)
- Local policies and procedures
- Building and/or campus maps
- Details about the activities in which they will be involved
- Hazards and risks as identified in the relevant risk assessment(s)
- Safe systems of work
- Restricted areas and /or processes

Model Induction information which should be modified to the needs of the School is available in <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/risk-assessments-checklists/checklists>.

It is important that young persons feel able to ask any questions or raise any concerns they may have at any time during the placement, and it will therefore be helpful to introduce them to various staff who can offer them help or advice such as Technical Staff, Local Safety Adviser, Servitor, Administrator, Trade Union representatives, First Aiders, etc.

Young persons should be encouraged to discuss any worries or concerns they may have, no matter how trivial they may be, with their immediate supervisor.

## Accidents

If a young person is involved in an accident at the University during the placement, the University's usual accident reporting procedure should be followed. A copy of the accident report should be sent to the school, for information.

In the event of a serious injury, or if the young person is taken ill during the placement, the secondary school should be notified immediately in order that the young person's parent or guardian can be contacted.

## Supervision

Young persons should be adequately supervised at all times during their work experience placement. It is likely that increased supervision may be necessary in certain areas / activities.

Consider young person to staff ratios taking into account the age of the young persons and any special needs which may be involved (educational, disability, medical). Where there are mixed gender groups, consideration should be given to having male/female supervisors available.

This supervision should assist in monitoring the competence and level of awareness of the tasks the young person is involved in, and if necessary identify further information or training needs. It is helpful to ask the young person 'open questions', such as how, what, when, why, where, in order to build up a better idea of the young person's understanding.

## Providing Information to Organisers, Parents or Guardians

There is a requirement to inform parents or guardians of school-age children (less than 16 years old) of the key findings of risk assessments and the control measures introduced to set high standards of health and safety.

There is no requirement to provide this information in writing, although you may wish to do so, and there is scope for involving the school, in getting this information to parents or guardians.

These guidelines do not apply to the activities of matriculated students who are undertaking a formal course of study at the University.

## Organisers Assessment Questionnaire

Work placement organisers are required to ensure that suitable health and safety systems and procedures are in place, and are likely to ask Schools, etc within the University a number of questions, see [Health, Safety and Welfare of Students on Placement](#) for specific examples of these questions.

Placement organisers may seek assurances that suitable arrangements are in place by means of a checklist which University School staff will be asked to confirm and sign. For some issues they may ask for copies of relevant paperwork.

### **Health and Safety arrangements / Policy**

Provide details of the local Health and Safety Policy and/or procedures as well as the central University Health and Safety Policy. Printed copies of the Keynote guide to the University Health and Safety Policy are available from the Health and Safety Department or are online at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/policy-cop/policy>.

### **Risk Assessment**

You may be asked to provide details of, or copies of, the risk assessment(s) relevant to the activities which the young person will be involved. There are specific requirements with regard to provision of information to children below the minimum school leaving age - see section above - Providing Information to Organisers, Parents or Guardians.

### **Responsible Person**

You should provide up-to-date contact details of the person within the University School who has specific responsibility for the young person in order that the placement organiser or the parents can contact the placement provider, if necessary. You should provide alternative contact details in case the main contact is unavailable for any reason.

### **Responsible Person for compliance with health and safety regulations**

This is the Head of School, although day to day responsibility may have been delegated to the local School Safety Adviser, see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/about/contacts/school-safety-advisers>.

### **Competent Person for health and safety regulations**

'Competent' health and safety advice is provided by the Corporate Health and Safety Department as well as professional College or School Health and Safety Managers (in certain Colleges or Schools). The named competent

person is the Director of Health and Safety, currently Alastair Reid ([Alastair.Reid@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Alastair.Reid@ed.ac.uk), 651 4257).

## **Supervision and Training**

You may be asked to provide details of the person(s) supervising the young person on a day-to-day basis, details of how the young person will be supervised and details of any induction information which will be provided.

## **Health and Safety Executive / Local Authority Registration**

The University of Edinburgh is registered with the Health and Safety Executive. Commercial areas of the University (catering or hotel accommodation) are registered with The City of Edinburgh Council.

## **Accidents and Emergency Procedures**

You may be asked to provide details of local arrangements as well as the University's main accident procedures [[Accident reporting](#)] [[Emergency Procedures](#)]. You should also reassure the placement organiser that the University School will notify them of any accidents or cases of ill health involving young persons for the duration of the placement.

## **Insurance arrangements**

The University has appropriate Employers Liability and Public Liability arrangements in place - see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/finance/about/sections/insurance/policies>.

Further details on these can be obtained from the Insurance Office.

## **Workplace Visits**

Work experience organisers may visit the University to satisfy themselves that there are suitable arrangements in place to manage the health and safety of young persons, and such visits can be beneficial to both the placement organiser and the placement provider.

## **Protection of Children and Young Persons**

The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 places additional requirements upon those who work with children or young persons.

Any member of staff who will come into contact with children or young persons should check whether they require to complete a disclosure application form for Disclosure Scotland.

Further details and advice on this issue and whether it applies to you, as a placement provider, are available from Human Resources.

## Further Information

1. The Right Start: Work Experience for Young People: Health and Safety Basics for Employers. HSE. IND(G) 364
2. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999. Section 19 Protection of Young Persons
3. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Provisions Relating to Young Persons - HSE/HELA Local Authority Circular 92/3 Rev
4. Managing health and safety on work experience: A guide for organisers HS(G)199 HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1742 4
5. Young people at work: A guide for employers HS(G)165 (Second edition)  
HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1889 7
6. Work Experience - a guide for employers, DfEE.
7. Information for work experience organisers - RoSPA website, supported by Norwich Union -  
<http://www.youngworker.co.uk/weo/ad.html>
8. Health and safety of children and young people in catering. HSE Catering Information Sheet 21
9. Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990
10. The Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1999 - HSE/HELA Local Authority Circular 84/2
11. Disclosure Scotland  
Resources for school teachers:
12. Work Experience - a guide for schools, DfEE.
13. *'Check it out. Risk assessment for young people on work placement'* ISBN 07176-2351-3. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/education/checkout.htm>
14. Teachernet -  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/visits/>

For further information concerning the health and safety of young persons at work, please contact the Health and Safety Department.