

SELF-SOURCING INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS

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If you have sourced your own work experience, please get in touch with the placement team! It is important for us to record this information:

Placementteam@sccb.ac.uk or taylor.jackson@sccb.ac.uk

Information taken from T-Level "self-sourcing industry placements" guidance resource.

SO, YOU WANT TO ORGANISE YOUR OWN PLACEMENT?

Having the initiative to find your own industry placement is one of the best ways to enter the world of work – and it will help your reputation as a great student and employee too. It means that you get the experience that you really want – which will be more satisfying for you – and employers will be impressed by your enthusiasm, motivation and maturity. Win-win!

This short guide might be good to read through (and refer back to in the future), just so you don't miss any of the important stuff.

CHECKLIST FOR FINDING YOUR OWN PLACEMENT

Research

- Consider the most suitable type of company/business or skills you will need to develop linked to your learning programme
- Thinking time for yourself: what do you want to get out of this opportunity? What skills do you want to use? What kind of organisation do you want to work in? Size? Local/ national? Reputation?
- Ask parents/ guardians, family, friends, tutors and curriculum staff for contacts and ideas
- Contact the careers service and placement coordinators at your education provider
- Search online, local business directories and newspapers
- Check transport options to get to organisations you're interested in
- Keep a tracker of your research
- Keep your education provider updated with your progress

Communicating with the organisation

- Preparation: key information about you, industry placements, the organisation and the person you're communicating with
- Prepare your CV
- Direct introduction
- Email/ phone /in person

- Follow-up communication
- Connect organisation with placement coordinator at education provider
- Thank people for help/ careers advice/ contacts and update them

Getting support

- Ask tutors, careers adviser, family or friends to review your CV and emails, and to practise phone calls with you
- Ask for help if you're feeling stuck

Other things to consider

- How will you get to your placement every day? What are the travel connections like?
- What skills do you want to develop? Will this company enable you to do that?
- What is the reputation of the company? Are they known as being a good place to work?

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO TAKE?

One of the best ways to connect with a potential new employer for an industry placement – and for any job in your future – is through a direct introduction.

Do your parents or guardians, teachers, tutors, careers service, friends, relatives or neighbours work in or have any contacts in the industry or organisation that you want to work in?

Ask everyone

People are often really happy to give careers advice and tips and are likely to be glad to introduce you to people they know who might be able to help you. (They will also appreciate if you take time to thank them for their help and let them know how you get on down the line.)

Research

If you can't get an introduction, do as much research as possible online or locally to find the organisations that you'd be interested in. Try your education provider's careers service; search on sites like LinkedIn, Glassdoor and local business directories, like Yell or Thomson Local as well as local newspapers. Research who you would like to speak to within each organisation – it will probably be Human Resources (HR) in larger organisations – and find contact details: addresses, phone numbers and emails.

Keep track

Organisation Name	Contact Name	Job Title	Email	Tel No.	Address	Transport Access	Status	Next Action
ABC Ltd	Jill Jones	HR Manager	jill.jones@abc.com	07123 456789	Fairtree Business Park, M12 3YZ	40 min bus from home	Sent email with Employer Info Guide on [date]. Awaiting response.	[Date]: Follow up phone call if haven't heard back.
DEF Ltd	Anita Patel	Company Owner			20 High Street, M14 4RS	25 min walk from home	Awaiting introduction and contact details from Tutor	[Date]: Send email with Employer Info Guide, CV & arrange call

Status key:	
Identified	Identified a potential organisation
Engaging	Contacted/ in discussions/ deciding
Yes	Organisation wants to offer placement
No	Organisation decided not to be involved

Making a list to keep track of this can be really helpful. You could do this in an Excel spreadsheet like this:

How do I make contact?

Approaching new people can be slightly daunting – especially when they might end up being your boss – but if you are well prepared, you are likely to feel more confident. No one will expect you to know everything about the industry or organisation, the most important things will be your enthusiasm, interest and willingness to learn and get stuck in!

If you know the person or the company already, you could drop by in person, or give them a phone call. Make sure you're looking (or sounding) professional and that you show you're really interested in the organisation. Try to do it at a time when they won't be really busy. Don't be offended if they ask you to come back another time. Always be polite!

If you don't know the company, or you're just feeling a bit too nervous to speak to someone on the phone, then send them an email (see example on page 9).

WHAT SHOULD I PREPARE FOR A FIRST MEETING/ PHONE CALL?

In the first conversation, give them the key information that they'll need to make a decision.

If they haven't had an industry placement student before, they might have some questions. You may even need to convince them that hosting an industry placement is worth doing.

It would be a good idea to have the contact details of the industry placement coordinator at your college or training provider. Your potential employer might want to contact them to ask some further questions.

In summary, what to have up your sleeve for an initial conversation/ follow-up email:

- Who you are and what you're studying?
- Your reasons for wanting to work for the organisation and how it ties in with your course.
- What industry placements are all about: how long it lasts; what kinds of things you would hope to get out of it; what benefits there are for the employer etc.
- Research the organisation's website, any news articles or social media about their latest activities and projects to show you're up-to-date and interested.
- If possible, some online research of the person you are going to contact (e.g. their LinkedIn profile).
- Some questions you would like to ask about the organisation, its current projects, its future direction, how they see an industry placement fitting in and even the person's own career path (we all love being asked questions about ourselves!)
- Copy of your CV.
- Copy of the industry placement coordinator's contact details.

THEN WHAT?

The conversation will end in three ways: no, yes or I need to think about it. If it's a no, thank them for their time, go back to your list and see which other organisations you'd like to try next.

If it's a yes, thank them for their time and tell them you'll be in contact once you've confirmed the placement with your education provider.

If it's an "I need to think about it", ask them if they have any further questions, when you should get back in touch and whether they would like you to put them in touch with your industry placement coordinator. Follow up the phone call or meeting with an email if you can. Attach the Employer Information Booklet include the contact details of your industry placement coordinator and clearly state the key dates and details of the placement.

WHAT IF I'M STRUGGLING?

Don't go it alone! This is a new challenge and your family, teachers, careers service and friends want to support you. Get another pair of eyes to check your email before you send it, get comments on your CV and practise a phone call so you feel familiar with what you want to say. Don't hesitate to ask for help at every stage of the process if you need it.

Remember that it is a completely normal part of life to get knocked back and there are many reasons why employers can't accept an industry placement student which have nothing to do with you – don't take it personally. All of this is great practice for your future in the world of work!

Apply to lots of different organisations to maximise your chances of success. Good luck!!

EXAMPLE EMAIL TO AN EMPLOYER

Dear XXXX

My name is XXXX. I am currently studying for an (insert relevant qualification) in (insert subject) at (insert name of education provider).

The Government has redesigned this course to include some longer, more meaningful industry placements (315 hours, on average 45-50 working days) in relevant industry – to help address the skills shortage in this country and get students employment-ready.

Employers who have hosted industry placement students (such as the BBC, Stagecoach and Mitchells & Butlers) found that the immediate benefits for them included:

- Extra resources for their projects and day to day operations
- Opportunities for the junior employees to develop management and mentorship skills
- CSR impact: boosting employability of local young people and enabling social integration.

I have been researching local organisations in (insert your industry) and I was really impressed with what I have found about (insert name of organisation). I particularly like (insert 2-3 things you have found in your research that stood out for you such as: new projects, reputation in the industry, reviews from staff members, mission or company values) and would like to learn more about them.

I would like to bring my (energy, hunger to learn and fresh perspective – what else can you bring? Make this original!) to work in your organisation and ask you to consider taking me on as an industry placement, most likely during (insert term and/or dates).

I attach my CV and an Employer Information Guide with further details about how the scheme works and the benefits for employers. Please let me know if you would like to arrange a call or meeting to discuss.

I look forward to hearing from you.