

Introduction

Work Experience is the largest part of your careers programme in college. It is important; giving you a chance to experience the world of work, the opportunity to develop new skills, consider your future career choice and raise aspirations.

This year we are using Unifrog for students to register their work experience, this will send information to employers and allow parent/ carer to see what the employer has put in place to protect their child. Student must have completed the employer section by Monday 20th April 2026 (see PowerPoint).

Students who do not find a work experience placement will be expected to attend school and will complete work set by individual departments.

Below is some lovely feedback we have received from employers for South Dartmoor students who have been on work experience previously:



I have to say that it was a real pleasure having him here. He was extremely polite, confident and was very keen to take on lots of different jobs.

They were a great bunch to have on site.

She had a very successful week and was a pleasure to host.

She was enthusiastic, professional and really good company too.

She was bright, articulate, listened well and asked relevant questions.

He was one of the most competent work placements we have had here and would be welcome back any time.

He was very enthusiastic and was well liked by the mentors he came into contact with.



Finding a placement

You are expected to find your own work experience placement

You should start to contact employers now as placements fill quickly, especially the popular choices such as NHS, veterinary and animal care placements.

Use your connections and network. Ask your parents or family if they know of anyone who you could approach.

Whoever you decide to approach, it is better if you, as a student, make initial contact. This shows the employer that you can be independent, shows you have initiative and that you have an interest in the workplace.

You can make the application in person, by writing to them, sending an email or by telephoning. If you write, please remember to give a reply address, and include why you would like to work at their company or place of work. Please see an example letter and email below.

If you telephone or approach an employer in person, you will need to follow up with a confirmation email as soon as possible. Employers are generally very busy and do not always remember calls or visits!

You will need to consider how you are going to get to the placement. There is no point arranging to go somewhere and then realising you cannot get there. If you are relying on a lift, please make sure you have a back-up plan in case they cannot take you one day – consider whether you would be able to get there by foot, bike, bus or train.

Placements take time to find and for all the necessary paperwork to be completed and returned, but if you start early you are more likely to get the placement you want. Don't get disheartened if you are turned down, just try again.

If you get really stuck, we (in careers) have a list of employers we have used in the past. They are not guaranteed places but it may be worth you contacting them to ask.

When you have arranged a placement with an employer you **must** complete the placement section on Unifrog (see PowerPoint), this will send information to the employer for them to complete. This must be completed by Monday 20th April 2026

How to contact a prospective placement

You can contact an employer:

- In person
- By letter
- By email
- By phone

If it is a large company and you do not have a contact person it may be best to address your enquiry to the Human Resources department. Alternatively, if it is a small company/business address it to the Manager.

Email is usually the best way to contact anybody as it is quicker and almost guaranteed to reach the person it is intended for. It is easier for an employer to reply to an email. You can generally find an email address on their website.

If you are interested in shop work, it is better for you to visit the shop in person. Remember to make a good first impression!

Contact several companies/businesses, often they do not reply and this gives you several options. Remember don't get disheartened if you are turned down, just keep trying.

Suggested draft for a letter or email for placement request

For emails when you do not have a direct contact address:

In the subject line start with 'FAO Human Resources' or 'FAO the Manager'.

If you are applying by letter, it is best typed. Remember that employers are busy people so try to keep letters no longer than one side of A4.

This is your first form of contact to a prospective employer and therefore you will want to make a good impression, remember to check:

- Spelling
- Presentation
- Company/Business name and address
- That you have the correct work experience date
(Monday 20th to Wednesday 22nd July 2026).

Guide to writing your letter or email

Your Name

Your Address

Person's Name, HR department or the Manager
Name and address of company/business

Dear Sir/Madam (or the person's name if known)

Work Experience

I am a student at South Dartmoor Community College. As part of our curriculum, we are expected to do Work Experience and I am hoping it would be possible for me to work with your company/organisation (whichever one is correct). The Work Experience date is Monday 14th July to Friday 18th July 2025.

Briefly say why you want to work with them and what you hope to gain from the experience.

- Possible ideas to show you have done some research: your company is well known/established...I would like to gain an insight into...I am hoping to pursue a career in....

Briefly give details of GCSE/A Level subjects you are studying – say what subjects you particularly enjoy and why.

Briefly give details of activities or responsibilities you take part in (for example, Duke of Edinburgh).

Finally, mention any interests you have out of college.

Finish with:

Yours faithfully (if name not known) or Yours sincerely (if name known)

Sign your name and print your name underneath.

Steps to follow...

- Contact possible employers - arrange Work Experience.
- Once you have a placement secured a placement – add this to the ‘Placement Section’ on Unifrog (see PowerPoint).
- Once the employer has completed their section, we will review the information and confirm the placement – no student is able to go without this confirmation.
- Monday 20th July to Wednesday 22nd July 2026 placements commence.

Placement ideas

Teignbridge, Torbay and Devon County Councils: Have a variety of work experience placements available: environmental health, legal department, public parks and grounds, countryside rangers, engineering, accountancy....check out their website for their wide range of opportunities.

Finance: accountancy firms, banks, building societies, insurance companies.

Retail and High Street: shops, jewellers, opticians, estate agents etc.

Engineering Firms: civil engineering, structural engineering, manufacturing.

Motor Vehicle: mechanic, car sales, car parts (auto centres).

Professional: solicitors, architects, schools.

Childcare: nurseries, schools (primary or secondary).

Art & Design: schools, galleries, web designers, interior designers, fashion designers.

Animal Care: veterinary practices, stables, visitor attractions (zoos, Pennywell Farm), pet shops.

Hospitality & Catering: restaurants, cafés, hotels, cookery schools.

Construction: builders, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painter & decorators (no lone workers).

Sport: leisure centres, sport centres, schools, football stadiums.

Healthcare: hospitals offer various department opportunities - check with Careers for details. Pharmacists, dentists, doctors surgeries, care homes.

Armed Forces: both the Navy and the Army offer work experience placements. These are fixed date placements and do not always correspond with our dates, although if you are really interested we may be able to arrange this depending on the time of year (see careers for further information).

Work Experience is to give you the chance to sample the world of work - it does not necessarily have to be what you want to do when you leave college. But if there is something you really want to do, remember that the earlier you start looking the more likely you are to get your first choice.

Good luck in securing a placement.