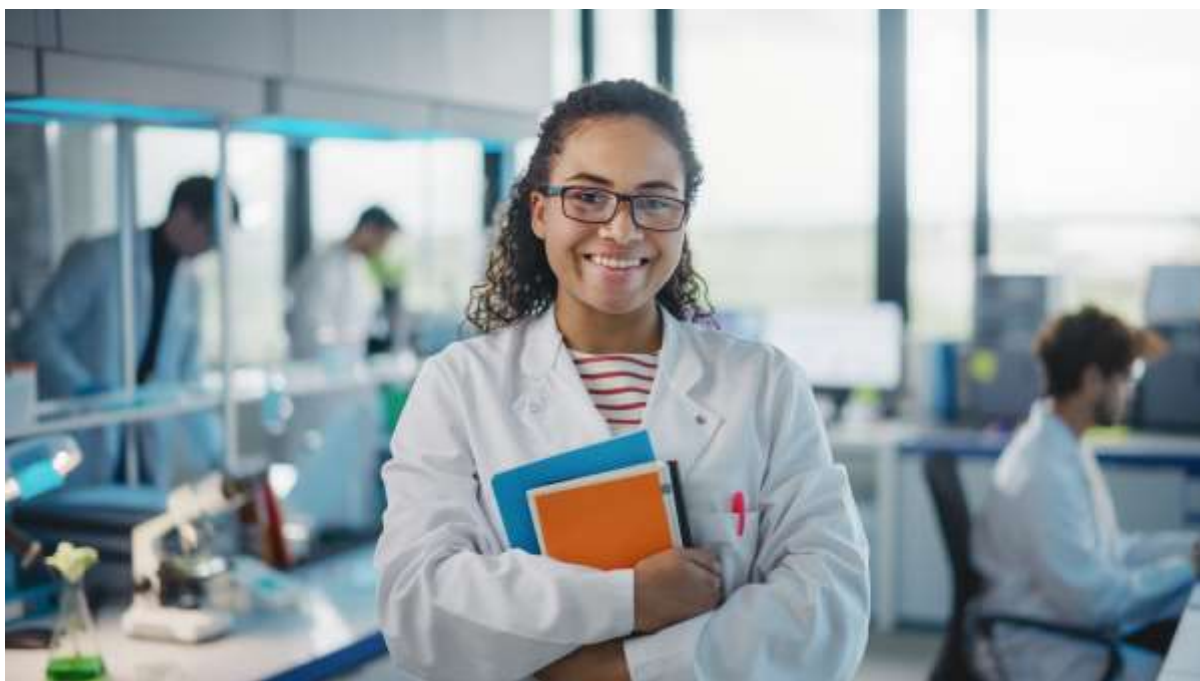


Work experience- connecting your business to your future workforce

We know that offering work experience is a great way to showcase your business to the local community and line up future employees. In fact, [the ASPIRES3 research](#) highlights that access to good quality, engaging chemistry work experience can shape chemistry trajectories. But getting started can seem daunting. This guide covers three crucial topics:

- the benefits to your business of offering work experience
- practical tips to overcome sticking points
- pointers on ensuring the experience delivers for all stakeholders



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“Just give it a go – it’s a beneficial way to support your early career talent pipelines and particularly the sustainability of technical skills in the laboratory environment ... Just do it!”

Janet Marshall, Senior Talent & Development Business Partner at Cranfield University

BENEFITS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

We understand that at work resource can be tight, so you may need to highlight the benefits of offering work experience to get permission to do so. Here are some of the top benefits of offering placements:

1. **Create a local talent pool:** Work experience placements create a local pool of potential future staff who are already familiar with your company's culture and operations.
2. **Encourage people into your sector:** Giving young people an experience of the workplace is a great way of making them aware of the career opportunities in your business and dispelling any stereotyped views about the chemical sciences. These experiences are a vital part of choosing a career and preparing for the world of work.
3. **Improve work skills, attitudes and behaviours:** An ideal way to answer the call for more skilled workers is to provide young people with an experience of your workplace where they can get first-hand understanding of some of the skills necessary to pursue a career in the chemical sciences.
4. **Developing existing staff:** Supervising work experience students gives your staff an opportunity to develop their leadership and managerial skills. It enhances their professional growth and benefits their teams.
5. **Demonstrating commitment to the community:** Providing placements shows your commitment to investing in local talent and it strengthens your corporate social responsibility profile. Young people are less likely to find themselves unemployed or not in education or training if they undertake employer engagement activities, like work experience.
6. **Additional support and resources:** If you are considering offering a placement to an older student, T Level Science students can help your teams complete tasks more efficiently. They can contribute to daily operations, projects, or research and ease the workload for your staff.
7. **Benefiting from specific skills and knowledge:** Students bring fresh perspectives and up-to-date technical skills, which can invigorate your team and contribute to innovation.

"It is really important to inspire the next generation of chemical scientists and engineers for futureproofing."

Christina Bird, Domino Printing Sciences

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

You may have concerns over things like insurance or safeguarding. The responses to common challenges below should put you at ease.

“They went through the exact same training that a new member of staff would have in terms of all the safety aspects”.

Jacqueline Reid, Research Manager at Innospec

1. **“Under-18s are not allowed to work in our laboratory or workplace setting”:**
There are very few legal restrictions on what young people can do in the workplace and they are mainly about exposure to harmful agents, such as radiation or toxic substances. Treat your placement student the same as a new staff member and provide them with health and safety training. You need to carry out a risk assessment for young people at work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides helpful [guidance on young people at work](#).
2. **“We would need to take out extra insurance”:** If the student’s work is part of normal business practice and you have employer liability insurance with a member of the Association of British Insurers or Lloyds, the student is treated as an employee for insurance purposes. If you are not sure, ask your insurance company. You will need to tell your insurer about the placement if it lasts longer than two weeks.
3. **“Safeguarding is a problem, we would have to get all our staff DBS checked”:**
Schools and colleges are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of students on industry placements – but you do need to work with them. You do not need to get all your staff DBS checked. The school or college will guide you through any safeguarding requirements, and if one or two key staff members need to be checked, ask the school about whether DBS funding is available.
4. **“We are concerned about confidential or commercially sensitive material”:**
Companies who carry out commercially sensitive or confidential work are already making placements work. They do it by picking tasks for their students that limit their contact with sensitive information. Some have their students sign a confidentiality agreement, just as they do with all new staff. If your student has to complete a logbook for their course, their workplace supervisor can check it to make sure there are no confidentiality breaches.
5. **“We can’t afford to pay a work experience student”:** Work experience is part of students’ education, and employers do not provide payment for work performed. In

some instances, you may want to discuss transport and meal arrangements with the student's school

OFFERING A GOOD PLACEMENT

Our top tips and ideas to achieve a good work experience.

'The one-week work experience is run during the year for one school student at a time. The first half-day covers an induction around health and safety. After that it's hands-on in the laboratory, carrying out some of the scientific testing preparation instrumentation work that is part of our daily work. They focus on the food-testing area of the work such as sample testing, homogenisation, extraction through to it going onto the instruments and the interpretation of the results.'

Mark Rolfe, Kent Scientific Services

Ahead of time

1. Make sure that you have all the equipment that the student will need, including PPE, ready to go. This will help you make best use of the time that the student is with you.
2. Consider if there is anything they need to know before they visit site. For example, if you don't have catering facilities, let them know so they can bring food and drink with them. If you have a cashless canteen, make them aware of what they need to do so they can buy refreshments.
3. Ask if they have any accessibility requirements. This should be done far enough in advance that you can consult with the school or college in case you have questions about how to accommodate their needs.
4. Think about what your student will actually be doing, and who will be supporting them. Think about having a backup supervisor in case the main contact is unexpectedly away from work.
5. Compile a draft timetable of where the student will be and broadly what they will be doing. Make sure to include time for any job or task specific training that they will need and consider who will deliver this.
6. Ensure there is meaningful work to do. Try to make it varied, current and relatable to the student. Depending on the student's stage of study, who might want to set them a project. You might even ask them to deliver a presentation on their work to help them develop transferable skills.

Set the scene

1. Introduce your work experience student to their team, and any other colleagues they're likely to see regularly, such as people on reception or in the canteen.
2. Give the student a short presentation on the company, explaining what you do, why you do it, and where the department they will be working in fits into it all. Take them on a site tour.
3. Set clear expectations and boundaries around professional conduct. Include things like when they should arrive at work, when they can go home, and the processes or etiquette around taking breaks. Let them know if, when, and where they can use their phone. Help them to understand what is acceptable use of company equipment, such as computers and printers. Explain the process for calling in sick.
4. Make sure that they are aware of all health and safety requirements for working on site, and any other important topics, such as confidentiality. Explain to them the importance of adhering to the rules and the consequences of not following them.

During the placement

1. Check in with your student regularly so you know how they are feeling about things, and you can address any concerns.
2. Make time to give them positive feedback, as well as constructively addressing any areas they need to work on.
3. Talk to them about their career aspirations. Discuss career pathways that might be open to them at your company. Maybe talk about your own career journey.



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If you would like more information specifically about offering placements to T Level science students, please see our [detailed guide](#).