

Unit 19: Preparing for Work Placement

Unit reference number: F/503/2854

QCF level: 1

Credit value: 1

Guided learning hours: 10

Unit aim

The aim of this unit is to ensure that the learner will have information about the company or organisation providing the work placement, with regard to the responsibilities, as well as the appropriate behaviours and sources of support.

Unit introduction

Before a learner begins a work placement, it is important that they understand the function of the company or organisation in which they are going to work. The learner will also set goals that will enhance their work placement experience.

Although the term 'company or organisation' has been used throughout this unit, it can refer to any type of work placement for which the learner may be preparing.

Essential resources

To make this unit relevant, the learner must be in the process of preparing to go on a suitable work placement. Employers must be prepared for the learners' arrival and support them in gathering relevant information.

Learning outcomes, assessment criteria and unit amplification

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria		Unit amplification
1	Know about the work placement company or organisation	1.1	Describe the work placement company or organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information and objectives of the company/organisation</i>: type of company or organisation; function, e.g. service provision, retail, construction, administrative, logistics; location; size, e.g. small, large, branches throughout country, number of employees
		1.2	Outline key objectives of the company or organisation	
2	Know what is expected of the learner during the work placement	2.1	Identify the requirements for the placement, and why the requirements are necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Work placement requirements</i>: hours of work; absence procedures; dress code; line manager or supervisor; health and safety responsibilities, e.g. evacuation procedures, first-aid procedures, reporting hazards; refreshment facilities • <i>Why requirements are necessary</i>: comply with health and safety rules, hygiene reasons, efficiency of working, promote good working relationships with colleagues and customers • <i>Expected tasks</i>: daily duties, e.g. opening post, taking messages, checking emails, filing documents, checking equipment for health and safety purposes, setting up equipment, liaising with line manager, project work • <i>Attitudes and behaviours</i>: positive attitudes, e.g. follow instructions, prepared to take on different or new tasks, dependable, confident but willing to learn, cooperative; behaviours eg polite, on time, reliable, thorough
		2.2	Outline tasks likely to be undertaken in the work placement	
		2.3	Identify appropriate attitudes and behaviours for the work placement and why they are important in the workplace	

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria		Unit amplification
	2.4	Identify appropriate steps that could be taken in situations of emotional stress, difficulty or confusion during the work placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why appropriate attitudes and behaviours are important:</i> e.g. creates positive impression of learner, helps learner get on with other people in the company or organisation, improves chances of successful and enjoyable work placement • <i>Taking appropriate steps in situations of emotional stress, difficulty or confusion:</i> using appropriate sources of support and guidance if an aspect of the work placement is causing emotional stress; asking questions if instructions are unclear or confusing; asking for help or guidance in carrying out a task if it is difficult or unclear
3 Be able to set goals to help the learner get the most out of the work placement	3.1	Set appropriate goals for the work placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Goals:</i> personal targets, e.g. attend each day, arrive on time, be enthusiastic; work-related targets, e.g. learn new skills, improve knowledge of specific sector or career, build confidence in asking for help if something is difficult or unclear; achievable and realistic goals, e.g. specific, within a set timescale, reasonable, within learner's abilities

Essential Guidance for tutors

Delivery

Although each learner will be attending a different work setting, the principles behind preparing for the work placement will be the same. Before going out on work placement, the learner needs to find relevant information about the company or organisation to which they are going. They also need to know the types of information that they need to investigate. To do this, learners could work in small groups to identify the type of information they want to gather about the company or organisation. They could use the results of this discussion to compile a checklist or series of questions. Individual learners would then be able to base their research on these questions. Checklist items could include, for example, size of company or organisation, function of company or organisation, its location or locations. Learners could gather this information by undertaking internet searches. Other sources of information could include the company or organisation's own website, promotional leaflets or brochures, resources such as Connexions or Jobcentre Plus, discussions with learners who have previously been on work placement at the same (or similar) company or organisation, and conversations with staff from the company or organisation.

Before learners attend the work placement, they should find out key facts relating to their placement, for example what the company or organisation does, its key objectives, where they will be located, their expected hours of work, the main tasks they will undertake and the dress code. This information could be gained as a result of an interview with the employer or talking with someone who has previously worked in the organisation. If this is not possible, the learner could identify the 'high priority' information they need before their first day and telephone or email the employer to obtain the information. Information that is not 'high priority' could be gained on the first day of the work placement.

Leaflets or information sheets, video and tutor-led group discussions could all be used to help learners find out about the main tasks relating to the job role or main areas of learning at the company or organisation. The information provided to the learner should be straightforward and clearly presented so that they can extract the relevant details independently. Learners who have previously participated in work experience could be asked to speak to learners in small groups.

Tutors could emphasise the importance of workplace values and rules and, where possible, provide lists of the possible attitudes and behaviours needed to satisfy the requirements of the placement. Learners need to articulate why certain attitudes and behaviours are necessary for their work placement. Employers could be invited as guest speakers to discuss expectations, or learners could discuss possible qualities and expectations in small groups or via role-play situations. Workplace scenes from television programmes, films or other video clips could be used as a starter for discussions.

Learners going into a work placement might feel nervous and concerned that they will appear incompetent or will not be able to do what they are instructed to do. It would be beneficial, therefore, for learners to be prepared to deal effectively with any potential feelings of stress or confusion. For example, a group discussion or role-play activity could be used to help learners think about appropriate ways to solve situations of stress, anxiety or confusion and how to ask others for help and guidance during the work placement. Alternatively, learners could watch a TV or film clip that depicts a stressful or difficult situation in the workplace and then hold a group discussion about what could be done to resolve the stress, difficulty or

confusion in that scenario. This could help address learners' fears and concerns about handling any confusing or difficult situations they may encounter.

Learners may discuss possible goals and examples of goals in group situations and/or individually with tutors or careers advisers, but need to come up with their own final list of personal goals for the work placement.

Assessment

For 1.1, the learner must be able to describe the company or organisation where they plan to carry out the work placement. Information should include aspects such as the size, type of business, location or locations and business function.

For 1.2, the learner must outline at least one key objective of the company or organisation where they plan to carry out the work placement.

Although information may be gathered from the company or organisation website or from documentation provided by the company or organisation, the outline provided must be in the learner's own words and demonstrate a clear understanding of the organisation to which they are going.

For 2.1, the learner can complete a checklist which identifies the requirements of the company or organisation for the work placement, for example hours of work, dress code and absence procedures. Alternatively, the learner may wish to record the description in a different format. At least two different requirements must be identified and a reason given why each one is necessary. The learner could give verbal descriptions (noted by the tutor) of why the requirements are necessary, or record the reasons as notes on the checklist or other means of evidence.

For 2.2, the learner must describe at least two different tasks that they will undertake in the work placement. These could be recorded in any suitable format such as a written document, leaflet or poster. Other means of evidence (for example discussion with the tutor accompanied by a tutor statement) could also be used.

For 2.3, the learner needs to identify at least two attitudes and two behaviours that they should demonstrate in the workplace. For each attitude and behaviour, they need to explain why they are important. These could be recorded in any suitable format such as a written document, leaflet or poster. Other means of evidence (for example discussion with the tutor accompanied by a tutor statement) could also be used.

For 2.4, the learner must identify at least two different examples of a positive step they could take if they found themselves in a situation of emotional stress, difficulty or confusion during the work placement. The positive steps identified can be straightforward but should be articulated in the learner's own words.

3.1 must relate directly to the learner's work placement. They need to set at least two appropriate goals, one of which may be personal, for example get to work 10 minutes early every day, or work-related, for example learn how to use the photocopier confidently by the end of the second day. The goals should be presented in an appropriate format such as presentation, chart, poster, or written statement provided by the learner, with supporting notes from the tutor, evidence from tutorials or taped discussions verified by the tutor.

Websites

www.projectsmart.co.uk/smart-goals.html

www.work-experience.org