



Funding Focus

Work experience and study programmes

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Funding Focus provides quick summaries of recent funding developments, or particular aspects of the funding system.

Introduction

External work experience is not compulsory for all learners but the Department for Education (DfE) advises that providers should ensure that, wherever possible, all young people who would benefit from it spend time in an external workplace. Ofsted advise it should be an important part of vocational programmes and consider it good practice if all on the academic route have opportunities to develop employability skills in the workplace. Ofsted's [review of 16-19 study programmes](#), published in September 2014, was critical of work experience opportunities made available for study programme learners in the early implementation of study programmes.

This guide looks at how work experience is defined and summarises the work experience expected in different study programmes. It also provides links to further information.

Definition of work experience

- Work experience needs to be planned, organised and supervised by the education provider.
- Work experience should be with an external employer, external to the learning environment and at an external site. It should take place in the workplace and allow young people to experience a job supervised by staff in working in the environment.
- Work experience should be tailored to suit the prior attainment of each learner and their career aspirations. Education providers should assess the individual needs of their learners and arrange suitably relevant and stretching work experience for them.
- The DfE includes a step-by-step guide in Annex A of their [Post-16 work experience advice](#), informed by the evaluation of the work experience pilot, to help providers plan and deliver work experience provision. They advise that Traineeship providers should also see the principles for good quality work placements in the [Traineeships - framework for delivery](#).
- Simulated work experience can be offered, but this is not considered official work experience.
- Many learners will also look for work experience opportunities independently, or take part-time jobs. This cannot be funded as part of a study programme.

Useful links

DfE, October 2013 - [Advice - Post-16 work experience as part of 16-19 study programmes](#)

DfE, and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, May 2014 - [Traineeships - framework for delivery 2014 to 2015](#)

EFA, May 2014 - [Delivery and recording of work experience](#)

EFA, June 2014 - [Funding guidance for young people - 2014 to 2015 - funding regulations](#)

EFA, July 2014 - [Funding guidance for young people - 2014 to 2015 - funding rates and formula](#)
Ofsted, September 2014 - [Transforming 16 to 19 education and training: the early inspection of 16-19 study programmes](#)

AoC - [Study Programme Central](#)

[DfE, June 2014 - Vocational qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds 2017 and 2018 performance tables: technical guidance for awarding organisations](#)

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Work experience expected in different study programmes

	What kind of work experience do the DfE advise?	How will this be funded?	What will Ofsted be interested in?
Work experience is the core aim of a programme (study programmes for learners not yet ready to study and achieve substantial vocational and/or academic qualifications, and Traineeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External work experience expected. Simulated work experience can be offered to prepare learners but this does not count as external work experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External work experience recorded one of the six work experience aims (see page 7 of the funding guidance). Simulated work experience recorded as non-qualification activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the experience has given the learner the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from an external work placement at an appropriate stage of their programme. How it has prepared them for employment.
Learning in a workplace environment is an essential element of a learner’s vocational qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External work experience expected if a qualification requirement. Simulated work experience can be offered if external work experience not a qualification requirement. But, external work experience expected if learner plans to progress to work or an Apprenticeship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External or simulated work experience required as part of the qualification recorded as qualification hours. External or simulated work experience not required as part of the qualification recorded as non-qualification hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learner’s intentions for progression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the intention is to progress to is to an Apprenticeship or work, it will normally be expected that the learner’s programme will include external work experience (if not already an essential qualification requirement). If the intention to progress to Higher Education, there is no automatic expectation to see external work experience included in the programme (unless an essential qualification requirement). External work experience and or simulated work experience can however add value to the student’s programme by preparing the student ultimately for work. Evidence the experience has been purposeful. The value the young person has gained from the experience.
Where work experience is an enrichment activity for the learner <i>(External work experience can be used to fulfil the employer involvement requirement in Tech Levels or Technical Certificates. Simulated work experience cannot.)*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External work experience expected if learner plans to progress to work, or an Apprenticeship. Simulated or external work experience may be expected for academic programmes if it could add value to the learner’s programme by preparing the learner ultimately for work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded as non-qualification hours. 	

** Qualifications submitted for approval as Tech Levels at level 3 or Technical Certificates at level 2 must require all students to undertake meaningful activity involving employers, and be governed by quality assurance procedures run by the AO. The DfE define meaningful employer involvement as structured work-experience or work-placements, project(s), exercises(s) and/or assessments/examination(s) set with input from industry practitioner(s), units delivered or co-delivered by industry practitioner(s), and industry practitioners operating as ‘expert witnesses’ that contribute to the assessment of a student’s work or practice within a specified assessment framework.*