

# Planning and participating in work experience

**Level 1: Planning and participating in work experience  
(K/504/3086)**

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This material is provided as an additional and optional resource for tutors and teachers to use and adapt when delivering a programme of units for their learners. For learners to achieve units within a Skilled for Life programme, it is important that every assessment criterion is assessed, fully met and noted. The resource sheets provided for each unit will enable learners to produce evidence for certain criteria. It is not envisaged that solely by completing the resource sheets, learners will fully meet all the criteria. It is the responsibility of tutors and assessors to ensure that all criteria are properly assessed and the evidence recorded appropriately.

## Introduction

Our Skilled for Life resources are designed to provide you with ideas for delivering the unit content and engaging tasks and activities that will help learners work towards assessment.

The materials consist of standalone sheets that can be used in a range of ways to suit most situations. Whether you are working in a classroom or a less formal learning environment, with individual learners or with groups, it is hoped that you will find these sheets and the accompanying tutor guidance notes useful.

The sheets are in PDF format; they are downloadable and may be photocopied for use only within your institution. Alternatively, learners can access them on-screen – the write-in sections are interactive so that answers to activities can be recorded electronically.

Each assessment criterion is addressed by one or more activity sheets and may also be referenced in a starter stimulus activity. Starter stimuli are based around the suggested unit content in the specification and can be used to explain key concepts, or as the basis for a discussion. You may also use these stimulus activities to draw together key learning points and encourage learners to engage with particular topics or concepts from the outset. There is plenty of scope for you to introduce your own content or ideas as well.

Activities will consolidate learners' knowledge and understanding and, in some cases, may provide evidence for assessment.

This tutor guidance document provides detailed suggestions for how to use each of the resource sheets in the unit and includes tips and advice together with suggested extension activities, alternative ideas, useful reference sources, and answers to activities where applicable.

## Unit overview

The aim of this unit is to ensure that learners develop and practise the skills required to work safely, both individually and with others, through a work experience placement. Learners will also prepare for their placement and set short-term and long-term goals based on the learning gained during their placement.

## Delivery guidance

This unit will be delivered in conjunction with a work experience placement. The first few resource and activity sheets (numbered 1–3) will help learners to prepare for their placements by encouraging them to consider their own interests and complete some background research. Activities 4–10 should be completed during the placement and will allow learners to identify important procedures in the workplace, outline their role and responsibilities, and record their learning. Some of these sheets require input from learners' workplace supervisor and, if completed in detail, may be used to assess learners' abilities or provide evidence that certain assessment criteria have been achieved. Activity sheets 11–13 will help learners to reflect on and review their work, assess the value of the placement and set short term goals for the future.

Completed resource and activity sheets may be compiled in a log book (perhaps in a ring binder) which will provide evidence of learners' preparation for, and learning gained from, the work experience placement. This log book could also contain a journal in which learners record further information about the work placement, or additional detail to support any of the activities provided here.

In preparation for this unit, you should consider ways in which you can develop your learners' confidence and ensure they get the most from their work experience. For example:

- group discussions about how learners will be expected to behave and engage with other people during their work experience placement
- mock interviews, in person or over the telephone, to help learners to develop skills they may not have had the opportunity to practise before
- role plays, either with other learners or – to create a more formal atmosphere – between the tutor and the learners. Role play scenarios could cover the initial visit to the placement, with a focus on body language and appropriate communication.

All of these activities will help learners to understand what to expect during their work experience placement.

If possible, arrange a visit from a guest speaker who is, or has been, a work experience supervisor. This will help learners to understand what is expected of them and give them an opportunity to ask questions.

Activities which focus on preparation for the work placement can be completed in class, individually or in groups. The remaining activities require learners to gather or record information from their place of work and to reflect on their learning during and after the placement. You may wish to give copies of these sheets to learners' workplace supervisors, so that they are aware of the work that needs to be completed and can assist the learners in completing the necessary tasks.

## **Learning and teaching activities in this unit**

### **Resource sheet 1: What are your interests?**

Resource sheet 1 and Activity sheets 1a and 1b should be used as a set, to help learners prepare for their work experience placement. The intention is to draw connections between learners' interests and the skills and abilities they will need, or may be able to develop, during their work experience placements. Discussion – as a group or with individual learners – may be useful in helping learners to make the shift from general interests and abilities to ones that are relevant or transferable to a work experience context.

### **Activity 1a: What are you good at?**

This activity will encourage learners to think about their skills and abilities and consider how they may be useful in a work experience context. Begin with a discussion about situations in which each skill may be relevant or important. Any learners who have part-time jobs already should be encouraged to link the activities listed on this sheet with the work that they do.

A combination of large and small group discussion should allow your learners to get the best out of this activity, but each learner should complete their own copy of the activity sheet so that they can refer back to it later in the unit.



### Extension activity

Ask learners to identify skills they do not currently have but which they would like to develop, especially ones that might be useful during their work experience placement. If possible, find opportunities for learners to develop these skills before the placement begins, or suggest that learners speak to their workplace supervisor on the first day of the placement to discuss what they would like to achieve during their work experience.

### Activity 1b: What are you interested in?

If possible, this activity should be used to guide the selection of the work experience placement for each learner. If this is not feasible, learners should be encouraged to focus on specific aspects of the planned work experience that will be of interest to them. This will create a useful baseline against which to evaluate the work experience.

Learners may need help to identify the skills and abilities that lie at the heart of their interests. For example, attributes such as working well with others, paying attention to detail, problem solving, perseverance, and learning and developing new skills will apply to many different interests and will also be useful in a variety of workplace settings.

### Activity 2a: What do you need to know?

This activity is designed to make sure each learner has the basic information they need before starting their work experience placement. Knowing where to go, when to arrive, who to ask for, and what is expected of them will help learners to feel more confident about their placement. This activity will also highlight any information gaps that you may need to investigate, and may help you to spot potential problems in advance.

Learners may already have some or all of this information, if they organised the placement for themselves. If the placement has been organised by someone else, however, the learner may need to make an introductory phone call in order to find all the answers they need.

### **Activity 2b: Why do you need this information?**

Learners should understand why it is important to be prepared before their placement, and why they need the information stated on Activity sheet 2a. For example:

- address of work placement: needed so that learners can plan their journey
- telephone number: needed so that learners can call if they have any problems on their journey, or if they need any additional information before the placement begins
- main contact: needed so that learners know who to ask for when they arrive etc.

Encourage group discussion if learners are struggling to identify the importance of each piece of information.

### **Resource sheet 3: Mo's journey**

Resource sheet 3 is intended to stimulate discussion about the practical things learners should consider when planning their first day at a work experience placement. For example, they should:

- make sure they know when they are due at their place of work
- plan their journey in advance and make sure they know how long it will take
- check alternative routes, in case a bus or train is delayed
- allow time for problems or delays.

Discussion should alert learners to the potential problems they may encounter en route to their workplace and allow them to work out how they will avoid these pitfalls.

This sheet should be used in conjunction with Activity sheet 3 so that learners can use the points raised in discussion to help them plan their own journey.

### **Activity 3a: Why is planning important?**

Activity sheet 3a encourages learners to be explicit about why it is important to plan a journey carefully. Make sure your learners think about the full implications of careful planning and the range of potential problems which may be caused by insufficient planning. Learners may work in groups to discuss the importance of planning but must complete the spreadsheet individually if it is to be used as evidence for this assessment criterion.

### Activity 3b: Plan your journey

This activity will encourage learners to consider their own route to their work experience placement, so that they can be confident of arriving on time without undue stress. The complexity of the activity will depend on the location of the placement in relation to the learner's home.

It would be useful to provide maps and timetables for public transport, so that learners can find specific route details and timings. Alternatively, you could ask learners to find suitable resources before the activity. You may wish to suggest that learners look at online resources such as Google Maps™ or other journey planners. Such websites often suggest public transport routes and provide estimated journey times depending on the method of transport chosen.

In order to complete this activity, learners must consider how much time they will need in order to get to the placement on time *and fully prepared*. To this end, they should state when they will need to wake up in order to meet the other deadlines they identify.



#### Extension activity

Learners could be given hypothetical journeys to plan, especially if their own route is very straightforward. This will give them a chance to practise using timetables, maps, and other route planning materials so that they can fully appreciate the level of planning that may be necessary in order to get to a work experience placement.

### Activity 4: Your work placement induction

This sheet provides a checklist of areas that learners should know about following their workplace induction. You should discuss this checklist with your learners before they begin their placements, so that they understand the importance of this information and feel confident enough to ask questions if they are not answered automatically as part of the induction process.

Learners may complete this sheet during or after their induction, and should have an opportunity to discuss their answers and ensure they understand them fully. If learners are provided with any additional information – for example, a checklist detailing the evacuation procedure, or a document outlining their role and responsibilities in the workplace – this should be stored alongside the activity sheet in their log book and may be presented as evidence for this assessment criterion.



### **Activity 5: What is your role?**

Activity sheet 5 will allow learners to expand on the description of their role and responsibilities provided during the workplace induction. Encourage your learners to identify the different aspects of their role and their responsibilities to staff and customers or clients.

### **Activity 6a: What have you done?**

Activity sheet 6a is a template activity log which each learner should complete during their work placement. Introduce this worksheet before learners begin their placements and make sure they understand how to record what they have done and know what type of information to provide.

This sheet will also give each learner's workplace supervisor an opportunity to comment on the activities undertaken and to talk regularly with the learner about their progress. It is recommended that you give a copy of this sheet to each learner's supervisor in advance, so that they can use it to plan activities and structure their conversations with the learner during the placement.

Make sure learners understand the importance of finding an appropriate time during the placement to discuss the worksheet with their supervisor. This could be reinforced with role play, so that learners can practise how and when to bring the subject of the activity sheet to their supervisor's attention. Learners must also understand the importance of using appropriate language, since their written description of the tasks they have carried out will be read by their supervisor.



#### **Extension activity**

Encourage learners to look back at Activity sheets 1a and 1b and identify ways in which each task or activity has used or developed their skills, or been relevant to the interests identified in Activity 1b. This will be helpful when learners come to review the placement.

### **Activity 6b: Can you follow instructions?**

Activity sheet 6b is designed to record specific evidence for assessment criterion 2.4 (*Communicate appropriately with colleagues*). You should aim to introduce this sheet before the start of the work placement, or after the workplace induction.

Make sure your learners understand the key skills they will need in order to follow instructions and work well with colleagues during their work placement, for example:

- listening to instructions
- asking questions if they are unsure
- checking that they have understood the task properly
- asking for help if they need it.

Role play, team building activities, or discussion of real or imagined scenarios may help to familiarise learners with these skills and ideas.

Encourage learners to look for opportunities to work with others and to ask their supervisor to find suitable activities if necessary. Alternatively, you may wish to inform the supervisor in advance that the learner will need to work with others on some tasks in order to fulfil the unit criteria. Team work will give learners opportunities to practise their communication skills.

Once the activity sheet has been completed, each learner should ask their supervisor to review and comment on their answers. This discussion could take place alongside the review of Activity 6a.

### **Activity 7: Can you communicate well?**

This activity should be introduced to learners during their work placement, so that they can self-assess their communication abilities using the sliding scales provided. Discuss each with your learners and make sure they understand that the quality of their communication is often best measured through other people's reactions, rather than their own opinions.

The final four rows have been left blank for learners to fill in if they feel they have learned or developed other skills that deserve recognition. Although not a requirement, it is recommended that learners ask their supervisor to comment, either stating their own opinion of the learner's communication abilities or responding to the learner's self-assessment.

### **Activity 8a: Health and safety information**

This activity may be introduced to and partially completed by learners before their work experience placement. However, the first question under each sign – relating to the location of signs within a specific workplace – will need to be completed while the learner is on placement.

Some signs may not be present in all settings. If this is the case, it is recommended that you ask learners to provide details of other signs they encounter during their work placement.

Learners must also show that they know where health and safety information is located, for example:

- fire exit notices on doors
- sector-specific warnings about the handling of dangerous materials
- the location of fire exits, fire alarms, fire extinguishers and assembly points.

This may be evidenced through a discussion with the workplace supervisor, recorded in a witness statement or observation record. Alternatively, learners may wish to draw a simple plan of their workplace, marking on it the location of various health and safety features. This plan should be filed in their log book, alongside this activity sheet.

### **Activity 8b: Hazards and risks**

Activity 8b will encourage learners to think about hazards and related risks in their work experience placement. It may be useful to introduce this activity to learners with a group discussion about the types of hazards and risks they may encounter, depending on the exact nature of their work experience placement.

You may wish to refer learners to the website of the Health and Safety Authority for additional information on this topic.

### **Activity 9: Report a hazard**

In this activity sheet, learners will need to compose an email to the health and safety representative at their place of work, reporting one of the hazards they identified in Activity 8b. Encourage your learners to plan their email in advance, so that they know exactly what they are trying to say. Some learners may also benefit from a discussion about effective written communication, so that they are aware of the need to use appropriate language and make sure their communication is clear.

You may wish to hold a one-to-one discussion with each learner once they have completed this activity, so that you have an opportunity to provide feedback and suggest improvements if necessary. Alternatively, this discussion may be used as alternative evidence for assessment criterion 3.2 (*Report potential risks and hazards to the 'responsible person' in the workplace*) as long as you provide a completed witness statement or observation record as evidence.

Learners should also show their completed activity sheet to their workplace supervisor, so that they can make sure the learner has followed the correct procedure and make other appropriate comments if they wish.

### **Activity 10: Follow workplace procedures**

If possible, give a copy of Activity sheet 10 to each learner's workplace supervisor before the work placement begins. This will ensure the supervisor knows which procedures they are expected to cover and enable them to plan tasks and activities which will allow the learner to find out about and, if possible, practise each procedure.

Each learner will need to work with their workplace supervisor to complete this sheet. However, you may wish to introduce the activity before the placements begin, perhaps with a class discussion about the procedures listed and why they are important. If possible, provide examples of real procedure documents – for example, your centre may have printed evacuation guidelines or posters about safe lifting and handling – so that learners can familiarise themselves with the key aspects of each procedure.

Learners will need to discuss this activity sheet with their workplace supervisor, explaining their understanding of each procedure and describing situations when they have followed it correctly and safely. This will enable their supervisor to 'sign off' each area of understanding and competence. If any areas are not relevant – for instance, a work experience placement in retail is unlikely to provide opportunities to use personal protective equipment – supervisors should add a note to explain this.

## Activity 11: What have you learned?

Introduce this activity to your learners as they are nearing the end of their work experience placement and encourage them to think about and discuss what they have learned. While thinking about this activity, learners should refer back to Activities 1a and 1b, and assess their answers to the questions on this sheet with reference to the interests and abilities they identified at the beginning of this unit. For example, did they enjoy the areas that had most relevance to their existing interests, or did they unexpectedly find themselves enjoying something completely different? Were they surprised by any of the tasks they found particularly difficult?

The first table on this activity sheet will be used as a basis for discussion with the supervisor, so learners should make sure their comments are constructive and that any criticism or reference to problems during the placement is framed in such a way that it will not damage relations between the learner and the supervisor.

Learners should complete this first table before photocopying the second page of the sheet and asking for feedback from two of the people listed. It is recommended that this feedback follows a discussion in which the learner is able to talk through their own comments and answer any questions their supervisor (or other named person) has about what they have done during the placement.

Note that some form of recorded evidence must be available for external verification in order for learners to achieve this assessment criterion.



### Extension activity

Ask learners to describe what they would do differently if they had the chance to begin their work placement again. For example, would they have liked to develop particular skills? Do they feel better equipped now to deal with problems or tackle the tasks that they found difficult this time? Would their attitude to the placement be any different?

### **Activity 12a: Review your work placement**

This activity sheet should be completed as soon as possible after learners have completed their work placement, while the experience is still fresh in their minds. Learners should reflect on what they have gained from the placement and assess how closely it matched their interests and expectations. Encourage learners to give as much detail as possible and to assess whether their own expectations were realistic. The final question, about whether the work experience has changed their aspirations for the future, will help learners to address the questions in Activities 13a and 13b.

### **Activity 12b: How did you do?**

Activity sheet 12b is a checklist activity which will allow learners to self-assess their achievement in a number of areas. Remind learners that these ratings are intended to help them set appropriate and realistic goals in the next two activities, so it is important that they are honest.

### **Activity 13a: Set short-term goals**

This activity sheet should be used at the end of the work experience placement. Make sure your learners understand the importance of reviewing what they have learned and considering their next steps. This activity should be used to sum up the value of the placement and help learners to plan how to use their new knowledge and skills.

Learners may need some guidance to set appropriate and realistic short-term goals. For example, you may need to help them find information about short courses or training they could apply for, or further work experience opportunities.

### **Activity 13b: Set long term goals**

This activity should be used alongside Activity 13a, at the end of the work experience placement. As in the previous activity, learners may need help and guidance to set appropriate and realistic goals, and to provide as much detail as possible about how these goals link to the work experience placement and how they can be achieved.



#### **Extension activity**

Encourage learners to use their answers to Activities 13a and 13b to create a detailed action plan, describing how they intend to respond to and use the learning they have gained during their work experience placement.

## Useful resources

### Websites

<http://maps.google.co.uk/>

Google Maps™ will provide suggested routes and estimated travel times for various different transport methods

[www.nationalrail.co.uk/](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/)

The National Rail website provides details of train times and real time travel updates

[www.hsa.ie/eng/](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/)

The Health and Safety Authority website has a dedicated section about 'Workplace Health', which provides information about accidents, appropriate behaviour, manual handling and various other topics

## Answers to activities

Answers are provided only for tasks or activities which have a definitive answer or range of suggested answers. For other tasks, accept any suitable answer.

### Activity 8a: Health and safety information

#### Fire exit sign

- **What does it mean?** Attention: take this route / use this exit to leave the building in case of fire

#### Wet floor sign

- **What does it mean?** Hazard: take care – the floor may be wet because of a spillage or recent cleaning

#### No Smoking sign

- **What does it mean?** Prohibited: smoking is not permitted in this area / building

#### Ear protection sign

- **What does it mean?** Mandatory: all persons in this area must wear ear protection