

## **Why work experience is important**

Choosing what to do in your career may seem easier if you know what you want to be in the future. You can look for opportunities that will help you to develop skills for that career. This could be through:

- a work placement
- an internship
- a shadowing opportunity

It's an opportunity for you to:

- test out your career ideas
- improve your skills
- show your commitment and enthusiasm

If you do not know what job you want, or you cannot get your perfect placement, any work experience is better than none. Whatever job you try, you'll learn more about yourself and working life.

You'll also gain skills in the process. It may even lead to more suitable experience with the same company. It could be good preparation for another opportunity that's closer to what you want to do. Try not to worry about where you could go to get work experience. Concentrate on what you could learn or improve on.

## **Use work experience as research**

Work experience is a chance for you to:

- find out more about yourself
- find out what inspires you
- come up with career ideas and try them out
- discover your strengths, values, motivations and interests
- meet new people

It can also help you to rule out options, which can help to focus your career ideas.

To explore your work experience options, you can:

- talk to your teachers, family and friends for ideas
- ask people you know about their jobs and the places they work
- talk to older students who have already done work experience
- get advice from a careers leader or careers adviser

## **Build your soft skills**

You can use your work experience as a time to build your soft skills. Employers look for employees who can show that they are:

- trustworthy and reliable
- good communicators
- great team players
- able to solve problems
- willing to learn new things
- able to adapt and 'bounce back' when things do not go to plan

These soft skills are common skills that are not specific to any one job but useful for most. You can learn and practise these skills in any workplace. Use your experience to show an employer that you have them.

[Ways to get work experience | National Careers Service](#)