

EMPLOYABILITY WORK EXPERIENCE



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Young people now approaching adulthood are among the first to have never experienced life without the internet. The technological advances made in the past 20 years alone have been vast, and bring with them opportunities and challenges that previous generations might struggle to comprehend.

Firstly, they open up a vast, global marketplace where the ability to 'stay connected' means that we can literally live in one country and work in another. They also bring new job roles that simply didn't exist a generation ago and require a completely new set of skills, resulting in a bewildering range of opportunities, within a highly competitive job market.

Employers frequently tell us that young candidates coming for interview often have the necessary academic or job-related skills, but lack experience of the workplace and don't understand the behaviour expected in the world of work. Here at Bridgwater & Taunton College we believe it is our role and responsibility to prepare young people for employment - not just academically, but also by ensuring that they:

- have good communication skills
- can work well with colleagues and customers
- are reliable
- are able to solve problems
- turn up on time
- understand what is expected of them.

We do this by ensuring that every young person who studies at the College has the opportunity to undertake work experience, enabling them to start developing these skills whilst also exploring different industry sectors and job roles.

With over 4,000 young people enrolled at the College, this is something of a challenge but nevertheless we regard it as crucial. Your help in providing Work Experience opportunities for our students is invaluable. For many this is their first encounter with the

world of work, and a highly positive experience can literally transform lives as students gain in confidence or discover an industry sector that really motivates them. With your help we can educate, inspire and develop young people into the technical and professional workforce that industry so desperately needs.

This handbook provides information on the responsibilities of the student, the employer and the College. I hope you will find it useful, and I hope too that you will feel able to offer work experience, or even Apprenticeship opportunities to our students.

Andy Berry
Principal
Bridgwater & Taunton College



ABOUT THE COLLEGE

Bridgwater & Taunton College has campuses in Bridgwater, Taunton and Cannington. It has an excellent reputation as a world class provider of education and training, with examination and course results that consistently place it amongst the best education and training providers in the South West.

The College's extensive curriculum comprises no fewer than 993 separate qualifications designed to address regional workforce needs, across the key areas of:

- Construction, Automotive and Engineering
- A Levels, Arts & Professional Studies
- Land-based, Sport and Foundation Studies.

Alongside their studies, every student receives a minimum of 30 hours of work experience, or a 315 hour industry placement, and is enrolled onto the Bridgwater & Taunton College Advantage - a unique programme that helps them to:

- learn more effectively
- gain in confidence
- aim high, and be proud of their achievements
- feel safe, healthy and happy
- be tolerant and respectful of others in the community
- interact positively with others.

WHAT IS WORK EXPERIENCE?

Our aim is to help young people prepare themselves for the world of work. The excellent relationships that staff throughout the College have established with employers large and small enable us to offer every 16 - 18 year old student the opportunity of work experience, in an industry sector that interests them. This can last from 30 hours to 315 hours, on certain courses, and is a brilliant opportunity for students to 'try out' a particular job or line of work before committing themselves.

A period of work experience helps young people develop the personal, employability skills that employers value - skills such as self-confidence, teamwork, communication skills and community awareness, which can often be the deciding factor at job interviews. In many cases it can also lead to full- or part-time employment

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

Offering work experience to a student can be of enormous benefit to your business in the following ways:

- You would be helping to bridge the gap between education and the workplace, creating a stronger workforce for the future.
- You would be playing your part in closing the skill gap affecting many industries, and safeguarding your industry's future.
- You would be providing yourself with access to a pool of future employees.
- It is a fantastic opportunity to develop Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR).
- Work experience is flexible, allowing you to develop bespoke projects that support your business needs as well as providing an invaluable student experience.
- The return on your investment of time and resource might well surprise you!

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE COLLEGE

The College will work closely with you to help ensure that the Work Experience works well for you and the student. You can expect that:

- The Work Experience Co-ordinator will ensure that you have the appropriate health and safety checks in place, visiting your company if necessary.
- Dates will be agreed to suit both you and the student.
- The College will ensure that the student is briefed on their workplace responsibilities and will seek to ensure that all parties are clear on the goals and targets the student wishes to achieve.

or an Apprenticeship, but even if it doesn't lead to a job offer, it will always look great on their CV for future employment. At the moment, we have students completing work experience with large companies such as Rolls-Royce, Thales, John Lewis and BAM, as well as a host of smaller, local businesses, and all these employers tell us that they find this aspect of the student's course hugely beneficial to filling the skills gap and preparing the next generation of workers.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Bridgwater & Taunton College prides itself on the calibre of its students and expects high standards of them both inside and outside the College. We require that our students:

- Abide by your policies and rules whilst working in your company.
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

- Telephone both you and the College, in advance, if they are going to be late or absent whilst on work experience.
- Keep mobile phones, and other similar devices, in the staff room or wherever specified by you, whilst working.
- Record their work experience hours using the attendance record provided by the College.

WHAT WE ASK OF EMPLOYERS

We are keen to work with employers who are able and willing to provide students with a realistic insight into their workplace, their business and their industry sector.

We would ask that you:

- Provide the students with an adequate induction and training programme.
- Provide the student with the required Personal Protective Equipment.

- Ensure that the student is properly supervised whilst working.
- Allow the student to see a range of roles or departments within the company.
- Offer the student constructive feedback that will help them to develop their skills.
- Alert the Work Experience Co-ordinator if the student is late, or fails to attend when expected, and fails to contact you.
- Alert your College contact if you have any concerns about the student's ability to complete their work experience.

If you have any worries or concerns about these expectations, please contact the Work Experience team in the Business Development Office on 01278 441237 during normal office hours, or send an email to workexperience@btc.ac.uk

INDUCTION

The student should receive an induction on their first day in the workplace, when they'll be given all the information they need.

This is also when their training programme will be discussed and planned. This is to ensure that both you and the student are clear on workplace expectations. The type of information that we would expect to be included in these discussions is:

- Company arrangements for signing in and out.
- A tour of workplace facilities, such as toilets, staff room, smoking area and where to eat.
- Fire exits and assembly points.
- First aid arrangements.
- Health and safety: warning signs, instruction guidelines, health and safety poster etc.
- Protective clothing and equipment, if applicable, and how to use it.
- Working hours and break times.
- Use of mobile phones and other mobile devices.
- A company point of contact for the student.
- The student's training schedule, where applicable.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Bridgwater & Taunton College is keen to ensure that young people are kept safe, and asks all employers providing work experience to share this commitment. We would ask that you:

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of students in your workplace, bringing your company Health and Safety Policy to their attention and ensuring they are aware of their personal responsibilities to themselves and others.

- Comply with Health and Safety legislation at all times.
- Make sure the student knows who the company's nominated Health and Safety representative is.
- Provide Health and Safety training in the workplace and provide any required protective clothing and equipment.
- Report any accidents involving students that you would report under the reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulation (RIDDOR) to the College's Work Experience Team.
- Assess any risks to which the student might be exposed, and apply the general principles of prevention.
- Ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to minimise and control any risks.
- Ensure students are properly supervised by a competent member of staff whilst in the workplace.
- Ensure that you have the correct insurance cover in place.

The College will meet with you and go through a Health and Safety agreement with you before any student starts a work experience.

COMPULSORY EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY INSURANCE

By law, students on work experience are regarded as employees for insurance purposes and will therefore be covered under your Employer's Liability Insurance policy. The College will need to ensure that you have such cover in place.

SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT

As a College it is our duty to safeguard young people against harm. Specifically we seek to protect our students against physical,

emotional and sexual abuse and neglect. We also try to protect our students from becoming radicalised in response to the government's 'Prevent Duty' (2015).

As employers, you have a duty to: recognise, respond, record and report any concerns you may have, or disclosures that are made to you.

If you feel that a student placed in your company is at risk of any of the harms above, please talk to your Work Experience Advisor without delay, or contact the College Safeguarding team directly:

Mark Nettle,
Director of Student Services
01278 441247
nettle@btc.ac.uk

Kristyn Woodward
Head of Student Engagement (Bridgwater)
Tel 01278 441267,
email woodwardk@btc.ac.uk

Helen Windsor
Student Engagement Manager (Taunton)
Tel 01823 366506,
email windsorh@btc.ac.uk

Louise Seymour
Student Engagement Manager (Cannington)
Tel 01278 655055 ext 5024,
email seymourl@btc.ac.uk

Or email staysafe@btc.ac.uk and this will be seen by all the above.

Recognise - what are some of the symptoms of abuse?

Abuse can take many forms. You are not expected to be an expert in this field. However, you will develop knowledge of the student you employ and may pick up changes in behaviour that may cause you concern.

The young person/vulnerable adult may:

- present with bruises and injuries that they have difficulty explaining

CASE STUDY

Bridgwater & Taunton College has been working in close partnership with multiple companies to provide placements to multiple students. One such employer is the Bridgwater branch of Nationwide Repair Centres, the UK's largest vehicle repair company.

The team at Nationwide recognise the need for new blood to rejuvenate a seriously ailing industry. As such they have committed to taking on multiple students and presenting them with the unique opportunity for our budding mechanics to gain new skills and address real-life challenges using what they learn at College in a practical setting. Nationwide are seeking to retain talented young people in Somerset, and in industry, by equipping them with a range of skills needed for a promising career and providing them with networking and career opportunities with one of the most prestigious and respected vehicle repair companies in the country.

Of the group of students who went to Nationwide, two are in line for an Apprenticeship, and the others are looking forward to pursuing lasting careers in the automotive industry having had a taste of professional life on work experience.



- be scared, tearful and may present unusual behaviour
- self harm or place themselves in risky situations
- show a dramatic change in character or appearance
- start disclosing strong opinions or radical views

Respond - if a student tells you of abuse...

Take them seriously; it will have taken a lot of courage to disclose this. Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you, but you have a duty to pass this on to the right person to deal with it - you cannot promise to keep what they tell you a secret. It is important not to ask leading questions, but make sure you thank the student for telling you and follow the procedures in this document.

A student may tell you about events that happened many years ago. It is important that you treat these disclosures with equal care.

Record

Make sure that you make a written record of what happened and how you dealt with it. Records should be made as soon as possible and every effort should be made to record precisely what was said.

Reporting issues

The student's needs are paramount, and when you have a concern about a young person or vulnerable adult you must share your concerns appropriately and promptly. Safeguarding information is very sensitive so should only be shared with the designated safeguarding officers, who can be reached at 01278 441247.

In addition you can report to the Director of Student Services, Mark Nettle, who is the Safeguarding Lead for the College. He can be reached at nettlem@btc.ac.uk. The Director of Student Services is also the 'single point of contact' for concerns about the radicalisation of a work experience student.

The College also has a responsibility to actively promote the 'Prevent Duty' to students and employers. This is relatively new, and requires training providers to take appropriate steps to challenge extremist ideas and prevent young people and vulnerable adults from being drawn into terrorism.

In case of emergency please contact:

During office hours: the Bridgwater & Taunton College Work Experience team: 01278 441237 / workexperience@btc.ac.uk

Outside office hours: the Bridgwater & Taunton College Duty Manager: 01278 455464, who is available until:

- 7pm on Mondays
- 9pm Tuesday to Thursday
- 5pm on Fridays.

If the student will be working outside normal office hours on their work experience, please ensure that you have an emergency contact number for them. Any issues should please be reported to the College at the earliest opportunity.

HOW WORK EXPERIENCE IS TRANSFORMING STUDENTS' LIVES

Work experience aims to provide learners with transferable skills that prepare them fully for the workplace and make them highly employable - working as a high-functioning, effective and proactive team.

Students have come away from work experience more confident, and ready to engage in the professional world of industry, praising the experience as one that allows them to see 'a sneak peek into the future'.

SUMMARY

We at Bridgwater & Taunton College believe that a week of work experience is invaluable to our students in helping prepare them for the working world, giving them a good understanding of the working environment they are interested in as well as the opportunity to start building their professional contacts within their chosen sector.

On-the-job experience is something we are unable to offer students ourselves, and so we are incredibly grateful to you for your part in helping our students get the best start possible in their future careers.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to give our students excellent experiences of the world of work, and the education and the skills that will enhance industry in the future.

