



STARTERMOTOR

Employer Guide & Best Practice

Work Experience, Placements and Internships

Offering workplace opportunities to students at any level is a valuable way to invest in the future of the historic and classic vehicles industry. It helps employers build a talent pipeline, address skills shortages, give access to the latest techniques and technologies, and can bring fresh perspectives into your organisation.

Investing in training can also strengthen your reputation, build links with education providers, and demonstrate your commitment to developing future skills.

The HCVA's affiliation with StarterMotor underscores its strong support for the charity's mission to inspire school-age students, attract the next generation of talent, and help them realise rewarding careers within the sector.

1. Types of workplace experience and training

There are broadly three different types of workplace experience offered at varying stages through a young person's academic career – these are Work Experience, Placements and Internships.

1.1 WORK EXPERIENCE (TYPICALLY AGES 14–16)

Work experience is usually undertaken by secondary school students and is primarily educational in nature, providing students with an ideal opportunity to explore potential careers, develop new skills, and strengthen their CV. During this time, they gain insight into the world of work and experience its disciplines and relationships. It helps them identify what they enjoy, what roles may suit their skills and interests and the environment they would like to work in.

- Typically lasts 1–2 weeks, usually in the summer term of their first GCSE Year
- Organised through schools
- Focused on introducing the world of work

Although not part of the National Curriculum, the UK Government has an ambition that all young people should have access to high-quality work experience during their education.

1.2 PLACEMENTS (TYPICALLY AGE 16+)

Placements form part of further or higher education courses where students usually receive academic credit and may include:

- Short-term course placements
- Year in Industry
- T and V Level industry placements

Some courses may be structured as multiple placements of shorter durations or a longer term including:

- Day release
- Block placements
- Long-term placements (up to 12 months)

1.3 INTERNSHIPS (USUALLY AGE 18+)

Internships are typically undertaken by students or graduates seeking experience in a specific career area.

- Often occur during summer break or after graduation
- Usually involve defined responsibilities and deliverables
- Potential to transition into full-time roles

Most interns are legally classed as workers and are entitled to the National Minimum Wage unless a specific exemption applies.

2. Benefits for Employers

Offering workplace opportunities can:

- Build a future talent pipeline
- Improve recruitment and retention
- Provide access to new ideas and perspectives
- Support short-term projects
- Develop leadership skills in existing staff
- Strengthen relationships with schools and colleges

Many graduates join organisations through placement or internship programmes, frequently becoming long-term employees. Both you and the participant have had time to get to know each other - they have had a chance to get to know the organisation, team members and expectations, whilst you have had a chance to experience first-hand their competencies, work ethic and see how they fit within your organisation.

3. What Makes a High-Quality Training Programme?

Work Experience should go beyond observation and include:

- A clear purpose and defined learning objectives
- Meaningful tasks or projects
- Regular feedback and reflection

Students on Placements and Internships should be integrated as part of the workforce with specific tasks or projects to complete. The work should be meaningful, challenging, and allow for personal development.

Effective placements and internships help develop:

- Business awareness
- Communication
- Initiative
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Planning

- Self-management & leadership

Where a placement forms part of a course, the student will be expected to produce a body of work for their educational establishment, which will be assessed and contribute to their final qualification.

You are not expected to provide additional time for this academic work to be completed; however, you should provide ongoing support and a mentor for the student. Expect to have a visit from the course co-ordinator before and during the placement and be required to offer feedback and review at the end.

4. Understanding T Levels

T Levels are a Level 3 qualification launched in 2020, offering 16–19 year-old students a two-year technical course to be studied after GCSE's. They offer a combination of practical and knowledge-based learning at school or college and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of 45 days (315 hours). Each T Level is equivalent to 3 A Levels and will gradually replace B-Tech qualifications once there is a clear replacement qualification.

T Levels differ from apprenticeships in that they are predominantly classroom based and prepare students for work, further training or further study. By comparison, an apprenticeship is predominantly work-based and typically suited for those who are ready to enter the workforce at 16 and want to earn a wage.

T Level placements can be offered as a block, day release or a combination of both. They can also be shared with another employer. Guidance on delivering an industry placement for T Level students can be found here.

Funding support is available from the T-Level provider for SME's providing placements via the T Level Employer Support Fund.

The students' school, college, or university will:

- Help plan and structure the placement
- Carry out checks and paperwork
- Visit during the placement to ensure everything runs smoothly
- Offer guidance on funding, such as the T Level Employer Support Fund, which can help cover setup and supervision costs

Below are some useful links for further information:

[GOV.UK Introduction of T Levels](#)

[GOV.UK T Levels & Industry Support for Employers](#)

[GOV.UK Benefits & Costs of an Industry Placement](#)

[GOV.UK Business Benefits, Case Studies & Progression](#)

5. Understanding V Levels

V Levels are also a Level 3 qualification and will launch in 2027, providing a two-year vocational pathway for students to explore different sectors before deciding where to specialise.

They will have a broader focus than T Levels and are designed to blend academic depth with practical hands-on industry skills. Each V Level will be equivalent to 1 A Level. V Levels will include a period of work experience.

This could be a one or two-week placement or a more flexible ongoing arrangement of one day a week.

6. At-a-Glance Legal Checklist

Before offering any placement, employers should:

- Confirm the type of opportunity (work experience, placement, or internship)
- Check if National Minimum Wage requirements apply
- Ensure employer's liability insurance covers students
- Complete a risk assessment (required for under 18s)
- Put appropriate supervision and safeguarding measures in place
- Agree working hours, breaks, and expectations

7. Planning and managing the placement

Planning ahead ensures employers meet their obligations and students settle in quickly.

Prepare the structure:

- Placement dates & working hours
- Activities and tasks
- Staff supervision
- Job shadowing
- Identify practical tasks and project work

7.1 SUPPORTING INCLUSION

Inclusive placements help ensure equal access to opportunities. Students may have different needs and employers should aim to accommodate diversity.

This may include:

- Making reasonable adjustments
- Providing clear instructions
- Offering additional support where required

The educational establishment may provide guidance about any specific needs.

7.2 PREPARING YOUR TEAM

A welcoming environment helps students feel comfortable and confident. Before the placement begins, inform staff that a student will be joining the workplace.

Encourage staff to:

- Welcome the student
- Explain their roles and responsibilities
- Share their career journeys
- Provide encouragement and support

7.3 MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Most educational establishments now rely on dedicated online platforms to manage the process efficiently.

These have largely replaced older paper-based systems and handle student applications and preferences, employer details and approval workflows, risk assessments and documentation, consent forms (parents/carers), and attendance tracking and feedback.

Common systems include:

- Unifrog
- Grofar
- Connect
- Compass+

8. Pay and Employment Status

Understanding employment status is essential.

8.1 WORK EXPERIENCE

Students on school-organised work experience are not classed as workers and are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage. It is good practice that Employers may reimburse reasonable expenses such as travel and meals.

8.2 PLACEMENTS

Students on placements that are:

- Part of a UK further or higher education course, and
- Last less than 12 months

are not classed as workers and are exempt from National Minimum Wage requirements. It is good practice that Employers may reimburse reasonable expenses such as travel and meals.

Year in Industry 12-month placements are usually paid, with many education providers having a requirement to do so.

8.3 INTERNSHIPS

Most interns are classed as workers and must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

Employers should review government guidance to ensure compliance at:

[GOV.UK Employment Rights & Pay for Interns](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-rights-and-pay-for-interns)

9. Health & Safety Responsibilities

Employers have a primary duty of care under the **Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)**. The Health & Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990 extended the meaning of the term 'employee' to include students on Work Experience.

All students should receive an induction covering:

- Workplace hazards
- Emergency procedures
- First aid and fire safety

Further Information at [Health & Safety Executive](#)

Additionally, for students under 18 the **Health & Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1999** require:

- A specific risk assessment before the student starts
- Consider inexperience and lack of awareness of potential hazards
- Put appropriate control and safeguarding measures in place

Employees supervising the students will need to be aware of their responsibilities towards the students.

9.1 WHAT INSURANCE COVER IS REQUIRED?

Your existing employers' liability insurance policy should cover work placements provided your insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers ABI or Lloyds, so additional cover should not be required.

Employers should:

- Confirm cover with their insurer
- Ensure students are included within the definition of employees

10. Safeguarding and Supervision

Providing a safe, supportive and appropriate environment for students is an essential requirement, particularly for those under 18 years of age.

Key Principles

- Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the student
- Promote a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace
- Ensure appropriate supervision at all times
- Maintain clear professional boundaries
- Provide a named contact for help and concerns

Checklist

- Confirm the student's age and placement details
- Review risk assessments, including young persons' risks
- Identify a named supervisor or mentor
- Brief staff on the student's arrival and expectations
- Consider whether any activity could involve unsupervised contact

10.1 STUDENTS AGE 18+

- Treat as adults, but still provide support and supervision
- Apply standard workplace policies and duty of care

10.2 STUDENTS AGE UNDER 18

Supervision is the primary safeguarding measure. Avoid extended unsupervised one-to-one situations.

10.3 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CONSIDERATIONS

DBS checks are not required where the placement is less than 15 days. However, where work involves regular, unsupervised contact with children, this is likely to be classified as a regulated

activity and would therefore require a DBS check. If unsure, seek advice from the education provider or relevant authority.

Further information at [GOV.UK DBS Checks Guidance](#)

10.4 STAFF CONDUCT AND BOUNDARIES

- Avoid sharing personal contact details
- Do not communicate outside work channels or hours
- Avoid inappropriate language or behaviour
- Do not form personal relationships with students

10.5 DURING THE PLACEMENT

- Provide appropriate tasks for age and experience
- Check in regularly with the student
- Encourage questions and feedback
- Monitor wellbeing and engagement

10.6 REPORTING CONCERNS

- Take all concerns seriously and act promptly
- Report concerns to the school or provider immediately
- Follow your organisation's safeguarding or HR procedures
- Record concerns where appropriate

10.7 FURTHER SAFEGUARDING & SUPERVISION GUIDANCE

[GOV.UK Disclosure and Barring Service](#)

[Health and Safety Executive – Young Workers](#)

[NSPCC - Safeguarding & Child Protection](#)

11. Implementation phase checklist

Getting things right from the first day helps students gain a better understanding of the workplace and creates a positive experience for all.

11.1 FIRST DAY INDUCTION:

- Introduce staff and workplace
- Provide a tour
- Working hours and overview of the placement timetable
- Informing practical arrangements including dress code and lunch breaks
- Explain rules and expectations, including use of technology and confidentiality
- Deliver health and safety briefing
- Explain how to report any issues
- Provide a named contact for help or concerns

11.2 MENTORING AND SUPERVISION

Each student should have a named mentor or supervisor. The mentor should:

- Provide guidance and support
- Answer questions
- Monitor progress
- Ensure tasks are appropriate

Regular check-ins help ensure the student feels supported.

11.3 SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

Employers can support learning by explaining how different roles contribute to the organisation.

Encourage students to:

- Ask questions
- Reflect on their experiences
- Consider possible career paths

Sharing career advice can be particularly valuable.

11.4 FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

At the end of the placement employers should:

- Provide constructive feedback
- Highlight achievements, strengths and areas for improvement
- Encourage reflection on what they have learned

Employers should also review feedback from students:

- What worked well for both parties
- Areas for improvement

Some employers also provide a certificate of completion or reference.

11.5 USEFUL RESOURCES

Below are some useful links for further information:

[The Careers & Enterprise Company](#)

[GOV.UK Work Experience Employer Guide](#)

[Inspiring the Future - Organisation](#)

[StarterMotor](#)

12. Disclaimer

This guide provides general best practice information and does not constitute legal advice. Employers should refer to official government guidance or seek professional advice where necessary.