



Developing the Young Workforce

Work Placements Standard

September 2015

The standard recognises the rich learning that a young person can experience when they use and develop their skills in a work environment. It recognises that a work placement should help a young person to make informed career choices. The standard sets out expectations for the young person, employer, school and local authority and parent/carer before, during and after work placements. Implementation of the standard will significantly improve the quality of learning undertaken in the workplace.

This document can be downloaded from Education Scotland's website www.educationscotland.gov.uk/developingtheyoungworkforce

This standard is part of the suite of documents that includes:

- Career Education Standard (3-18) (September 2015)
- Guidance on School/Employer Partnerships (September 2015)

The documents will be revisited in March 2017 in light of experience and use.

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Introduction

The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce was set up to consider:

- how a high-quality intermediate vocational education and training system, which complements our world-class higher education system, can be developed to enhance sustainable economic growth with a skilled workforce;
- how to achieve better connectivity and co-operation between education and the world of work to ensure young people at all levels of education understand the expectations of employers, and that employers are properly engaged; and
- how to achieve a culture of real partnership between employers and education, where employers view themselves as co-investors and co-designers rather than simply customers.

The Commission published its final report, *Education Working For All!* in June 2014 and, in order to better prepare children and young people for the world of work, made the following recommendation:



A modern standard should be established for the acceptable content and quality of work experience, and guidelines should be made available to employers. This should be developed by Education Scotland in partnership with employer bodies and Skills Development Scotland. This should involve input from young people. Work experience should feature in the Senior Phase Benchmarking Tool and in Education Scotland school inspections.

(Recommendation 3, Education Working for All, Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Final Report, 2014)



[Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy](#) was published in December 2014. This strategy and implementation plan is the Government's response to [Education Working for All!](#) and sets out milestones over a seven year period with the aim of improving outcomes for all young people by 2021. This included a commitment to developing a new standard for work experience during 2015-16.

The *Work Placements Standard* is one of a suite of three documents, along with the *Career Education Standard (3-18)* and *Guidance on School/Employer Partnerships*, and should be seen as clarifying expectations and providing helpful support and guidance. The standard is built on the comprehensive advice and guidance presented in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and throughout the *Building the Curriculum* series. There is a particularly strong association with key messages contained in [Building the Curriculum 4: skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work](#).

Context and definitions

Ever since the Education (Scotland) 1980 Act came into being, the general interpretation of work experience has been a week-long placement undertaken in S4 in partnership with an employer. Over time, the term 'work experience' has become synonymous with a stand-alone, week-long experience of the workplace. It is now the accepted understanding that within the context of Curriculum for Excellence and underlined by Developing the Young Workforce, this singular opportunity is not sufficient to provide a meaningful experience of work. Improving on the current offer was a priority highlighted by young people during consultation by the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

It is important to recognise that this standard refers to **work placements** throughout as opposed to the term 'work experience'. This change of terminology reflects the change in approach to one that is more personalised and flexible, with expectations set out before, during and after any placement and a greater focus on project based learning whilst in a workplace setting. Young people will experience the world of work through a range of activities throughout their broad general education leading to a more focused experience of work in the senior phase in the form of work placements.

Definition

Work placements should enable young people to experience a relevant, challenging, enjoyable and appropriate learning experience within the contemporary workplace. A placement should help the young person to make informed decisions about their future careers.

Work placements should adhere to a set of clear expectations for young people, employers, parents/carers, schools and local authorities on what work placements should deliver. The standard will also be used within the school inspection process.

The standard sets out the expectations for the main parties involved in work placements namely the young person, the employer, the parent/carer, the school and local authority, outlining the expectations in advance of, during and after a placement. The standard aims to raise the quality of the learning that a work placement can offer and to motivate and inspire all those involved.

There are currently a number of ways young people can develop skills for work from 3-18. The following list identifies some of these opportunities:

- Learning in simulated work environments
- Enterprise activities
- Mock interviews
- Careers events
- Research tasks
- Employer presentations
- Site visits
- Personal skills analysis activities
- Work placement activities.

The standard builds on the skills, knowledge and capabilities young people will learn and develop throughout their broad general education and senior phase, and provides a platform for further and more focused work-related learning. It should be used along with the Career Education Standard (3-18).

The standard applies to work placements for all young people and should support them to reflect on, and choose, future career pathways. A wide variety of models need to be considered in order to ensure a more individualised approach. This ranges from providing a number of bite-size placements through to extended placements. These may sit within the conventional school week or outwith it as appropriate.

Examples of models currently in use include:

- multiple introductory work placements (half day or single day experiences potentially increasing the exposure to the workplace over time);
- timetabled opportunities to undertake work placements at an agreed time each week within the school week, for a mutually agreed period of time;
- an introductory week-long experience to the workplace followed by additional opportunities; and
- placements undertaken out-with the school day (during term holidays e.g. internship model).

Any young person who is following a vocational pathway as part of his or her senior phase curriculum should have a work placement/placements linked directly to their pathway. For example, a young person undertaking an HNC in Engineering should experience an appropriate placement within an engineering setting. Placements should be planned alongside the particular course being studied and other elements of the pathway to enrich the learner's overall experience. A placement may require to be of a set duration in order to meet the requirements of a specific qualification; otherwise it should take place at a time and be of a duration that benefits the learner.

The young person's school or local authority will be responsible for the organisation of the placement, and will work closely with the college partner, training provider or third sector organisation to identify a suitable opportunity and to prepare the young person for the placement.

Partners should jointly support the young person after the placement to use the experience as the basis for further learning and skills development.





Expectations

Expectations

The expectations for work placements – before, during and after – are set out here for the following groups:

- young people
- employers
- parents and carers
- local authorities and schools.

Equalities

It will be the responsibility of all partners to address the issue of equality. While this standard is expressed as a universal entitlement for young people to gain experience of work, it needs to be clear that not all young people enjoy the same advantages, nor face the same challenges. Their backgrounds and circumstances must never limit their potential and all partners will seek to develop practice which ensures improved outcomes for all young people.

All stakeholders involved in any work placement should provide advice, guidance and opportunities that contribute to:

- eradicating discrimination; and
- promoting mutual respect and equality of opportunity across genders, social background, disabilities, ethnicities, sexual orientation and religions.

Young Person

In advance of a placement I will:

- have the opportunity to participate in work placements at a time that is mutually suitable for my needs, the employer and my school;
- be supported in my work placement in such a way that takes account of any challenges I may face in relation to my physical, social and emotional wellbeing and any specific support needs;
- agree the duration of my work placement with my employer, school and parent/carer. This will be flexible in order to give me maximum value from the experience;
- take ownership of my placement and have the opportunity to consider whether it is appropriate for my studies and my career aspirations, ability and capabilities, and to ask for an alternative if appropriate;
- agree with my school and employer which goals I aim to achieve during the placement;
- understand the conditions of the placement regarding the period of time, the expectations of the employer and the location along with dress and behaviour codes. This information will be available through my school/local authority and my own personal research. I will also know who my main employer contact is; and
- take every opportunity using my main contact within the organisation and with my school, before embarking on my work placement, to acquaint myself with any hazards that may potentially occur when I am there.

During a placement I will:

- complete my workplace learning plan and work toward achieving my agreed goals and targets;
- demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes that my employer would expect to see in an exemplary employee;
- follow training and instructions provided by my employer and will wear any PPE provided <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/students-and-young-people.htm>;
- take full advantage of the opportunities available to me to develop my skills, gain knowledge and develop a positive attitude; and
- reflect on the support provided by my employer and other partners to allow for adjustments to my participation.

After a placement I will:

- reflect on my learning as I continue with my studies – using my placement experience to support my ongoing learning;
- reflect on feedback from my employer, record it in my workplace learning plan, and agree any improvement action with my school/parent/carer;
- add relevant details of my work placement to my CV and (if applicable) to my social media profile;
- share my placement experience with school staff and my peers, highlighting the skills I have acquired and opportunities that were available to me within my specific work context; and
- take the opportunity to participate in a quality assurance survey of my work placement as a means of influencing local work placement policy.



Employer



We replaced work experience with personalised learning placements with an industry mentor. It works well – we gave ten people personalised placements last year and all of them went on to work for the organisation. This is all in stark contrast to the limited success we ever had with work experience. Media Employer



In advance of a placement we will:

- liaise with the local authority and/or school and the appropriate Regional DYW Group to promote our opportunities;
- ensure that risks are controlled before the placement starts: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/index.htm>;
- ensure that the placement will take place at a time that is mutually suitable for our organisation and the school and young person;
- identify key member(s) of staff from our organisation to support the young person on our placement;
- know who the school/local authority link person is to support the young person;
- be provided with, and consider, any information relating to age and stage details of the young person undertaking our work placement (in compliance with Data Protection) along with his or her career ambitions, particular interests, skills including any specific support needs; and
- have agreed the targets with the school and the young person for their workplace learning plan and begin to induct the young person into the organisation.

During a placement we will:

- support the young person by providing appropriate training and guidance, including a health and safety briefing, to enable them to both undertake essential tasks and explore areas of particular interest as we would with any new employee;
- provide ongoing feedback to the young person;
- offer a rich and varied experience which enables the young person to both understand our organisation's culture and practices, and to develop practical skills whilst undertaking meaningful tasks;
- take stock of the young person's knowledge and skills, and their views about our organisation in relation to our ethos and the way we work; and
- invite the young person to suggest ways in which our approach to work placements could be enhanced.

After a placement we will:

- take the opportunity to share our views on the young person's performance relating to their personal goals/targets with the school and young person;
- receive and reflect on feedback from the young person and the school regarding the placement and experience; and
- take the opportunity to participate in a quality assurance survey of the work placement as a means of influencing local work placement policy.



Parent/Carer

In advance of a placement I will:

- be invited to give my permission to enable my child to participate in a work placement opportunity which takes account of their physical, emotional and social wellbeing and any specific support needs;
- be fully informed of which organisation is providing the work placement, its duration and location;
- acquaint myself with the purpose of the placement and what my child should expect to gain from it;
- agree along with the employer and the school that the duration of the placement will be tailored to provide the best possible experience for my child;
- communicate, where appropriate, with the school link person overseeing my child's work placement; and
- be aware of my child's goals and targets concerning the work placement.



During a placement I will:

- support my child to complete the work placement and encourage his/her enthusiasm;
- encourage my child to think beyond the specific role they are carrying out to help them gain broad insights about what ‘work’ means for them; and
- show interest in their experience and discuss it with them.

After a placement I will:

- support my child to reflect on their workplace learning plan and feedback from the employer;
- encourage my child to use the work placement experience to think more about what they want to do in the future, how they will get there and the skills they will need to get a job; and
- take the opportunity to participate in a quality assurance survey of my child’s work placement as a means of influencing local work placement policy.



Work placements should be practical, hands on, and linked to career aspirations. Parent of a Student in S6



School and Local Authority



Choosing the time of the placement - needs to be carefully monitored to ensure ALL young people actually have a work placement opportunity. A Secondary School



In advance of a placement we will:

- liaise with the appropriate Regional DYW Group to promote the placement opportunity;
- have robust record keeping in place which monitors and tracks where and when each young person participates in a work placement;
- ensure that the duration and timing of the placement will be mutually agreeable to the young person, the employer and the parent/carer;
- identify how the placement aligns with the young person's studies, career aspirations, abilities, and capabilities;
- ensure we pass on any information on the young person relating to their physical, social and emotional wellbeing and specific support needs (in compliance with Data Protection);
- note that the goals and targets the young person will be working towards during his/her placement are appropriate and productive and liaise with the employer until this is achieved;
- be satisfied that the employer/placement provider has arrangements in place to manage health and safety risks <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/organiser.htm>; and
- prepare young people for their placement including information on health and safety in the workplace and how to deal with any issues which may arise whilst on placement.

During a placement we will:

- monitor and track the success of the placement in unison with the young person, parent/carer and employer, taking account of the length and nature of the placement, and the needs of the young person; and
- work with the young person, employer and the parent/carer to resolve any issues that may hinder a successful placement.

After a placement we will:

- support the young person in maximising the learning from the placement learning and retain evidence from the workplace learning plan for relevant certification;
- ensure the work placement quality assurance process is contributed to by constructive feedback from the young person, the employer and the parent/carer;
- give feedback to the employer on any aspects of the placement that were particularly strong or might be enhanced – from both the young person’s view and the school’s;
- explore ways for the whole school community to gain maximum benefit from the placement, enabling the young person to continue developing their skills to enhance learning and teaching;
- identify ways of sharing knowledge of the workplace with staff and young people; and
- grow relationships with the employer alongside our school’s self-evaluation processes. This will contribute to the Career-long Professional Learning of staff.



Guidance and Support

Education Scotland will work with local authorities, employers, parents and young people to support the implementation of the standard. This will include the co-production and sourcing of toolkits to support schools and local authorities to adopt and test out new approaches to work placements. The toolkits will include resources from different localities across Scotland and are being designed to enable schools and local authorities to source what they need depending on their own context and environment.

The toolkits will aim to include information on:

- duration and type of placements;
- work placements at the core of the learner experience – timetabling case studies;
- monitoring and tracking of work placements including management information systems;
- workplace learning plans;
- accreditation and certification;
- improvement planning and policy development;
- professional learning resource – maximising placement for staff and young people;
- insurance;
- health and safety: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/index.htm>;
- child protection;
- equal opportunities including gender and disability participation;
- Investors in Young People Accolade; and
- employer support including developing project-based placements.

Information on the toolkits and other sources of support will be regularly updated on the dedicated Developing the Young Workforce webpage within the Education Scotland website:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/developingtheyoungworkforce

Appendix: Work Placement Chronology

Education (Scotland) Act 1980

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended, provides the legal basis to allow students below the statutory school leaving age to participate in work placements from 1 May prior to a young person's statutory leaving year.

Determined to Succeed: A Review of Enterprise in Education 2002

In 2002 the Determined to Succeed Review Group recommended that all pupils over the age of 14 should have an opportunity for work-based vocational learning linked to accompanying relevant qualifications.

Work Experience in Scotland 2008

In 2008, the Scottish Government commissioned a review of work experience to establish the range and nature of opportunities provided across the range of pupils' abilities and needs; to gain a full understanding of these; to highlight examples of good practice in a global context; and to make recommendations for new and improved models.

Building the Curriculum 3: A framework for learning and teaching 2008 (Entitlements for all children and young people)

“ *Every child and young person is entitled to experience a curriculum which is coherent from 3 to 18...Those planning the curriculum have a responsibility to plan, in partnership with others involved in learning ... building on prior learning and achievement in a manner appropriate to the learning needs of the individual.* ”

“ *Every child and young person is entitled to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work...Children and young people should have opportunities: to build knowledge and understanding of the workplace, what employers may expect of them and what they should expect from employment.* ”

Building the Curriculum 4: skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work 2009



Curriculum for Excellence offers the flexibility for a more individualised approach to work placements which is relevant and meaningful for young people providing opportunities for them to consider the skills they will need in advance of their placement, to practise and develop their skills and to reflect on their experience post-placement.



Curriculum for Excellence can best be delivered through partnership working. All establishments should work with partners and share a common understanding and language around skills development and application. Together, they should plan and deliver learning and other experiences which meet the needs of individual children and young people.



Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Interim Report 2013



...the approach to work experience needs to be developed to allow young people to have a richer experience of the workplace.



Education Working For All!

Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Final Report 2014

Recommendation 3: A modern standard should be established for the acceptable content and quality of work experience, and guidelines should be made available to employers.

Recommendation 33: Career advice and work experience for young disabled people who are still at school should be prioritised and tailored to help them realise their potential and focus positively on what they can do to achieve their career aspirations.

Recommendation 37: ... Large public and private sector employers should be encouraged and enabled to provide an ongoing package of mentoring, work experience and other employment related support to young people in care.

Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy 2014

“ *The key message we have had from young people on our Interim Report is their need for significantly enhanced quality work experience while at school and college.* ”

Sir Ian Wood

Chair of the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce

“ *Fundamentally, this is about ensuring a work relevant educational experience for our young people. It is about all of us valuing and understanding what a rich blend of learning, including vocational education, can offer. It is about employers playing an active role, both shaping and benefiting from Scotland’s education system by helping to create the talent pool they need and recruiting young employees. Ultimately, it is about the future workforce, our young people, making informed and ambitious choices about jobs and careers, ready to take their place in the world as effective contributors.* ”

Rosanna Cunningham MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Skills & Training



Glossary of Terms

DYW Regional Groups – employer led groups whose purpose is to encourage and support more employers to engage with education and to employ more young people.

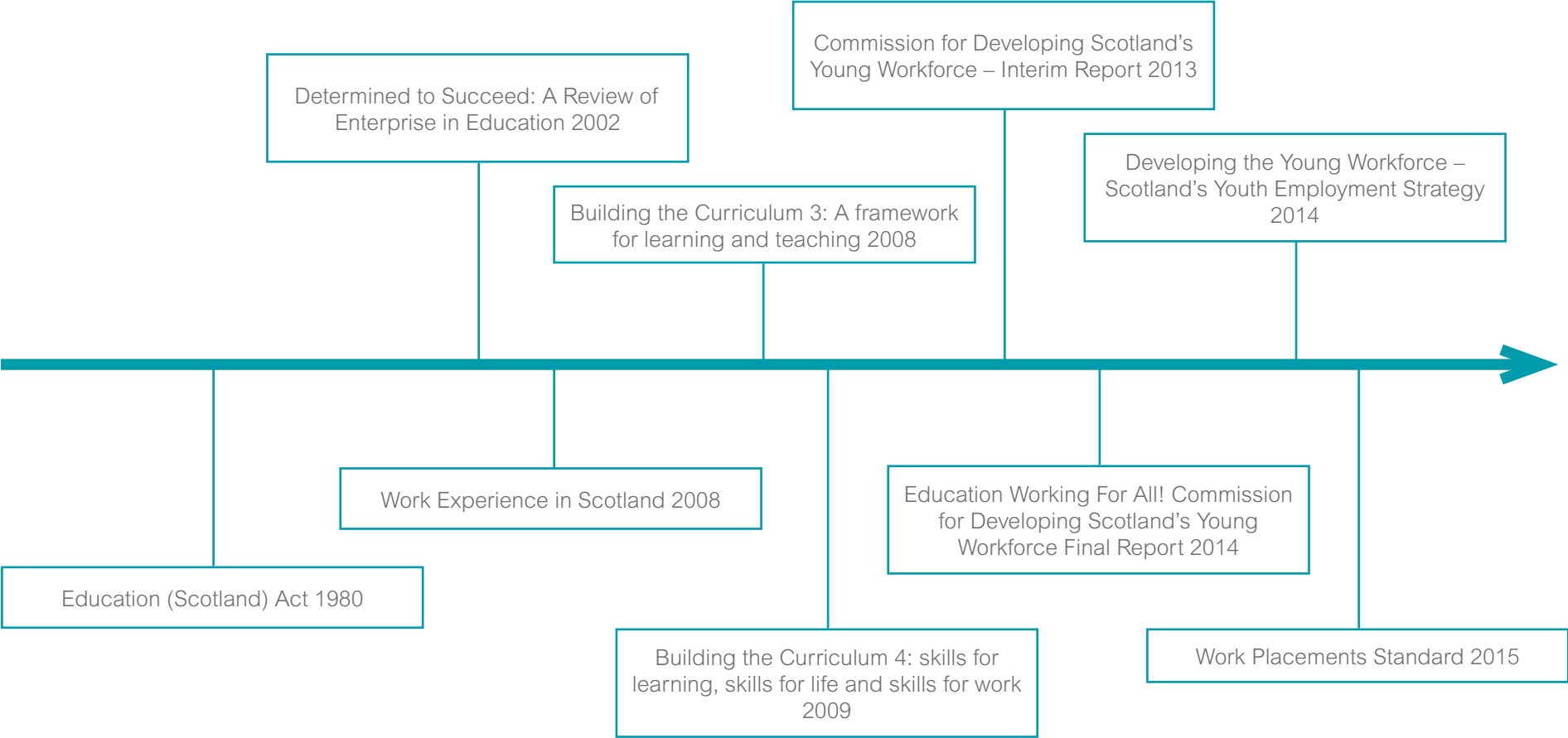
PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) – protective clothing, helmets, goggles, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from health or safety risks at work.

Investors In Young People Accolade – an accreditation framework that offers recommendation and guidance for organisations recruitment, retention and development of young people. <http://www.investorsinyoungpeople.scot/>



Timeline

Work placements are an aspect of learning that all young people are entitled to experience as part a coherent curriculum from 3-18. The timeline below outlines the policy landmarks which directly affect experience of work leading up the development of this new national standard.



Education Scotland

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)141 282 5000

E enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk

www.educationscotland.gov.uk



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www.educationscotland.gov.uk