

Fifth Form Work Experience Summer 2021

“We need to provide more inspiration for young people, more real-life contact with the world of work, so that when they come to make big decisions, they understand where different choices could take them in the future”. (UKCES, 2014)

Preparing Stoics for the competitive world of higher education and work

In an increasingly competitive higher education and labour market, achieving the best grades at school is not always enough. Work experience is one way of making a difference and consequently it is proving ever more important for school leavers. Young people with four or more work experience-type activities completed during their Fifth and Sixth Form years are far more likely to achieve better degrees, get a job and earn higher wages (McCulloch, 2013).

Stowe operates a work experience scheme for the Fifth Form on completion of their GCSEs and we encourage parents to start thinking and planning for this as soon as possible.

The sooner a pupil starts planning for their summer work placement the more likely the process is to bear fruit. Your efforts and your professional networks will be critical to securing valuable insight and experience for your sons and daughters. Properly researched and managed, this work experience will act as an effective foundation for future successful careers.

Work experience where pupils are just making tea is of little use.

While all work experience has some value, the more rigorous and demanding the work experience is, the more useful it will prove. A report by the education charity, the Sutton Trust, warned that top universities are making greater use of personal statements to distinguish between students of equal academic ability, and apposite and challenging extracurricular experience is an easy way to distinguish between the possible and the probable. Work experience is mandatory for any applicant to the law, medicine, veterinary, engineering and fashion sectors, but any application is stronger with appropriate work experience.

Almost half of graduating undergraduate students in the UK had completed work placements, internships or vacation work with employers during compulsory education and at university – completing an average of seven months’ experience during this period (Highfliers, 2017). Those students that do not complete work experience may stand out for the wrong reasons.

It’s not just about university.

Changes in the labour market for young people have led to a scarcity of high quality career paths that offer a blend of work and learning. Ever increasing numbers of graduates seeking jobs has not made this any easier: in 2017 universities received 649,700 undergraduate applications, 25,190 fewer than 2016 (a decrease of 3.8%). The proportion of 18 year olds in higher education in England is 39.7%, the highest recorded figure in history (UCAS, 2017). If the economy is growing at a slower rate, it follows that more and more graduates are chasing jobs that are simply not there. This is a very competitive market and everyone needs an edge.

“As the amount of graduates entering the labour market increases, employers are looking for more from graduates”

One in five graduates from the UK universities' class of 2017 started their undergraduate studies with at least four grade As at A Level and a record 94% of graduates were optimistic about achieving a 1st or 2:1 in their final exams (Highfliers, 2017). 71% did achieve these grades in 2016 (UCAS, 2016). So having a degree, even a good degree, is not always enough to start a graduate career. Therefore most employers not only look for a 2:1 or above, but they are now looking for hard and soft skills gained through credible work experience.

“Learning in the workplace allows young people to develop ‘hard’ skills on modern equipment, and ‘soft’ skills, such as teamwork, communication and negotiation, through real-world experience”. (UKCES, 2014)

What happens next?

As part of the Fifth Form careers support at Stowe, pupils have already sat the My Future Choice profile aptitude tests (<https://www.myfuturechoice.com/myaptitude/>) before the end of term they will have had the opportunity to go through the results of these tests with an independent, external advisor.

With the findings of these tests as a starting point, we hope that over the Christmas break you will be able to start the process of preparing for work experience placements at the end of the Summer term. We strongly advise that pupils start this process sooner rather than later.

Lent term

Pupils are expected to be able to discuss their ideas and plans with their Tutors next term and they will have numerous opportunities to do so. Starting again with the My Future Choice aptitude tests, there will be a formal follow-on meeting with Tutors and, with that in mind, we ask that you return the form below as soon as possible and by Lent Half term at the very latest.

Summer term

Over the Summer term, pupils are expected to liaise with the organisations providing the work experience. Tutors and the Careers Department will be on hand to assist but the more ownership of the process the pupil is willing to take on, the more likely this process is to be effective.

How will I find work experience?

When thinking about getting work experience, it is important not to get carried away with the reputation of the establishment to which pupils are applying. Admissions Tutors are much more interested in what applicants *gained* from their work experience than *where* it was. Therefore Stoics should speak to family members, other Stoics and their extended networks to secure the best work experience possible. Advice and support is also available from the Stowe Careers Department.

For those pupils who struggle to find suitable work experience placements outside School, there is a range of Stowe based opportunities. Stoics accepting one of these placements will continue to be resident at School during the post GCSE period and will continue to follow the School's timetabled activities, e.g. assemblies, Chapel, stance. Current opportunities can be found in the table below.

Department	Experience
Stowe House Preservation Trust	Front of House in the Welcome Centre; assisting staff in Welcome Centre; shadowing staff on guided tours.
Maintenance	Shadowing Plumbers, Electricians, Building Services Engineer.
Catering	Basic food preparation.

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Name of Pupil:School Number:.....

Name of Employer:.....

Nature of Work Experience:

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.....

Date of Placement:.....

Signed by Parent/Guardian:.....Date:.....

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):.....

Please return by Friday 5 February 2021 to:

**Luciane Guntner-Jones
The Careers Department
Stowe School
Buckingham
MK18 5EH**

