

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

STAND OUT IN A COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET.

Why it's important

Work experience is essential. It is an important step in becoming work ready and will help you to develop the skills you need to enter the workplace. Employers want evidence of how you have used your skills effectively to convince them of your ability to do the job you are applying for.

As well as helping you make the transition to the world of work, work experience can help you to make informed decisions about your career direction. Use it to explore types of different job roles and experience various companies or organisations before making a commitment. It can also help you to put the theoretical aspects of what you are studying on your degree programme into practice and gain work experience relevant to the industry you might want to work in when you graduate. Such experience shows dedication and commitment to the career area. Some internships may even lead to a job offer; so finding relevant work experience can have longer term benefits.

Finding opportunities

From job boards, internships within your university, to work experience abroad schemes or volunteering in the community, there are many opportunities and resources to help you find what you are looking for.

Making an application

Think about the skills and experience you might have already gained at university. Did you have a leadership role in a Students' Union club or society? Were you a Student Ambassador? Activities you do because you enjoy them are a great way to develop important transferable skills such as teamwork, communication and time management. What skills and experience have you already gained that can be transferred to the work experience position you are applying for?

Things to think about

- Why do I want to work for this company or organisation?
- What value can I offer?
- What are they looking for and how do my skills and experience match the role?

Finally

Before you send your application, visit your careers department to make sure you are presenting your experience in the best way possible. Book an appointment for a practice interview so that you are prepared for the kinds of questions you might be asked. **L**

See 'Job-hunting tactics' PAGE 18



'My part-time retail job gives me practical experience of understanding customer needs, sales and promotion skills, plus product knowledge – all really useful in the world of marketing, which I can use to strengthen my future applications.'

Biology student

'I'm studying Psychology and thinking about a career in law. In my volunteering role for a charity, I'm looking into copyright. Researching law in reference to real world situations has really helped me to clarify what the legal system is and how the law works.'

Psychology student

'Students should think about why they want the job they are applying for. What skills make them the best candidate?'

Technology recruiter