

Work experience is an opportunity for a student to see what working life is really like, develop their confidence and skills, and explore what they might enjoy in the future.

You don't need to create a completely different role for a student. The everyday work of your organisation can provide valuable learning opportunities – sometimes, it just needs a little context.

1. Plan a range of experiences

Where possible, try to give students a mixture of:

- **Doing** – having a go at appropriate tasks
- **Seeing** – observing how people work
- **Talking** – meeting colleagues and asking questions
- **Learning** – understanding processes, roles and responsibilities
- **Reflecting** – thinking about what they have learned

This doesn't need to be a complicated timetable. A simple plan can help ensure the student gets a varied experience. Please see page 4 for an example timetable.

2. Make every task meaningful

Don't just give students a task, explain the purpose behind it. Students may not always know how an everyday workplace task fits into the bigger picture. Something that is obvious to an experienced member of staff may be completely new to someone experiencing a workplace for the first time.

When setting a task, take a moment to explain:

- **What?** – What would you like the student to do?
- **Why?** – Why does this task need to be done?
- **Who?** – Who would normally carry out this task?
- **How?** – How does it contribute to the wider work of the team or organisation?
- **Learning?** – What might the student learn or practise by doing it?

3. Explain Limitations

There will be some things students cannot do during work experience. This is completely normal. Restrictions may be in place because of GDPR and data protection, Health & Safety or the level of responsibility involved in a particular role.

Explain the reason where you can. If a student is told they cannot take part in something without understanding why, they may feel that they are not getting 'the full experience'. Instead, use the restriction as an opportunity to explain how the workplace operates.

Instead of: "You can't log into our system and use our computers."

Try: "Some of our systems and computers contain confidential information and are only available to authorised members of staff, so we can't give you access during your placement. We can still show you how these systems are used and, where possible, provide you with a suitable device or example system to use for your activities."

Can't do it? Think about whether the student can:

- **See it** – Can they observe the process?
- **Discuss it** – Can someone explain how it works?
- **Try it differently** – Could they complete an anonymised or simplified version?
- **Learn from it** – Can you explain why the restriction exists?

4. Advice for Supporting Students

- You're welcoming an individual, not just 'a student from Tower Hamlets'
- Avoid fixed expectations – give them space to grow
- Meet them where they are, not where you assume they should be
- Turn challenges into learning moments
- Check in with the student regularly to help you understand what the student is enjoying, what they understand and where they might need more support.

5. How to Ask for Support

If you still need some assistance, you can reach out to the Work Experience Team via telephone or email:

Telephone: 020 4591 0999

Email: work.experience@theswitch.org

Need some inspiration? Keep reading for examples of tasks, activities and sample timetables.



Tasks that spark learning

Students thrive when tasks feel real and purposeful. Here are some task ideas to keep them engaged and building skills. Stuck for ideas? Just reach out – we're here to help.

Shadowing and meeting minutes

Shadowing gives students insight into daily tasks and the wider function of the company. Involving them in meetings and asking them to take minutes keeps them engaged while building their skills in active listening and summarising key points.

Tailored activities

Find out what the student enjoys and shape tasks around that. If they like graphic design, have them create a poster. Into social media? Ask them to draft your next post. Interested in finance? Give them mock data and show them how to create an invoice. Personalised tasks boost engagement and make the experience more meaningful.

Administrative tasks

Admin tasks may seem simple, but they help students build valuable, CV-worthy skills. This could include scanning, shredding, data entry, or alphabetising documents. Explain the purpose behind each task and the transferable skills they develop. You could also ask them to research competitors and report back on their findings.

Research projects (industry specific)

Research tasks help students build sector knowledge, critical thinking, and information-handling skills. For example, when The Switch hosts students, we ask them to design their own charity and present it to staff on their final day, but this can easily be adapted to suit any industry!

Blog writing

Ask the student to write a blog post. It could be about the company, tips for success in your industry, or reflecting on their work experience. It's a great way to build skills like writing and research, and it doubles as excellent promo for your organisation too!



Example timetable

Here's an example timetable to help structure the week. You can use it as inspiration for task planning!

We encourage skills-based activities that build skills like communication, organisation, and independent thinking. Each student will also have a Student Booklet from The Switch to complete during their placement.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Introductions, Health & Safety induction and workplace tour	Office admin tasks	Practical, entry-level task related to project	Introduction to industry skills	Office admin
IT set up and training	Set up meeting room		CV workshop	Final project preparation
Send introductory email to staff	Team meeting and minute taking	Mid-week check in	Interview skills workshop	Present project
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Project briefing and goal setting	Intro to key team/area of interest	Project time	Project time	Reflection and goal review
Project time/company research	Project time		Shadow staff members	Farewell and feedback session
Fill in Student Booklet	Fill in Student Booklet	Fill in Student Booklet	Fill in Student Booklet	Fill in Student Booklet