

Reigate College Guide to Work Experience 2025-2026

All students need to have completed at least one period of work experience before they start their Upper Sixth year, as it provides useful preparation for university, apprenticeship, and employment applications.

It doesn't have to last for a whole week but must be at least one day duration minimum. Work shadowing can be really insightful and if you aren't sure what you want to do, perhaps try two or more different things. Students should arrange work experience around their timetable, either in College holidays or on Structured Learning Days. The College also has a designated work experience week in July.

This guide will help students to identify and secure suitable work experience. If you have any questions having read this guide, please email workexperience@reigate.ac.uk

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Student Advice and Guidance

Students can contact the Work Experience Team in the following ways:

- Come to the drop-in session on a Tuesday or Thursday between 12.45pm-1.45pm, located in the Careers Office, P7 in the Priory Building.
- Email workexperience@reigate.ac.uk or come and see Careers in P7.

Information for students and parents

Why do Work Experience?

- Gaining an insight into a role, a specific company or a wider industry can help you identify if this is an area you aspire to work in.
- Being able to meet various employees, find out what they actually 'do' in their role on a daily basis and discover their career route.
- You will come away knowing a bit more about a new company or business. What do they do? What challenges and opportunities do they face? What is the team like? Could you see yourself there at some point in the future?
- It gives you the chance to connect with people face-to-face and learn things you can't find online. It will help you with figuring out next steps, will look great on your CV and gives you things to talk about on future applications.

5 Stages to securing a Privately Organised Meaningful Work Experience

Stage 1: Research an industry and the roles within it

Stage 2: Apply for work experience

Stage 3: Log onto the MyPD portal and enter the pre work experience section that details what you have planned, the employer, the dates and the employers email address. Your parent/guardian will be informed about the work experience and asked to give consent if it has been privately organised. Reigate College does also organise some workplace insight visits.

Although it is not College policy to grant permission for absences during term time we may make an exception where a particularly valuable piece of work experience cannot be completed outside of College time. It is your responsibility to check the College calendar before requesting absence as absence requests will not be approved on certain days, such as Compulsory Cross College Days e.g. Community Days or over exam periods. You will need to upload your work experience to the portal at least 5 working days in advance so that the team can process your absence request prior to your start date. Without this, your absence may be recorded as unauthorised. Please note there is a maximum of 5 days of absence that can be granted for educational visits which includes Work Experience and university open days etc.

Stage 4: Carry out your work experience

Stage 5: Log onto the MyPD portal and complete the post work experience sections

Stage 1 - Research an industry and the roles within it

Be Creative and Flexible

If you do not have a career path in mind, use the opportunity to try something new. You could start by thinking about businesses located near to where you live.

Use Unifrog to help you research sectors and roles. Pathway CTM and Uptree can also help you find a placement.

[Pathway CTM](#) [Uptree](#) [Prospects publications | Prospects.ac.uk](#)

We also have a Sharepoint page which supports with preparing for, searching for and securing work experience. It will help you with generating ideas and help you consider what options might be available to you within the sector you are interested in. It also provides support with approaching employers and creating a CV plus guidance on how to practically prepare for your work experience.

There is also an area on Sharepoint where we advertise any opportunities that have come in to us, grouped by sector so this would be a good place to check: [Live Opportunities for In person Work Experience](#).

Be Organised

Remember that other students at Reigate College and in your local area will also be looking for experience in the workplace, so you need to be organised and start making enquiries early. Keep a record of whom you have contacted and when. For example:

Company Details	Area	Initial Contact	Followed Up	Outcome
Delta Software Engineers delta@software.co.uk	Software Development	10 Feb	21 Feb	Able to offer one day in Aug. Email mid Jun to confirm.

Stage 2 – Apply for work experience

Using the right approach to contact companies - some employers might require you to submit a CV.

An **initial e mail** might be along the lines of:

Dear

I am e-mailing to enquire whether you would be able to offer me a day or more's experience of working at [company name]. I am a Lower Sixth student at Reigate College and I am interested in pursuing a career in [area you are interested in]. I am particularly interested in finding out more about [company name] because I have attached my CV and I would be very grateful if you could look at it, or pass it on to the relevant member of staff.

An **initial phone call** might start something like this:

“Good morning, my name is and I am a student from Reigate College. I am ringing to find out whether the company would be able to offer me a day or more’s experience of working at [company name].”

Have a **pen and paper ready** to write down contact details, as the person you initially contact is unlikely to be the person you actually need to speak to.

People are very busy so it is likely arranging work experience may not be a high priority. Don’t be afraid to follow up after a reasonable period of time (1-2 weeks). As long as you are polite and courteous, it is not unreasonable to expect a response.

Stage 3 - Log onto the MyPD portal and enter pre work experience section

When you have arranged dates for your work experience you will need to log it on the MyPD portal. Start by going to the MyPD section on your portal and select Work Experience. Then go to “Add New Work Experience” and complete all the relevant sections. Your parents will be sent an automated email asking them to provide consent, which they will need to do before College can approve your work experience. The employer will also be sent an automated email. A student must log their planned work experience **a minimum of 5 days in advance of the placement** to give us time to process the entry. Without this, any absence you may have requested may be recorded as unauthorised. The work experience must also be approved as being aligned to a career goal by the Work Experience Team.

List of Employment

Employer	Placement Type	Start Date	End Date	Status	Add Work Experience

What are your objectives?

Think about what you want to get out of this experience. What do you hope to learn/develop?
You are not limited to these choices, but you should give it some thought before you participate.

Employability skills such as:

- Team working
- Time management
- Problem solving
- Communication skills

Work experience may also help with

- Managing expectations – knowing that your ambitions are realistic
- Seeing how a business operates from the inside
- Helping with career decision making
- Motivating you with your studies
- Understanding entry routes e.g college apprenticeships/graduate opportunities
- Developing a better awareness of a specific role or industry

Please remember that we will not authorise absences during internal or external exams, or days off timetable such as Get Ahead Day, Progression Day or Equality and Diversity Day. We will not authorise an absence if your attendance or effort grades are a cause for concern.

Work experience that students have organised themselves is considered unaccompanied private educational visits, for which the College is not responsible. Transportation will be the responsibility of the individual.

Before the day

- **Plan your travel.** Punctuality is important and you don't want to create a bad first impression so plan your journey in advance and aim to arrive 15 minutes early especially if you are relying on public transport. Check travel sites or social media on the morning for any reported problems. Find a map, get directions and take a hard copy with you in case your mobile fails on the day.
- **Look the part.** You will feel more confident if you feel comfortable and look the part. Check the dress code (if in doubt it is better to go smarter).
- **Know your contact.** Make sure you have details of who your main employer contact is. You need to know who to ask for when you get there. It is also a good idea to have a phone number in case you need to get in touch in something happens and you are going to arrive late.
- **Do your research.** Make sure you are familiar with the company, who they are and what they do. Make a note of any questions or areas of interest. Consider lunchtime and whether you need to take lunch with you, whether there are facilities onsite or whether you will need to explore the local area.

Stage 4 - Carry out your work experience

- **Be professional.** Create a good first impression. Turn your mobile off or on to silent to avoid disruption. Remember you are also an ambassador for Reigate College and the excellent feedback from employers is used in references for university or employment.
- **Be positive and enthusiastic.** Small actions taken together leave a good impression - open doors, say hello and greet everyone with a smile, shake hands and introduce yourself. Observe your colleagues and watch how they act. If you are shadowing someone don't be afraid to ask them about their role and how they got to where they are now – they will be flattered and you could learn something.
- **Show initiative / get involved.** If you are given an opportunity to use your initiative – use it! If you have finished the task you have been given, ask what else you can do to help.
- **Ask questions.** Listen carefully to instructions and make lots of notes. Try and meet as many different people in different roles across the company. This will help you to build up a good picture of each role and how they fit into the organisation.
- **Say 'thank you'.** Thank people for the time they have spent with you and insight they have provided. Sending an e-mail to your point of contact as follow-up would also be an excellent idea. Sometimes work placements lead to future opportunities.

Stage 5 - Log onto the MyPD portal and complete the post work experience sections

NB – your work experience will not be recorded as complete and added to your student record until you have completed the post work experience section.

- **Take time to reflect.** Did you meet the objectives you set out before the placement? Did you learn everything you wanted to? Reflect on any feedback the employer gave you. Think about what you liked about the firm or industry and use this when planning your next placement or applying for future roles.
- Think about the skills and competencies you developed and make a note so that you can add the experience to your CV or personal statement for university.

Work experience information for Parents and Employers

Work Experience Safeguarding

Below is a summary of safeguarding principles in the context of work experience. Please read the full version of the College's Safeguarding Policy, which can be downloaded here [Reigate College Safeguarding policy](#)

Should you have any questions specifically regarding safeguarding, please contact the safeguarding team by email safeguarding@reigate.ac.uk or by phone 01737 221118.

Safeguarding Principles

Bullying or Harassment: We expect our students to work in an environment that is free from any bullying, harassment or discrimination. It is important that you have in place procedures to deal with any incidents that arise and that you promote an environment where any form of bullying or harassment is unacceptable. We encourage our students to report to us if they feel uncomfortable by actions, words or any incidents that occur.

Professional Behaviour: Whilst it is important to make a young person feel at ease, avoid being over familiar and maintain a professional employer/employee relationship at all times. Supervisors or mentors should be competent in their work role, mature in their attitudes but also be at ease with young people.

Environment: Where possible, avoid being on your own in an isolated or closed environment with a young person, if this is unavoidable make sure that others know of the situation.

Travel: A young person should not be travelling alone with an adult during a placement. In normal circumstances, the student is responsible for getting to/from the organisation for the duration of the placement. If additional travel is integral to the placement, then you should seek advice from the work experience coordinator, by e-mailing workexperience@reigate.ac.uk.

Physical Contact: There may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, (e.g. when you are guiding them in carrying out a technical operation) however it is advised these are kept to a minimum. Always explain the context and seek the consent of the student.

Disclosure: Occasionally young people may disclose confidential information at work that gives rise to serious concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such situations, you must share this concern with the College. This can be done by contacting the safeguarding team by email safeguarding@reigate.ac.uk or by phone 01737 221118.

Disqualifications: There is a requirement by law to protect children from harm; therefore, any employees disqualified from working with children, must declare it and make the College aware

Work experience supervision

The following guidance determines the level of staff supervision for in person Work Experience placements. We have identified four categories of in person work experience.

The College accepts that a significant part of work experience is independently organising and travelling to the place of work. However, we also acknowledge that work experience placements need to be checked and verified for quality and safeguarding purposes.

The level of supervision will be determined by the nature of the work experience, the travel to and from the work experience and the level of supervision requested by The Employer.

In person work Experience should be supervised in four different ways

Identify which type of work experience you are undertaking and then read the relevant section

1. Work Experience privately organised and attended by students.
2. Work Experience organised by Reigate College Staff but attended independently by students.
3. Work Experienced organised by Reigate College staff, students attend independently but employer requests a member of staff to be present.
4. Work Experience organised and supervised by Reigate College staff, including the transport provision.

Procedures

Students should log any work experience they are going to undertake on their portal. Once the work experience team have approved it parents are sent an e mail asking them to provide consent via their parent portal. There are four main categories of work experience:

1 - In person work Experience privately organised and attended by students.

- A student must log their planned work experience a minimum of 5 days in advance of the placement, which is approved as being aligned to a career goal by the Work Experience Team.
- Parents will receive an e mail asking them to provide consent via their parent portal.
- Following portal approval students travel independently to and from the placement.
- Students should plan Work Experience around their lesson time, so not to miss any lessons. In instances when this is not possible:
 - An absence of one day can be authorised by the Work Experience Team with a minimum of 5 days' notice in advance of the placement.
 - An absence of more than one day can be authorised by the Director (Progression) in advance of the placement with a minimum of 5 days' notice in advance of the placement.

The above guidance includes placements signposted by the Careers Department (e.g. via email or the Careers Bulletin) where students still need to arrange travel independently.

2 - Work Experience organised by staff at the College, but students attend independently:

- The organisation will have been vetted by the Work Experience Team, including checks on

company websites, conversations with relevant company managers, and agreements regarding the nature of the work experience, including a risk assessment where necessary.

- If the experience is taking place during holiday time or on weekends, college staff will not be contactable during the experience. However, if the experience is during a college day, students can call the College phone number.
- Parents will be informed about the work experience and asked to provide consent.

3 - Work Experience organised by Reigate College staff, students attend independently but employer requests a member of staff to be present.

- The organisation will be vetted by the Work Experience Team, including checks on company websites, conversations with relevant managers, and agreements regarding the nature of the work experience.
- Reigate College staff will be in attendance but will not be in loco parentis. Students must organise their own transport to and from the placement.
- Parents will be informed about the work experience and asked to provide consent.

4 - Work Experience organised and supervised by Reigate College staff, including the transport provision.

- Where any form of transport is being organised by the College, the placement will be organised in line with the trips policy.
- Parents will be informed about the work experience and asked to provide consent.

