

# **WORK EXPERIENCE / INDUSTRY PLACEMENT POLICY 2026/27**

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## **Document control**

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## **1. Policy Statement**

We aim to prepare our students for their chosen careers through the provision of outstanding technical and professional programmes of study. Work experience is a key component in developing the skills, qualifications and experience necessary in the workplace. The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures to follow to ensure high quality work experience.

Participation in work placements provides essential employability skills and enhances the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for young people to progress successfully in their chosen career. Work placements contextualise a lot of the taught theory components and provide the students with real-life experiences that they can apply to their studies.

The Work Experience staff have a responsibility to co-manage all Industry Placements (IP) for the College under the T Level programme and have a clear process to meet the requirements for funding and positive outcomes for students, working in conjunction with the curriculum delivering the qualification and the employer that has the students in their setting.

## **2. Types of Placement**

### **2.1. Work Experience**

#### **2.1.1. Mandatory Work Experience**

Work experience can be provided for students where it is a necessary part of their course. These placements should reflect the guidance provided by the exam boards relevant to the subject/qualification being studied. This guidance will provide a structure to the number of hours or the number of days/'shifts' that must be completed to pass this element of the course.

#### **2.1.2. Employability, Enrichment and Pastoral (EEP) Hours**

Some large vocational courses include additional hours set aside for work experience. These are timetabled in the college year and can be either a block-week placement, 'day release' (one day a week) or to fit around the students' timetables and other responsibilities. These placements are deemed as mandatory but do not impact the success, failure or grading of the qualifications that they study.

### **2.2. Modern Work Experience**

This term refers to the range of work experience opportunities that are available to learners that are not 'traditional' placements (in person placements in a workplace environment). Modern Work Experience provides alternative encounters with employers, providing an equitable chance for learners to develop work-ready skills.

#### 2.2.1. Virtual Work Experience

For students that may not be able to undertake a physical placement, a virtual placement(s) can be completed using SpringPod. This website is free to use and once registered correctly, a student's activity is logged and reported to the COPC's staff log in dashboard. This information about the number of virtual hours completed can be transferred onto our main platform for tracking placements (EBS). Unifrog will also offer virtual placements that can count towards each student reaching their required number of hours, which will vary dependent on their main qualification.

#### 2.2.2. Employability Skills

The groups of students that have not been able to achieve a placement using any of the methods identified between points 2.1.1-2.1.4 are supported through an employability skills programme. This includes input and delivery from a range of staff from careers, work experience and enrichment to develop skills that intend to prepare students for employment or future work placements. The intention is for each Employability Skills block to be supported by an employer. The employer is invited to add context and insight when covering the aspects of the Employability Skills block, which may give the students an advantage by hearing from their experience.

#### 2.2.3. Employer Set Projects

Employers can be used to provide a workplace related scenario that can be a chance for learners to apply their learning to a real-life problem. Employers are used to 'judge' the students' work and provide feedback, simulating a workplace project with line manager feedback. Tasks may be set using topics and criteria being taught in the classrooms to add context or they can be scenarios that employers face that currently do not get covered by the qualifications being studied by the learners.

#### 2.2.4. Supported Internships

Eligible students with an EHCP may qualify for the Supported Internship programme coordinated by Portsmouth City Council. Applications for this programme occur through standard COPC application processes and are offered to those that would qualify during enrolment interviews by the SEN Department.

#### 2.2.5. World Skills

WorldSkills offers both internal and external opportunities for students to compete against a set of industry standards. All types of

WorldSkills competition can count towards the target hours for work experience. These competitions include:

- Benchmarking Resources: An on-demand set of criteria that can be used to assess the competency level of students by submitting evidence of work produced. These resources are set by WorldSkills.
- Benchmarking Events: WorldSkills have scheduled events where students can enter competitions remotely or in person to compete against other students. These are externally set by WorldSkills.
- Local Skills Competition Endorsement: COPC can work with WorldSkills to create internal (or external) competitions that are then graded by WorldSkills standards. These competitions can be in any sector but those that fit into other WorldSkills competitions can be used as a 'qualifying heat'.
- National Competitions: WorldSkills competitions run nationally and often have a pre-qualifying stage for students to complete before being entered into the national competitions. National competitions will be located in different cities each year and students can be selected for the international squad as part of the International Competitions.
- International Competitions: Learners must be 21 years of age in the same year as the competition and can be 'recently out of education' to qualify for these competitions. The location will change each year globally.

### 2.3. Industry Placements

Industry placements give students studying a technical course practical experience directly related to their course. Industry Placements help develop technical and employability skills and build confidence and will last for a minimum of 45 working days (315 hours). Industry Placements can be set as single or multiple blocks, as 'day release' or a combination during the duration of the course being studied. The longer duration gives students time to master the essentials and gives employers time to mould the student's abilities, so they can really add value to the organisation. The exact details of how the placement is organised is agreed between the curriculum managers, the work experience coordinators and the employers.

### 2.4. Work Preparation Programme

All students that undertake a work placement or Industry Placement will complete a preparatory programme that is agreed and scheduled prior to the placement start date. The preparation course could be delivered by curriculum, work experience or enrichment staff and will aim to:

- Establish the level of expectation for a student working with an employer
- Complete the pre-placement paperwork that is required
- Identify the channels of support for a student while on a placement
- (where used) establish the method of recording activities experienced whilst on the placement

## 2.5. Differentiation of the Work Experience Offer by Level

The most appropriate work experience options (2.1.1-2.1.7) based on the level of qualification being studied by the learner. Differentiation between qualification levels will allow for students to progress onto the next qualification level and have access to different work experience opportunities to their previous level of qualification. The arrangement of the most appropriate form of work experience will be agreed between the Work Experience Officer assigned to each qualification and the Lecturer of that qualification.

### 2.5.1. Suggested Work Experience Offered by Level

#### Below Level 1

- Supported Internships
- Group visits
- Volunteering

#### Level 1

- Employability Skills Programme
- In person work experience
- Group visits
- Virtual Work Experience
- Employer Engagement

#### Level 2

- In person work experience
- Employer Engagement
- Employability Skills Programme
- Virtual Work Experience
- WorldSkills

#### Level 3

- In person work experience
- Virtual work experience
- Employer engagement
- WorldSkills

### **3. Pre-placement Assessments**

EBS, supported by Unifrog will be used for setting up and recording the work placements for COPC students. All paperwork is uploaded to this platform, and the relevant checks are structured by the platform. There are seven stages to the Unifrog process with 4 of these occurring prior to the placement starting:

1. Initial Form (instigated by either the student or the Work Experience Officer)
2. Employer Initial Form (information collected about the placement)
3. Parent/guardian Agreement
4. College Permission
5. During placement Check-in
6. Employer Review Form
7. Student Reflection Form

#### **3.1. Employer Checks**

The Work Experience / Industry Placement Officers have all completed the IOSH training to be able to risk assess work placements and conduct the health and safety paperwork required. A copy of the employers Employer Liability Insurance (ELI) or their policy number must be provided.

#### **3.2. Student Checks**

Each student must submit a medical declaration to highlight any specific health conditions that the college and employer must know of before starting work. Any medical conditions declared must be reviewed prior to placements beginning so support/measures may be put in place.

For some placements a DBS check or CSCS card must be valid and in date. This is also carried out by the COPC staff and all Work Experience / Industry Placement Officers have all completed the training to be able to process DBS checks.

Student checks are completed each year of study so any changes to personal circumstances are considered for the placements.

#### **3.3. Parental Consent**

For any students under 18-years old, parental consent must be given. This may be given over the phone with the record of consent recorded on Grofar. If an email address is provided, parents are also able to receive an automated email where they can give consent for a work placement that is automatically tracked on Grofar.

#### **3.4. Safeguarding Checks**

Students about to undergo a work placement must be checked by the safeguarding team to ensure that there are no risks that have not been

recorded or disclosed due to their confidential nature. The aim is to prevent any students being in a placement that may lead them or others to harm.

#### **4. During Placement**

##### **4.1. Progress Reviews**

The work experience staff will liaise with the employer and student to review how the placement is going. The timing of this will be agreed prior to placement and will vary depending on the duration of the placement. For shorter placements it may occur after one or two days where there are longer placements, the call/visit may take place after a week. There is also the need for a mid-point review to take place, which ideally will occur face-to-face with the employer and the student (separately). The two reviews are recorded on Grofar and are sent automatically to the person that was met with to sign and authenticate the meeting notes.

##### **4.2. Logging of hours**

Unifrog has the capacity for students to log their own hours as and when they complete them, which are countersigned by the employer and the appointed work experience staff member. These hours are subtracted from the target amount of hours required for the placement to show how close the student is to completion on the Unifrog dashboard.

All placements are also shared with [timetables@copc.ac.uk](mailto:timetables@copc.ac.uk) so that an accurate record is kept of all placements and the number of hours that have been completed, which can be downloaded as a report from EBS.

##### **4.3. Absence Reporting**

The employer is responsible for informing COPC if a student does not attend their work placement. When this occurs, a Student Attendance Officer will contact the student and parent (if under 18) to make sure that the student is ok and to inform the work experience staff.

#### **5. Feedback**

Once a placement has been completed, Unifrog will contact the student and employer to receive feedback. The information submitted will automatically update the learner's record on Unifrog and the work experience staff assigned to the student will be notified.

Feedback forms a crucial part of development of our provision and the comments received are discussed in strategic team meetings to help shape future plans for the work experience department.

#### **6. Review**

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and when there are substantial changes to personnel or related policies.

#### **7. Roles and responsibilities**

The Colleges Senior Management Team will monitor the implementation of the policy and:

- ensure staff are aware and comply with the procedures
- actively promote this policy
- take corrective actions when issues for improvement are identified.

#### **8. Policy Distribution and Communications**

A copy of this Policy is posted on the College website.

#### **9. Associated College Policies and Strategies**

This policy links with the following COPC policies and strategies:

- Careers Strategy
- CEIAG Policy
- Quality Improvement Strategy
- City of Portsmouth College Self-Assessment Review