

Work Experience Guidance 2021/22

This needs to be arranged for the student between April 2022 and August 2022 and confirmed to GFUMP no later than 15 April 2022.

This guidance note is to outline the aim and objectives of the two-week work experience offer as part of the Ground Forum Undergraduate Mentoring Programme.

Initiation

Each GFUMP mentor is responsible for arranging or facilitating the arrangement of work experience for students they have been assigned. As the programme is national, it is likely that the mentor and students will be in separate geographical locations, virtual work experience will therefore be acceptable.

On site experience

Any mentor that is able to arrange face to face on site work experience for the student must ensure that the correct risk assessments have been carried out and that suitable protection measures, including PPE, is provided to the student during any site visits. This should be in line with the host company procedures, and according to legislation.

Office experience

Any mentor that is able to arrange face to face office work experience for the student must ensure that the correct risk assessments have been carried out in line with the host company procedures, and according to legislation.

Virtual experience

Any mentor that is able to arrange virtual work experience for the student must ensure that the student has the appropriate digital technologies and capabilities of engaging during the sessions.

Things to agree before they start their work experience

The students will come from a range of different year groups and backgrounds, and therefore it is important that you clearly lay out the expectations of them. This should include the following:

- Experience working hours
- First day practicalities: what time to arrive at the office, who to ask for and what to bring
- Who will be supervising them, and who to inform if they are unable to attend
- Anything that they will have to bring themselves i.e. lunch, or where to buy it
- Any dress code that is appropriate
- A draft agenda of the full two weeks – this will aid motivation and hopefully build some excitement about what is going to be provided by them
- It will be useful for you to carry out a pre-experience interview with them to run through the above and make sure they know exactly what they are doing. It will also be useful if you carry out a post-experience interview that will help plan for future work experiences. The format of this is up to you, but please do share the findings with the Ground Forum Mentor Group.

Example agendas

The table below sets out some example agendas of what two weeks' work experience might look like. This is for guidance only.

	On Site (09:00 – 17:00)	Office (10:00 – 16:00)	Virtual (2/3 x 2 hour blocks)
M	Welcome session, orientation, health & safety briefing, project overview	Welcome, orientation, company and project overview	Welcome, orientation, company and project overview
T	Process experience # 1	Engineering principles, use of code tables and standards	Engineering principles, use of code tables and standards
W	Process experience # 1	Software applications and output	Introduction of their project, and allow them to review it to come up with solution
T	Process experience # 1	Introduction of their project, and allow them to review it to come up with solution	
F	Review, intro to next experience	Finalise their idea and present to you	Finalise their idea and present to you
M	Process experience # 2	Working with 'live' projects i.e. contractor queries	Review of current project work, allow them to come to a meeting or two
T	Process experience # 2	Site visit if possible	
W	Process experience # 2	Visits to other teams in office i.e. geo, env, water (if poss)	Introduction of their project, and allow them to review it to come up with solution
T	Management process experience	Introduction of final project and allow them to start	
F	Management process experience and final review	Finalise idea and present to you – final review of the experience	Finalise their idea and present to you

Example project work to be set

You could create a 'workshop' style approach, where the student is set a project which they will be guided on by the mentor. A certain degree of creativity is required in coming up with a suitable project for the student, but nothing is out of bounds. Types of projects could be:

- Working with an estimator to price a piling project or ground investigation
- Planning a ground investigation for a project
- Design an element of the foundations for a scheme i.e. designing piles for a project
- Preparing a risk assessment for an item of site work. This could be for a ground investigation, a piling project etc

The output that you require from them should be clearly indicated, and how they would be reviewed at the end. It would be good at this point to bring other colleagues into this review to allow them to meet new people.

Will the students be paid?

The reason that the words 'work experience' was to indicate that it would be an offer in kind and would not be paid. Whilst some of the students might ask for this, we advise that you keep it unpaid for this year. We do not want a situation where some students are paid, and some are not as this might attract negative comments to what the programme has set out to achieve this year.

An exception to the above would be around travel expenses: where you are supporting a student to travel to an office or site to get the work experience, then this would be acceptable.

Of course, if follow the work experience, they are going to be an asset to the company, and you would like to offer them something paid, then this is at your discretion – however it needs to be separate from the two week work experience offer that has come from the Ground Forum Undergraduate Mentoring Programme.