1. **Introduction**

1.1 Every year, many young people below the age of 18 attend the University for short periods of time for the purpose of work experience. The University encourages this in the interests of widening participation and strengthening our links with the local community. Often arrangements are made privately or upon receiving an application from a young person, but some arrangements are made formally through local Schools or providers such as Trident. The aim of this guidance note is to provide University employees with useful information about what should be considered and the process that should be followed to ensure the University has taken appropriate steps and maintains adequate records for young persons undertaking work experience on campus.

2. **Characteristics of Work Experience**

2.1 This guidance is only relevant where Candidates (as defined below) wish to attend the University for the purpose of gaining work experience. Although similar considerations may still apply, this guidance does not apply to outreach programmes, schemes aimed at widening participation in Higher Education or “bring your child to work” days.

2.2 Work experience will ordinarily be unpaid, undertaken for a short period of time by candidates in the last two school years during which the child is of compulsory school age i.e. normally about 15 or 16 years old (“Candidates”).

3. **The University's Obligations**

**General**

3.1 Once the University accepts a Candidate it should take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of Candidates on campus which includes conducting a risk assessment. The objectives of the work experience, if any, should be discussed with the Candidate and the activities undertaken should be suitable to the Candidate’s age and level of experience. Work experience should not be offered by the University in situations which fall into one or more of the categories set out in section 5.2. The University must keep appropriate records of the risk assessment carried out and the letter sent to Candidates. Candidates should receive an induction on the first day of their work experience.

**Assignment to named individual**

3.2 In order to enhance a Candidate’s work experience at the University, he or she should be assigned to a supervisor who will work alongside the Candidate on a day to day basis and understand the objectives of the work experience.

**Risk Assessment**

3.3 A risk assessment must be carried out by the relevant manager responsible for the visit before any Candidates arrives on campus for their work experience. Guidance on how to carry out a health and safety
risk assessment can be found by referring to Health & Safety. The risk assessment must be communicated to the person mentoring the Candidate whilst on site.

3.4 The risk assessment must be relevant to the tasks and activities it is anticipated that the Candidate will be carrying out. It must also take into account the lack of experience, absence of awareness of existing or potential risks and the fact that young persons have not yet fully matured. This may arise from a number of factors because of a Candidate’s unfamiliarity with the environment or simply not having the confidence to ask questions or knowing where to get answers. Control measures should be introduced to eliminate where possible or minimise the risks to an acceptable risk level for a young person undertaking work experience. Higher levels of supervision than are normally given to employees in the University will usually be appropriate. If the Candidate has identified any special needs or you know or have reason to believe that there may be special needs, these must be taken into account in the risk assessment. Further advice is available from the Central H&S Group if required.

3.5 A copy of the risk assessment should be given to the organisation or Candidate requesting the placement. A copy must also be given to the Candidate’s parent or guardian if requested.

Insurance

3.6 The Insurance Office must also receive details of all Candidates preferably before they arrive on campus or as soon as reasonably possible upon their arrival. For this purpose it is acceptable to send an e-mail to the Insurance Office attaching a signed copy of the work experience letter and a completed risk assessment for record-keeping purposes which will be very important in the event of a claim.

Vetting & Barring Scheme

3.7 Employers can no longer complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks with barred list information on staff who are supervising young people aged 16 or 17 on work experience. Barred list checks by the DBS might be required on some people who supervise a child under the age of 16 on a work experience placement. Please discuss the process of DBS checking with your local HR representative if you believe a DBS check may be required. All staff working with work experience students should familiarise themselves with the University’s Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Hours of Work

3.8 Generally, work experience should not exceed a period of 10 working days, and working hours should not exceed 8 hours a day and between 35 and 40 hours per week. A lunch break and other rest breaks during the day must be provided to the Candidate. Working overnight is not permitted.

4. The Candidate's Obligations

4.1 The Candidate, together with their parents, should sign and return the University’s standard letter for work experience. Amongst other things, the letter provides them with useful information about the expected minimum standards for acceptable behaviour and conduct and furthermore provides parents or guardians with useful information about the work experience. A template of the letter is attached at Appendix A.

5. When is Work Experience unsuitable?

5.1 The University is responsible for the safeguarding of young people on work experience.

5.2 The following activities are considered by the University to be high risk activities and inappropriate for consideration as work experience opportunities for Candidates:

- working in areas involving animals;
- work beyond that young person’s physical or psychological capacity;
- working with patients in a clinical setting;
- situations where Candidates might be left unsupervised to work with children or vulnerable adults;
- work involving the risk of accidents which it may reasonably be assumed cannot be recognised or avoided by young persons owing to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training;
• work in which there is a risk to health from extreme cold or heat, noise; or vibration;
• work that is likely to involve the sale of alcohol or involvement in gambling.

5.3 The following activities should be carefully assessed before they are carried out by a Candidate. There must be direct reference to them within the risk assessment and the Candidate must be continuously supervised at all times whilst they are carrying out these activities.

• Working with or around potentially hazardous machinery;
• Work involving potential exposure to agents which are toxic or carcinogenic, cause heritable genetic damage or harm to the unborn child or which in any other way chronically affect human health;
• Work involving exposure to radiation;
• Work involving the use of sharp knives;
• Working at height.

5.4 Furthermore, work experience should not involve the Candidate

• working in an isolated environment or with just one individual for protracted periods of time, or
• being involved in activities with a residential element e.g. attendance at a conference or field trip.

5.5 The University should not facilitate or arrange work experience if the Candidate will be working under the supervision of a University contractor, agent, or other individual who is not an employee of the University.

6. Process checklist

If you have received an application or are considering offering a person a Work Experience opportunity you should follow the process set out below.

| 1. Risk assessment | Undertake a risk assessment in accordance with Clause 3. If any risk has been identified as high or medium risk you must consider ways to eliminate the risk entirely or reduce the risk to an acceptable level before proceeding. |
| 2. Work experience letter | Send the standard work experience letter to the Candidate or the Candidate’s school/college, appropriately completed. |
| 3. Notify the insurance office | As soon as possible after receiving the signed copy of the letter back from the Candidate, notify the Insurance Office by sending them an e-mail and attaching the signed agreement for their records, together with a copy of the risk assessment undertaken. Please send this to insure@soton.ac.uk. Please also notify the Insurance Office if a Candidate does not turn up or there are other amendments to the arrangements initially set out in the letter. |
| 4. Apply for facilities access Complete a HR7 form | In exceptional circumstances, you may request that HR issue the Candidate with a temporary visitor pass by submitting an HR7 form. If computer access is not required than do not request a visitor’s pass from HR. To discuss this further please contact the HR Triage. The person will be logged on the system as a 'Visitor' although in reality their status is a person on work experience. |
| 5. Induction | An induction must be provided to the Candidate on their first day. The induction should be proportionate to the time they will spend on campus but must nonetheless still be commensurate with the nature of activity being carried out under the work experience. The induction must be suitable for the age group of that Candidate and more robust and detailed than an induction which you would give to an adult in similar circumstances. |
6. **Report incidents**

Please immediately report any incident involving the Candidate by following the process and procedures set out in the Health & Safety Guidance available at [http://www.southampton.ac.uk/healthandsafety/emergency.html](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/healthandsafety/emergency.html)

Also contact the University’s Insurance Services Manager.

If you have a particular query which you feel has not been addressed in this guidance document or require assistance with a particular issue, please refer it to the relevant professional department.
APPENDIX A

EXAMPLE OF TEMPLATE WORK EXPERIENCE CONFIRMATION LETTER

[Name]

[Address]

[Date]

Dear XXXX

RE: WORK EXPERIENCE

I am pleased to welcome you to the University of Southampton for a period of work experience, which will start on [date] and finish on [date]. I hope that you will find your time with us interesting and enjoyable. While on work experience, you will be based in [faculty or service] and should report to [name]. You should observe such working hours as may be agreed with the Faculty or Service where you are working.

If you are issued with a temporary ID card and login to enable you to access the University and its facilities, your ID card must be returned on the last day of your work experience to your manager.

There are a few rules that we will ask you to observe while working with us:

1. If working in an administrative role there is no particular dress code, but we suggest you adopt smart casual wear. You will be advised if there is any particular dress requirement relevant to the area you are working, eg. if working in a laboratory or a healthcare setting.
2. You will be expected to be punctual and to show courtesy to members of University staff and others whom you come across during your work experience.
3. You should not work unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults.
4. Any information of a confidential nature which is communicated to you during your work experience must remain confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone, including your family members. This would include records or other information about the University's activities, areas of research or students or prospective students of the University, or any patients you might meet in a clinical setting.
5. Your period of work experience will be unpaid.
6. Please make sure that you make yourself aware of and abide by any specific health and safety rules relevant to the area where you are working.
7. The access that you are given to the University’s computer networks and/or software is purely for your work experience. You should not use our computer networks, systems, software and hardware for activities of a personal nature, for example downloading or sharing music, etc.
8. A copy of this agreement, together with associated documents and information collected from your work experience will be kept by the University for six years. It may be shared by the University with your parent or guardian, School or College, or will otherwise be disclosed by the University to third parties where it is required by law to do so. By signing this letter you consent to us sharing your information in this way.

We would ask that you and your parent or guardian complete and sign the appropriate section at the end of this letter to indicate your acceptance of the above. We also ask if you would kindly advise us of any special needs or medical requirements you have and provide us with the details of an adult family member to call in an emergency situation:-

I do hope you enjoy your time with us. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. We would appreciate it if you sent us feedback about your work experience at the University.
Yours sincerely,

[name]

WORK EXPERIENCE ACCEPTANCE

Please complete the details below in the attached copy of this letter and return to the address above to confirm your acceptance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☐ STUDENT: I agree to a period of work experience on the above terms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your full name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your School/College name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any special requirements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency contact name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to you:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency contact telephone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☐ PARENT/GUARDIAN: I agree to my child undertaking this work experience on the above terms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>