Work experience is important
In the current, highly competitive graduate labour market employers look for more than just a good degree. They look for people who stand out from the crowd by demonstrating a high level of motivation and a proven record of workplace skills. Work experience can give you an advantage as it helps you to develop such skills and also an understanding of the world of work.

Benefits of work experience
There are other benefits to gaining work experience during your studies, such as

- Employability skills or competencies;
- Commercial awareness;
- Understanding different types of work and what they involve;
- A clearer idea about what type of job appeals to you;
- Practical examples to support applications for graduate jobs;
- Networking opportunities and the chance to make useful contacts;
- The opportunity to apply academic knowledge and skills in the workplace.

Starting points
Before you start looking for work experience take some time to think about:

1. Industries and occupations you are interested in and the work experience you require to make a successful start in your chosen career path;
2. The skills and experience you have already gained and would like to develop further;
3. How much time you can commit – a few hours a week, the whole summer vacation?

Types of work experience
Anything that gives you practical experience and skills can be regarded as work experience. So there are many different types of work experience, including:

Part-time/ Casual work
Working for only a part of the normal working week is a good option for students with time constraints. There is a wide variety of opportunities and although not all of them are ‘graduate level’ they will provide you with the opportunity to gain valuable transferable skills.

Internships
By this we mean a formal scheme, usually with a major graduate recruiter and running during the long vacation, which is generally well structured, and offers an insight into a professional role and challenging work. Increasingly, major graduate recruiters use these schemes to identify good candidates for permanent positions.

Vacation work
A less structured temporary job or one that is not part of a formal scheme, but perhaps with a well known recruiter, over one of the vacations. A popular option to gain work experience and/or earn some money during vacations. Often this is obtained by speculative applications or responding to one-off advertisements.

Volunteering
Unpaid work, often seen as a pre-requisite for some entry to areas such as environment and conservation, media, charities, social work. Sometimes expenses only are offered. Charities are allowed to use unpaid volunteers but note that, strictly speaking, it is illegal for other organisations to give you regular duties without paying at least the National Minimum Wage.

Work shadowing
A short period spent observing someone doing their job; a great way to learn about an occupation, especially if structured work experience is not available

Competitions
A good opportunity to show attributes such as motivation, entrepreneurship or how creative you are. Organisations offer competitions which enable you to gain an insight into a specific area of work.

Resources and opportunities advertised through the Careers Service
King’s CareerConnect
www.kcl.ac.uk/careerconnect
King’s CareerConnect is our exclusive online career portal enabling students and recent alumni to engage with our services. Once logged in, you can access our vacancy board and search hundreds of part-time roles, placements, internships and graduate-level opportunities, book one-to-one careers or application guidance appointments, apply for exclusive King’s Internships and view our full events calendar to book attendance at our many events throughout the year.

King’s Careers Events
www.kcl.ac.uk/careers/events To find employer talks, workshops and fairs providing information on internships, part-time work, vac schemes and voluntary work.

Target Job: Work Experience – Take-away booklet available in the Careers library (published annually).
Websites advertising work experience opportunities in the UK

Here is a selection of sites advertising a variety temporary positions, vacation placements, formal internships, etc.

King’s CareerConnect  www.kcl.ac.uk/careerconnect
Employment 4 Students www.e4s.co.uk
Enternships:  www.enternships.com
Graduate Jobs wwwgraduate-jobs.com
Graduate Talent Pool http://graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk
Milkround www.milkround.com
Placement UK www.placement-uk.com
Prospects www.prospects.ac.uk
Rate My Placement www.ratemyplacement.co.uk
Step www.step.org.uk
Target Jobs  http://targetjobs.co.uk
Top Internships www.topinternships.com
The Year in Industry (YINI) www.yini.org.uk

Websites advertising international work experience

AIESEC www.aiesec.co.uk/students
The British Council www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants
Gapwork.com www.gapwork.com
Global Placements www.globalplacement.com
Global Choices www.globalchoices.co.uk
IAESTE www.iaeste.org
iAgora www.iagora.com/iwork
Intern Abroad www.internabroad.com
IST Plus www.istplus.com
Natives www.natives.co.uk
Oneco www.oneco.org
Platform2 www.myplatform2.com
Resort Jobs www.resortjobs.co.uk
Season Workers www.seasonworkers.com
Work and Volunteer Abroad www.workandvolunteer.com

Equal opportunity/diversity work experience schemes

There are some schemes designed to help students with barriers to employment to get into particular professions; generally you can find out about these by looking in our files on the specific type of work (occupation) that interests you.

Some of the better known schemes are:

Civil Service Fast Stream
Summer internship for students from ethnic minority backgrounds or with a registered disability

Diversity Milkround lists a number of diversity graduate jobs and internships, as well as diversity employers

www.employ-ability.org.uk

EmployAbility lists numerous new and ongoing graduate and internship opportunities with a number of global and UK organisations.

www.seo-london.com

Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) London is a not-for-profit organisation that every year provides hundreds of undergraduate students from under-represented ethnic minority backgrounds summer internships at investment banks, corporate law and IT firms in the UK.

www.skill.org.uk

The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities offers a number of unpaid work experience opportunities for young disabled adults. Look under ‘Policy’ and ‘Volunteering’ for information on Volunteering.

Create your work experience opportunity

If you experience difficulties finding work experience tailored to your needs and interests, you might want to consider creating your own one through speculative approaches to organisations. Start off with some research on the different types of jobs and organisations in the industry you feel attracted to. Once you have found an organisation you are interested in, you should contact them; but before approaching them about potential work experience make sure you have researched the organisation and already thought about the following questions:

What type of experience are you looking for?
Why are you approaching this organisation?
What skills and experiences can you bring?
When and for how long are you available?

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