

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS

Employers are always looking for people with experience of the world of work and hands-on skills. But how can you gain experience if you don't have a job?

If you haven't been at school much, or don't have many qualifications, the 16–19 Study Programme aims to give everyone the chance to work towards a substantial qualification, working towards Level 2 in English and Maths if you're not already at that level and in addition get some work experience or other preparation for work. You can find out more in the separate help sheet on "Developing your employability". There are lots of other ways you can build your employability skills and make your CV really stand out to an employer. Here are some things you could try.

Volunteering

Volunteering means working without getting paid, usually for a good cause like a charity or community group. It's a really useful way to gain some new skills, meet people and build your self-confidence.

Work experience

Like volunteering, work experience is not usually paid, but you are more likely to be working with an employer rather than a charity or community group. Many education courses will offer you opportunities to go on work experience or take part in work-related learning. Your current school, academy or college may be able to help you organise a work experience placement before you finish Year 11.

Personal development opportunities

These are opportunities which give you a chance to build your skills and experience. They could be activities or projects organised through school, academy or college, or more informal things you do yourself. For example, you might gain experience through hobbies, sports or helping family and friends. All these activities enable you to prove to potential employers that you have the skills they want. For example, being a "team player", "understanding how businesses work" and "good customer focus skills".

Find out more...

You can find out more about volunteering, work experience and personal development. You could try out these websites for more information:

- nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/youngpeople/Pages/WorkExperience/Volunteering.aspx
- vinspired.com lets you search for volunteering opportunities in your area
- www.volunteering.org.uk is the website for Volunteering England — look for the link to the "I want to volunteer section"