

Guidelines on Providing Quality Work Experience in Ecology and Environmental Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance has been produced to help organisations in the UK and Ireland, whether public, private or voluntary, provide legally compliant, ethically sound, properly planned and rewarding work experience opportunities to those seeking to enter the profession. It emphasises the value and benefits of such opportunities to host organisations and the wider profession as well as to the individual.

This guidance covers work experience for people who are aged 18 years or over. It does not cover the provision of work experience for younger people or vulnerable adults where different legislative requirements apply. Some useful references are provided in the Sources of Further Information section at the end of this document. Further careers information is also available on the CIEEM website at www.cieem.net/students-careers.

2. ABOUT CIEEM

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) is the professional body for applied practitioners of the science of ecology and management of the natural environment. CIEEM's objects¹ are:

- To advance the understanding and standards of practice of ecology and environmental management for the benefit of the natural environment and the public good; and
- To further the conservation, management and enhancement of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecological processes and life support systems essential to a fully functional biosphere.

Membership of CIEEM is a recognised benchmark of professionalism within the fields of applied ecology and environmental management. We expect all our members to conduct their working lives in a way that reflects well on our profession, which includes providing help and support to those seeking to gain employment in our industry.

3. THE ROLE OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN OUR PROFESSION

The future of our profession is underpinned by the continued recruitment of high calibre, enthusiastic and committed individuals into roles across all relevant employment sectors. CIEEM's previous research into skills gaps and skills shortages² has highlighted the importance of ensuring that there are sufficient people with key competencies in critical areas. These include aspects of field survey, species identification, ecological/environmental impact assessment and adaptive habitat management and habitat creation. These are vital skills, acquired through practical experience, which are required to enable society to meet the challenge of managing our natural resources sustainably.

In an ideal scenario, graduates seeking a career in ecology and environmental management would be able to apply for jobs fully equipped with the practical skills they need and there would be plenty of graduate jobs available. The reality is very different. Pressures on degree programme timetables and the costs of field-based work mean that students may have insufficient opportunities to develop the required confidence and competence in the key skills needed by future employers. In a highly competitive job market employers are likely to be drawn to candidates who can demonstrate at least some basic level of competence in a range of routine technical and transferable activities³. Development of these competences through work experience can make a candidate more 'job ready'.

¹CIEEM Royal Charter and Byelaws (2013) http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Resource_Library/Governance/CIEEM_Charter_and_Bylaws.pdf

²Closing the Gap: Rebuilding ecological skills in the 21st Century (2011) CIEEM <http://www.cieem.net/ecological-skills>

³See CIEEM's Competency Framework for definition of Basic Competence <http://www.cieem.net/competency-framework>

Well-planned, well-managed and ethically responsible work experience opportunities can help future ecologists and environmental managers in embarking on a successful and rewarding career. Many employers will favour candidates with a good track record of practical experience in a workplace setting. Work experience can be undertaken alongside a programme of study, particularly fieldwork during the summer survey season. In many cases graduates, hopefully supported by education providers, will seek an opportunity for post-study work experience to improve their job prospects.

4. THE BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience requires commitment from host organisations in terms of planning, recruitment, training and supervision as well as commitment from the individual to make the most of the opportunity. Good work experience opportunities have distinct benefits for both the provider and the individual.

For the host organisation providing well-planned, well-managed and ethically responsible work experience can:

- Provide access to new talent.
- Expose your organisation to new ideas and fresh thinking.
- Create useful links with higher education institutes.
- Motivate your staff and teach them coaching and mentoring skills.
- Demonstrate aspects of corporate social responsibility.

For the individual, undertaking such a period of work experience can:

- Provide an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills gained in studies and develop competence through practical experience in a genuine working environment under close supervision.
- Allow interaction with ecologists/environmental managers to discover what is involved in such a role on a day-to-day basis.
- Learn and apply new and important skills which may not appear in, or readily be learnt from, text books.
- Expose the individual to the realities of work including health and safety, commercial considerations, workplace etiquette and conducting business relationships.
- Give them an insight into the range of roles and opportunities within the host organisation and the wider profession.
- Improve employability and future career prospects.
- Experience the reality of working in a particular career area to see if it is the right choice for them.

5. DEFINITION OF TERMS – SEE BOX 1

6. THE LAW AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are both legal and ethical considerations in providing a work experience opportunity and a wealth of useful guidance is available online (see Sources of Further Information at the back of this guide and note that these may vary between the UK, Ireland and elsewhere). Members of CIEEM should be mindful of the Code of Professional Conduct⁴ which requires you to 'act at all times with professional integrity'. Members of CIEEM should also refer to the Guidance on Good Working Practices⁵ which sets out our expectations of a good, ethical employer.

The advice in this document applies equally, in respect of working practices such as health and safety and working conditions, to those who are on work experience or volunteering.

⁴See http://www.cieem.net/professional_conduct

⁵See http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Resource_Library/Professional_Guidance_Series/Good_Working_Practices_FINAL.pdf

Box 1: Definition of Terms

There is potential for confusion around the terms used for different types of work experience. The distinction is important because, in some cases, different employment legislation applies in different parts of the UK and Ireland.

Work experience - a period of paid or unpaid supervised work with a host organisation to better understand the role or roles available and learn/practice relevant skills.

Work placement - a period of work experience undertaken as part of a degree or other programme of study, typically between 2 and 10 weeks in duration and taken as a block or one day a week.

Sandwich placement - a six month or one year work placement taken as part of a programme of study, usually taken between the second and final year of study for an undergraduate degree.

Work shadowing - observing/working with an employee of an organisation to learn what their job entails. Typically this would be for 1 - 2 weeks, or on an ad hoc basis for specific activities.

Volunteers/Volunteering - spending time, without pay (except for travel and other out-of-pocket expenses), helping an organisation or individual with activities to benefit the environment or individuals/groups other than, or in addition to, close family members. The volunteering must be optional, with no obligation to offer the volunteer work or for them to carry it out. It may be over a defined period or open-ended. Host organisations still have legal responsibilities in relation to volunteers.

Apprenticeship - a nationally-recognised scheme that provides a combination of 'on-the-job' learning and training over a longer period (1 - 3 years) in order to learn a trade. Apprentices receive a wage. Usually apprentices will not have followed a relevant programme of study post-19.

Traineeship - a period of paid or unpaid work experience involving formal training in a specific role over a set time period. Trainees are expected to be trained up to a specified level of knowledge and skill and this may include day release to follow a relevant programme of study.

Internships - a period of paid or unpaid work experience where the individual has the opportunity to apply their learning and skills in a focused role following a relevant programme of study. Internships are typically 3 – 12 months in duration. An internship may be used to cover seasonal work but should have structured learning support in place.

Worker - an individual who works for an employer under contract and who is entitled to some employment rights, such as holiday pay, entitlement to the National Minimum Wage and protection under anti-discrimination legislation. This term usually includes employees, agency workers and short-term casual workers. The contract may be a formal written contract or a verbal agreement.

Employee - an individual who works under an employment contract. Employees generally have additional employment rights such as Statutory Sick Pay, maternity, paternity and parental leave and statutory redundancy pay.

Zero hours contracts - a form of employment contract designed to enable employers to manage fluctuations in available work and therefore workforce requirements. Individuals subject to these contracts will always have worker rights (see above) and may also be considered an employee of the organisation, with the additional rights which that affords.

Motive: The first question an organisation should ask is 'why are we doing this?' Offering work experience opportunities should not be a means of:

- a. covering seasonal fluctuations in workload cheaply rather than offering short-term seasonal contracts to the labour market, or
- b. sourcing free labour or replacing paid staff.

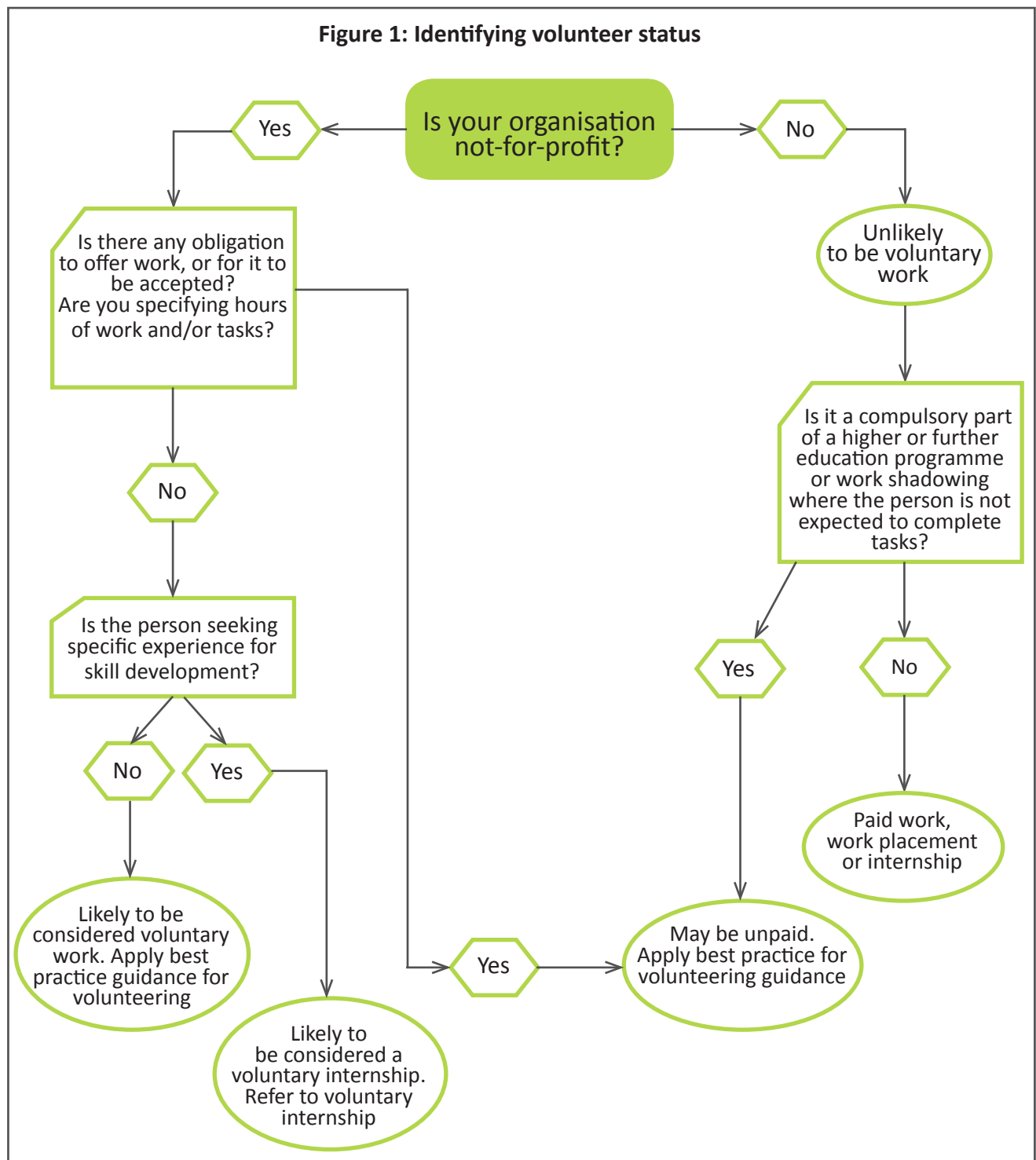
Both instances are ethically wrong and may also be unlawful (see Payment below). Inevitably, due to the seasonal nature of fieldwork, some of the work experience activities that are offered will only be available at certain times of year. But the motives in offering work experience will be demonstrated through the planning of activities to be covered during the individual's time with the organisation and the provision of appropriate professional development opportunities.

Payment: If an individual is performing as a 'worker' then they must, by law, be paid at least the National Minimum Wage⁶. The only exceptions are:

- Students undertaking a work placement, with agreed learning outcomes, for less than a year as part of a higher education or further education programme of study.
- Volunteers (see definition in Box 1).
- Those undertaking work shadowing only.

Figure 1 provides guidance on how to assess whether someone is likely to be considered a genuine volunteer or not.

Employers should note that an individual's willingness to 'volunteer' does not determine whether they are legally considered to be a volunteer or a worker, and therefore does not remove an employer's obligation to pay them for work.



⁶<http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage> or <https://www.citizensinformation.ie>

CIEEM strongly recommends that, with the exception of genuine volunteering and work shadowing, all work experience should be paid and that this should be no less than the Living Wage⁷.

A failure to pay those undertaking work experience, even if within the law, disadvantages those who cannot afford, through personal circumstances, to take an unpaid work placement opportunity and is contrary to the principle of encouraging diversity within the profession.

All those engaged in work experience activities, including volunteering, should be offered reimbursement of expenses, such as travel and subsistence.

In the voluntary sector, some organisations may provide access to a structured programme of training in lieu of a salary. Other benefits may include free or subsidised accommodation and access to equipment. In such instances providers should satisfy themselves that those engaged in work experience do not meet the definition of a worker, in which case they would be legally entitled to a salary. Care should also be taken to ensure that any payments made to volunteers cannot be construed as wages. Payments to cover actual expenses should be clearly identified as such and ideally reimbursed against receipts.

Good practice dictates that those on work experience should be provided with both a salary **and** appropriate training and support. Where payment of a salary is not possible, and provided the individual is not classed as a worker, training should be of sufficient quantity and quality as to enrich the work placement experience. Training should be planned at the start of the work experience and should normally include structured training in addition to 'on-the-job' learning.

If work undertaken by an individual on work experience is then charged out to a client or is otherwise used to generate an income, then it is only fair that the individual should receive payment commensurate with the knowledge and skill they used to perform the task. This should, as a minimum, be equivalent to the Living Wage.

Working conditions: All those undertaking work experience or volunteering, are entitled to a safe and healthy working environment and should be covered by the appropriate insurance cover (Employment Liability and Public Liability insurance). Appropriate risk assessments must be undertaken and both training and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) provided where required. Their work should be properly supervised and any essential training needed to undertake their tasks safely must be provided.

Those on work experience are covered by the restrictions of the maximum working hours and minimum rest breaks as set out in the Working Time Directive⁸. These are safe limits and organisations providing work experience opportunities should consider whether shorter working hours and longer rest breaks would be appropriate for those unused to full-time work.

Whilst volunteers are not workers and are freely choosing to provide their time and services, care should be taken to ensure that they take sufficient rest breaks and do not volunteer more time than they should do in order to maintain their own safety and wellbeing and that of others. As with workers, host organisations should ensure that they receive the appropriate training in safe working practices including, if appropriate, manual handling, safe use of tools and lone working. Lone working is not appropriate for inexperienced volunteers.

Organisations should provide reasonable time off for individuals undertaking longer term work experience (6 weeks or more) in line with the time off provided to employees.

Access to appropriate work experience opportunities should be open to all to encourage fairness and diversity within the profession. Organisations should take account of this principle when planning their work experience provision and when advertising and recruiting.

Organisations should also consider how their normal workplace policies and procedures extend to cover those on work experience and make sure that they do not intentionally or inadvertently discriminate against or otherwise treat those on work experience unfairly.

⁷ <http://www.livingwage.org.uk> or <https://www.livingwage.ie>

⁸ <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/workingtimedirective.htm>

7. PLANNING THE WORK EXPERIENCE

A good starting point for the host organisation is to be clear why it is providing a work experience opportunity rather than a standard employment contract, clarifying the purpose of the opportunity to all those involved and confirming that it is legally and ethically appropriate. Those planning the work experience must be familiar with the relevant legislation covering the type of opportunity offered (see Sources of Further Information). Establish whether the offer includes a salary, either because the host organisation is legally required to do so or because it follows good practice principles regarding payment.

It is good practice to make sure that any work experience provides the individual with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and improve their skills in a range of tasks or through more in-depth engagement in a specific piece of research or project work. The host organisation should also expect to provide training.

The host organisation should designate a lead person to be responsible for the work experience opportunity. This person should:

- Draw up a role description describing the activities the individual is expected to undertake.
- Draft a learning contract (see example in Appendix A), which sets out what the individual can expect to learn during their time with the organisation. This is also a useful document to manage expectations on both sides. Reference should be made to CIEEM's Competency Framework, identifying which areas of technical and transferable competences the work experience activities will cover. The aim should be that at the end of the work experience the individual will be able to demonstrate at least Basic level in these competences. For longer work experience periods that focus on a narrower scope, some individuals may have reached Capable level in some of the relevant competences. (See Box 2).
- Appoint a supervisor / mentor who will oversee the work and provide support to the individual. Mentors may need support and training if they do not have experience of supervising work experience staff. Such responsibilities need to be recognised in their workloads.
- Produce an induction plan (see section on Induction) and identify the resources needed to support the work experience, including management, supervision and training. Confirm that the organisation has the resources and staff 'buy-in' to provide a quality work experience.
- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place. The host organisation's insurance policies must cover individuals on work experience, including volunteers⁹.
- Undertake a health and safety risk assessment. Existing risk assessments for some or all of the activities will need to be reviewed from the context of an inexperienced worker. Remember that the work experience individual should be closely supervised and supported, so make sure that all those likely to work with them are properly briefed. The work experience individual can provide support to paid employees undertaking field surveys but should not be sent out on their own to undertake work.

If the work experience on offer is a work placement for a student currently studying at a higher education institution (HEI) then the HEI should already have guidance and pro-formas in place to help you plan, recruit and manage the work placement, and will help match students to the placements. In such placements the HEI will identify an academic member of staff as a named contact who can advise on the placement. There is usually a form of assessment linked to student work experience which may include an evaluation of the placement student¹⁰.

Box 2: CIEEM Competency Framework Levels

An individual working at Basic level competence has:

'some knowledge with an understanding of terminology and concepts. Has some experience of practical application. Would be able to carry out standard tasks to the required standard under supervision.'

An individual working at Capable level competence has:

'the knowledge and experience essential to carry out standard tasks unsupervised confidently and consistently. Is likely to need to seek advice before carrying out complex or non-standard tasks.'

⁹ <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/volunteering-and-insurance-information-sheet-nl.pdf>

¹⁰ The Higher Education Academy produced a guide to sandwich placements, this is focused on engineering placements but the basic principles are transferable to environmental students and can be accessed at: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/guide-industrial-placements.pdf>

8. WORK EXPERIENCE RECRUITMENT

Work experience opportunities should be openly advertised and filled in accordance with legislation and fair working practices. The application process must be carried out in accordance with the principles of equal opportunity at all times. There must be no suggestion that an individual is being discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, pregnancy, disability, religion or religious belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status or age.

The host organisation should aim to get applications from a diverse range of candidates and these should be assessed on an equal basis.

Advertisement of the work experience opportunity should include the information normally given in any job advert including details of:

- The type of experience being offered (e.g. placement, traineeship, internship).
- The duration of the opportunity.
- The working hours and pattern of work, including amount of travel involved.
- Remuneration, if any, including reimbursement of expenses.
- Role description and a summary of training to be provided.
- The knowledge and skills which are looked for in applications – both essential and desirable.

Do **not** advertise the prospect of a permanent position at the end of the period of work experience unless you are certain that such a position will be available if the individual demonstrates their suitability. Suggesting or implying that a permanent position might be available at the end of the work experience without any such certainty is unethical. If you are offering work experience opportunities to more than one person and there may not be permanent positions for all of them, be open about this at the outset. Those undertaking the work experience need to know that selection for any paid position(s) will be a competitive process and what the final selection process will be based on.

You may have an existing relationship with a particular HEI such that you agree to provide work placements for students following a particular programme of study. This is a good way of supporting the programme but the placement should still be openly advertised to all eligible students.

Once the selection process has been concluded you should send the successful candidate an agreement setting out in writing the terms which apply to the arrangement. Remember that the absence of a written contract does not necessarily mean that a contract does not exist, or that the individual would not be considered a worker or an employee.

9. INDUCTION

As with any new member of staff, you should arrange an appropriate induction covering:

- introductions to colleagues;
- a tour of the office premises;
- arrangements for remuneration (if appropriate) and payment of expenses;
- health and safety including provision of PPE if relevant;
- a training needs analysis;
- the learning contract;
- a written agreement covering the terms and conditions of the work experience, including an exchange of expectations regarding what will and will not be covered during the work experience period;
- organisational policies and procedures; and
- arrangements for rest breaks.

Be especially mindful that this may be the individual's first experience of a workplace so take particular care to check their understanding and go at a pace which allows them to take all of the information in.

Towards the end of the first week review the training and development plan or learning contract and make any appropriate adjustments. It would also be useful to set some SMART¹¹ objectives for the work experience period. The individual should be encouraged to keep a reflective record of their experience, including any structured and unstructured training, highlighting what they have learnt and how this is being applied.

10. MANAGING THE WORK EXPERIENCE

Regular supervision/mentor meetings should be held with the individual to review progress against objectives and the training and development plan, and to address any issues or concerns. This also provides opportunities for work experience individuals to air their views on how things are going. It is very important to identify issues and concerns early on. For example the individual may not be familiar with the work environment and may need to be encouraged to state their concerns/problems. If not dealt with, this could lead to major problems.

11. WHAT TO DO IF IT STARTS TO GO WRONG

Most properly planned and well-supported work experience opportunities are successful for both the individual and the host organisation. Good communication and transparency prior to the work experience ensures that expectations are clear on both sides. Nevertheless it is important to have processes in place to manage the situation if it starts to go wrong¹².

Regular supervision meetings are an opportunity to resolve minor problems or issues. Major issues should be managed according to the written agreement in place and, if the individual is an employee, with reference to the organisation's Human Resources policies. If the work experience opportunity is a student work placement, involve the HEI at an early stage as they may be able to help resolve difficulties.

In the most extreme cases it may be necessary to terminate the work experience. This should be done with care, ensuring that the individual is clear why it is being terminated and providing further advice as to how they can develop their career.

12. EVALUATING THE WORK EXPERIENCE

Towards the end of the work experience period, time should be set aside for evaluation. The supervisor/mentor should prepare constructive feedback (having possibly gathered examples from colleagues) highlighting what the individual has achieved, their strengths and any further areas for development.

Work experience should be evaluated by both parties, so encourage the individual who has undertaken the work experience to provide feedback, and listen carefully to what has worked well and what has worked less well. If possible, it might be prudent for someone other than the supervisor/mentor to undertake the evaluation process so that the individual can raise any difficult issues in confidence. For work experience undertaken in partnership with an education institution there is normally a formal evaluation assessment process. In some cases work experience can form part of a student's formal education award and the outcome can affect the grade they receive.

If the work experience opportunity was offered with the potential of a permanent post being available at its conclusion, this should be discussed in good time before the end of the period. If the individual is not going to be offered the position based on their performance, they should be given clear reasons as to why not. If the intended position is no longer available, the reasons for this should be explained.

If a permanent position is available but more than one person on work experience is eligible for it, the selection process should have been made clear at the outset. All potential candidates should be reminded of the process, which should be undertaken fairly and transparently.

If the individual is not offered a permanent position (whether it was originally intended or not), you should offer some careers advice including how their work experience can be reflected in their CV. You should also offer to provide a reference on request.

¹¹ SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound

¹² For useful advice on what to do in this situation go to <http://www.joe.org/joe/2011october/tt3.php>

BOX 3: CIEEM's 10 Good Practice Principles For Providing Work Experience

CIEEM's Training, Education and Careers Development Committee has identified 10 Good Practice principles which it expects members to adhere to when offering work experience.

1. **Be clear on your motives.** Providing quality work experience opportunities is a responsible way to support your profession and those seeking to enter it. Work experience is not a means of sourcing free or cheap labour during periods of heavy work demand. In all cases ask yourself whether offering unpaid work experience is appropriate, legal and ethical?
2. **Understand the law** as it applies to your organisation and the type of work experience you are providing. There is also a lot of guidance available (see Further information) so familiarise yourself with the most up-to-date versions.
3. **Be open and transparent** about the nature of the work experience opportunity and prospects of employment at the end of the work experience. Do not make vague promises or suggestions of a permanent position if they are theoretical rather than actual.
4. **Pay at least the recognized Living Wage** unless the individual is genuinely undertaking voluntary work. In all instances cover travel and subsistence expenses. We want our profession to be respected so we should respect those seeking work experience. Individuals receiving grants, scholarships, bursaries or who are volunteering should still receive reimbursement of their travel and subsistence.
5. **Be fair.** Make your work experience opportunity as accessible as possible by making proper provision for those with disabilities or responsibilities, giving thought as to how and where you advertise the opportunity, offering a wage (see above) and providing a supportive and enabling workplace environment for all.
6. **Plan well.** Plan the work experience opportunity carefully and thoroughly to ensure the individual gets the most out of it and it is successful for your organisation. Be clear as to the competences, both technical and transferable, that the individual will have the opportunity to develop during their time with you and how they will do so. Monitor progress and adapt.
7. **Take responsibility for health and safety.** Be mindful that the working environment may be very new to someone on work experience so take extra care with welfare, health and safety issues. Ensure adequate training, PPE and insurance is provided.
8. **Be generous with your time, resources and access to relevant training.** The individual is there to learn, so invest in them to help them succeed.
9. **Be caring.** Treat any concerns or any problems that they have seriously. Provide proper support mechanisms, including those that enable the individual to ask for help or raise any concerns. Consider how you would like to have been treated in a similar situation and act accordingly.
10. **Aim for a positive outcome.** Help the individual to take something tangible away from the experience. A portfolio, evidence of training, endorsement of skills acquired, careers advice and/or the offer of a reference will help them going forward.

CASE STUDY 1 - VOLUNTEERING

A Wildlife Trust offers an 11 month Volunteer Land Management Traineeships where a trainee is able to gain useful work experience working alongside Land Management Advisors within the Conservation Team. They are a volunteer so no wages are paid but travelling expenses and subsistence are covered.

The trainee completes a training needs analysis at the start of the traineeship which results in an individual training plan being produced. Training is provided through a combination of external providers and in-house staff.

The trainee is recruited via an application and interview process in line with the organisation's usual recruitment practices. They are mentored and supervised by a Land Management Advisor who, in turn, is supported by other staff.

The trainee worked on a well-defined project with clear outcomes. This gave structure to the volunteering experience. The trainee has remained with the organisation having successfully applied for a maternity leave cover post before moving on to another post within the organisation.

CASE STUDY 2 – INTERNSHIP

An ecological consultancy offers an internship as an entry-level position aimed at graduates with no consultancy experience, although they may have some relevant field skills from courses or voluntary work. The successful candidate is paid the minimum wage in addition to travel and subsistence for internship-related activities.

The consultancy aims to provide as wide a range of experience as possible. Certain survey experience is guaranteed, such as Phase 1 habitat, GCN and bats, but opportunities vary from year to year and outside of those 'certainties', the experience gained depends on the nature of projects that are commissioned at that time and the individual's specific interests.

An induction meeting at the start provides an opportunity for the training plan to be tailored to the individual and take account of any particular areas of interest they may have.

Interns receive structured training via a programme of in-house workshops and presentations run by the company's more experienced staff. They also receive on-the-job training by accompanying staff or assisting with fieldwork on as wide a variety of projects as possible. The structured and documented training plan incorporates the company's commitments to the intern and its expectations of them.

Going forwards the consultancy has decided to assign a specific mentor who will support the intern, particularly during their first few weeks with the company. This is in addition to the mentoring they receive from all members of the team on the industry in general and in particular fields of technical expertise.

The intern is required to keep a structured work experience diary and they are also encouraged to write a blog, providing an opportunity to describe their experiences in their own words throughout the duration of the placement.

In addition to at least one interim review meeting during the placement the intern will have a final review meeting at the end of the placement which includes constructive feedback on the intern's progress, discussion of ongoing training requirements, advice on career development and updating their CV. This also provides an opportunity for the intern to provide feedback on their experience in order to help the consultancy improve the internship scheme each year.

CASE STUDY 3 – WORK PLACEMENTS, TRAINEESHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

A local authority provides a range of paid work placements for a minimum of 4 weeks for those still exploring their potential career path through to 1 and 2 year traineeship opportunities where full training is provided. The local authority also provides work shadowing opportunities and apprenticeships as well as volunteering opportunities. Volunteers only carry out tasks that the local authority is not being paid to deliver.

Recruitment for paid roles is through publicised campaigns whilst volunteering opportunities can be found on a permanent webpage.

Work placements and trainees through to contracted staff are paid at the appropriate grade and scale point. All travel to sites is paid for (or refunded to volunteers).

All work experience opportunities, except volunteers, have access to the local authority's training schemes and formal training on agreement with their line manager, supervisor or mentor. Volunteers have tailored training according to their volunteering activity.

Trainees follow Individual Learning Plans that are prepared with a dedicated Ecologist mentor.

These are monitored and appraised regularly throughout their placement. The Learning Plans are mapped against the CIEEM competency framework as well as any NVQ or OCN requirements. All trainees have a dedicated mentor to support them.

Areas of training include: Phase 1 and extended Phase 1 surveying; record data management; Protected species surveying, Development Management (planning) responses, project report preparation and management plan preparation.

Work placement candidates have a meeting with the supervisor prior to the placement to identify areas of mutual benefit. They are monitored and appraised regularly throughout the placement.

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SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

There is a wealth of information online which is continually being updated. Here are some useful links which will help you plan your work experience opportunity.

General Guidance:

Useful guidance that can apply outside Northern Ireland
<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/work-experience>

NCVO offers a range of guidance at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers-and-your-organisation>

TUC charter for volunteers - <https://www.tuc.org.uk/public-sector/workplace-issues/volunteering/charter-strengthening-relations-between-paid-staff-and>

Internships – Best Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-quality-internships-code-and-guidance-for-employers>

Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard:

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/volunteer-induction-checklist-nl.pdf>

Volunteer Now – good source of volunteering vacancies and guidance: <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/publications/?category=13&type=0&Search=Search>

NCVO – as champions for the voluntary sector – range of resources <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/volunteering>

Other Useful Organisation Links <http://www.volunteerscotland.net/organisations/resources/useful-links/>

Legal Issues:

Differences between volunteers and employee/worker: <https://www.thebiggive.org.uk/advice/why-is-it-important-to-determine-if-someone-is-a-volunteer-or-an-employee-worker/>

Gov.UK has some useful info on internships <https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns> and on volunteer rights and examples of paid and unpaid: <https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses>

Employment rights and pay for interns

<https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>

Legal Issues – National Minimum Wage Legislation and Work Experience

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-work-experience-and-internships>

Differences between volunteers and employee/worker: <https://www.thebiggive.org.uk/advice/why-is-it-important-to-determine-if-someone-is-a-volunteer-or-an-employee-worker/>

Risk Assessments for Work Experience

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm>

Country Specific Information:

England: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering>
Scotland: <http://www.volunteerscotland.net/organisations/>
Wales: <http://www.wcva.org.uk/advice-guidance/volunteers>
Northern Ireland: <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/publications/?category=13&type=0&Search.x=61&Search.y=4>
Republic of Ireland: <http://skillstowork.ie/employer/>
<http://www.volunteer.ie/resources/factsheets-guides/> <http://gradireland.com/work-experience>
<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Work-Placement-Programme.aspx>
<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/JobBridge.aspx>
NB: some online help is free but other advice may be charged for

Guidance on University/HEI work placements:

http://www.hestem.ac.uk/sites/default/files/an_introduction_to_work-based_learning.pdf - NOTE written for physics students but much of the detail is transferrable

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/hetaskforce/minutes/learning>

Internships:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-quality-internships-code-and-guidance-for-employers>

<http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-work-experience-and-internships>
<http://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>

<http://ccskills.org.uk/supporters/funding/northern-ireland/apprenticeships-and-internships-for-young-people>

Volunteering:

<http://www.gov.uk/volunteering>

<http://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses>

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/volunteering-and-the-law-information-sheet-nl.pdf>

<http://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/242101/volunteering%20and%20the%20law.pdf>

<http://www.volunteeringengland.org.uk/goodpractice>

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/work-experience-and-volunteering>

www.volunteering-wales.net

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/public-sector/workplace-issues/volunteering/charter-strengthening-relations-between-paid-staff-and-volunteers>

<http://www.volunteer.ie/resources/factsheets-guides>

Apprenticeships:

<http://www.skillsaction/apprenticeships>

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-framework>

Guidance for People considering doing Voluntary Work:

General guidance <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/work-experience-and-volunteering>

A but general but some good info at: <http://www.savethestudent.org/student-jobs/the-ultimate-guide-to-volunteering.html>

Lots of info at <http://www.voluntaryworker.co.uk/becoming-voluntary-worker-frequent-questions.html>

Specific Aspects of Work Experience:

Recruitment and Selection – ACAS

http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/p/9/Getting_it_right_factsheet_-_Recruitment_and_selection-accessible-version-July-2011.pdf

Guidance on training and training need analysis (p12) <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/workbook-4-managing-volunteer-training-2013.pdf>

Guidance on recruiting and managing volunteers:

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers>

Useful forms and checklist for volunteering:

http://www.gem.org.uk/volunteer/vol-res/catherine_artmell_volunteer_managers_toolkit.pdf

Induction checklist:

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/volunteer-induction-checklist-nl.pdf>

Guidance on Managing Volunteers:

<http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/fs/doc/publications/volunteer-induction-checklist-nl.pdf>

Example forms and checklists for volunteering/work placements:

<http://www.volunteeraberdeen.org.uk/documents/Volunteering%20Toolkit.pdf>

APPENDIX A - MODEL LEARNING PLAN

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Name:.....
 Date:.....
 Supervisor:.....

Current qualifications and achievements

-
-
-

Current job aspirations

Priority learning objectives	How will these be achieved (e.g. hands-on experience, training course, desk study)

Additional support to be provided:

Frequency of review	Monthly
Signed (Trainee)	Date:
Signed (Supervisor)	Date: