



# Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

## The Value of Work Experience and Volunteering

### Background information

Reading in the news about employment and competition in the labour market can appear to be a daunting future! Such articles entitled : UK employment hits another record high (BBC News Feb 2019) and UK recruitment: world's most competitive market (UK recruitment firm Investigo July 2018) highlight this competition.

Work experience and/or volunteering enable you to gain many advantages and are actively encouraged by Universities and employers alike!

### Key questions to think about:

1. What is the difference between work experience and volunteering?
2. Why undertake work experience?
3. Why do Universities and employers value work experience?
4. Will work experience make up for low grades?
5. Where do I go next?

### 1. What is the difference between work experience and volunteering?

“*work experience*” has become an all embracing title for any form of participation in a working environment, and could include *volunteering work* with a registered charity which may not be paid but would still be counted as work experience.

Is there a difference between work experience, an internship and a placement? Sep 2015 UCL

### 2. Why undertake work experience?

Work experience enables you to see if it's the right career for you!

Work experience enables you to have the possibility of meeting new employers, to learn, build some contacts and network with people who, one day, may employ you!



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### 3. Why do Universities and employers value work experience?

Mary Beard, professor of classics at the University of Cambridge, says work experience can help admissions tutors understand a prospective student.

For certain degree routes such as Medicine or vocational degree courses applicants must complete work placements before applying. Sheffield University Medical School explains that this helps students to develop their medical knowledge and skills, and ensure they have "an understanding of the complex nature of a doctor's role, as well as being aware of the highs and lows of the profession".

UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), employers stated that "work experience was, in most cases, more or as important to them as GCSEs in maths and English when they were recruiting."

Sutton Trust "warned that top universities use personal statements - which include extracurricular experiences - to distinguish between students of equal academic ability"

Admissions tutors are much more interested in what you gained from your work experience. It's also worth remembering that "picking up transferable skills"

"enhancing your interpersonal skills"

"real world' experience"

### 4. Will work experience make up for low grades?

"Work experience does not make up for low grades!" University of Cambridge

"Although you can gain skills in a wide variety of ways and that prior academic performance is not the only indicator of a student's ability"

### 5. Where do I go next?

School and year assemblies actively promote local labour market information and encourage students to be proactive in thinking about future options and work experience. There are also school events such as the Alumni Careers fair in December, the Future's evening in February, the HE fair in March and career interviews to name but a few to assist in supporting work experience placements and career choices.



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## Supporting resources

### Work experience

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-experience/388-work-experience-for-school-students-what-you-need-and-how-to-get-it>  
<https://bwc.nhs.uk/workexperience>  
<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/getting-job/work-experience>  
<https://www.pearson.com/uk/learners/fe-and-college-students/career-choices/careers-advice-topics/how-to-find-work-experience.html>  
<https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/youthhub/pages/finding-work-experience-school-and-college-students-xmarks>

### Volunteering

<https://do-it.org/>  
Search for volunteering opportunities near you!  
<https://onewalsall.org/volunteering/>

Volunteering roles with various organisations...

<https://www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/work-with-us/volunteering/>  
[https://www.macmillan.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/why-volunteer.html?gclid=EAIaIQobChMlvJyv6I7N4AIVKpPtCh3VewETEAYASAAEgLvxD\\_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering/why-volunteer.html?gclid=EAIaIQobChMlvJyv6I7N4AIVKpPtCh3VewETEAYASAAEgLvxD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds)  
<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-fundraising/volunteer/>  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer>  
<https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer>  
<https://www.acorns.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>