

Delivery and recording of work experience in EFA-funded study programmes from the 2014 to 2015 academic year

Introduction

In October 2013 DfE published a [policy document on work experience](#). This reinforced the importance of work experience within study programmes for 16-19 year olds who can benefit from it. It noted that the greatest benefits for students are where work experience is substantial and with an external employer.

In December 2013 the [funding letter to the post-16 sector](#) from Peter Mucklow, EFA National Director for Young People, stated that from 2014 to 2015, only work experience with external employers should be counted towards and recorded as a work experience learning aim from 2014/15 and that simulated work environments should be separately recorded as non-qualification activity.

This has given rise to a number of queries, particularly how the DfE will define external employers. This note seeks to clarify how workplace-based activity should be recorded in EFA-funded programmes, and the general approach that Ofsted will take in inspecting programmes based on discussions with Ofsted.

Types of work experience/workplace-based learning

There are three types of work experience/work placement activity, all of which are fundable if they form part of the student's study programme:

- the student's core aim is work experience;
- learning in a workplace environment is an essential element of a student's vocational qualification; and
- work experience is an enrichment activity for the student.

The student's core aim is work experience

The student's core aim is work experience because the work environment is key to motivating the student to succeed and progress. For these students it is important that they get the full experience of a real work environment external to an educational institution, including in order to be work-ready. This experience should therefore be with an external employer, external to the learning environment and at an external site.

A simulated environment in an education institution can provide students with the skills needed to work within a particular occupation but does not satisfy the requirement for the student to gain full preparation for the demands of employment. Experience in a college restaurant run by an external organisation, or experience in a college-based crèche that is a commercial enterprise, are valuable in themselves and to a student's learning. However

where the core aim is work experience then for that core aim it is a requirement that the student should benefit from the added value that experience external to the educational institution can bring.

Students whose core aim is work experience could also receive experience in an internal environment prior to their placement with an external employer. This is fundable and should be recorded as non-qualification activity. Where work experience is the core aim this should be recorded in the ILR/school census against one of the six work experience aims. At inspection Ofsted would look to see how all the experience provided has given the student the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from an external work placement at an appropriate stage of their programme and how it has prepared them for employment.

Learning in a workplace environment is an essential element of a student's vocational qualification

Where learning in a workplace environment is an essential part of the student's vocational qualification the purpose is to provide the student with the opportunity to practice skills in a supervised environment. This applied learning or practical training might take place for example in a college workshop or hairdressing salon, or on a college farm. This is part of the qualification and should be counted as qualification hours.

This is not the same as external work experience. A student on such a programme may still take part in external work experience i.e. with an external employer, external to the learning environment and at an external site. Where this is required as part of the qualification it should be recorded as qualification hours. Where it is not required as part of the qualification it should be recorded as non-qualification hours.

At inspection Ofsted would look to see what the progression intention is for the student on their programme. If it is progression to Higher Education there would be no automatic expectation to see external work experience included in the programme. If it is to an Apprenticeship or work Ofsted will normally expect the student's programme to include work experience with an external employer.

Where work experience is an enrichment activity for the student

Where external or simulated work experience is an enrichment activity for the student, it is fundable through inclusion of the hours in planned non-qualification hours. Whether such work experience should be included in a student's programme would depend upon the study programme and the student.

For academic programmes external work experience can add value to the student's programme by preparing the student ultimately for work. Simulated work experience or experience on the site of the educational institution can be valuable to students. It can also be a stepping stone to external work experience for those students not immediately ready for external work experience.

At inspection Ofsted would look for evidence that the experience has been purposeful and at what value the young person has gained from the experience.

Specific circumstances

It is impossible to cover all possible circumstances in a general note. However a number of specific queries have been raised where clarification can be offered.

Part-time work by students: Only hours that the teacher has spent agreeing the objectives and the learning outcomes with the employer would count as fundable hours. The part time work must clearly contribute to the aims of the student's study programme. The actual hours of the student's employment should not be included.

Traineeships: The purpose of Traineeships is to prepare young people for employment so that they are able to progress successfully to Apprenticeships and other sustainable jobs. Work experience in Traineeships should give the young person experience of a real workplace so they can develop the skills, knowledge, confidence, attitudes and behaviours they need to succeed at work. Simulated activity in an artificial environment may well form a helpful part of work preparation training but will not count as work placements for the purposes of Traineeships.

Supported Internships: A supported internship is only an option for a young person with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Learning Difficulties Assessment. Therefore if a young person is undertaking a work placement within the college it will be recorded as part of a supported internship study programme and the young person will have an EHC plan. Unless both of these conditions apply this would not meet the EFA criteria for funding.

Work experience within local authorities: A number of local authorities have a training arm, but direct provision of training is clearly not the local authority's core business. In these circumstances work experience within local authority departments which are separate to the training arm count as external work experience.

Learning aims in the ILR/school census

In all cases where work experience is with an external employer, external to the learning environment and at an external site institutions should also record this in one of the 6 learning aims indicators in the ILR/school census.

Enquiries and further information

Institutions can contact us via the territorial email addresses listed below with any questions in connection with the content of this note. LAs, schools, colleges and other (non-academy) providers should use the following email addresses to contact the EFA:

Northern territory (North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humberside)

YPNorthern.efa@education.gsi.gov.uk

Southern territory (South East, East of England and London)

YPSouthern.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk

Central & south west territory (South West, West Midlands and East Midlands)

YPCentralSW.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk

Academies should use the following email address to contact the EFA:

Academy.QUESTIONS@education.gsi.gov.uk

**Education Funding Agency
May 2014**