



**An Roinn Fiontar,
Trádála agus Fostaíochta**
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

DETE Transition Year Work Experience Policy

HR Strategy and Policies Team
23 August 2023

Transition Year Work Experience Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the process and procedure for any Transition Year (TY) student applying to undertake a work experience placement at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE).

Work experience is a key element of the TY curriculum in most schools. TY students typically have two weeks' work experience to organise, which may not necessarily be consecutive. Work experience can take place at a number of points throughout the school year, depending on the school's individual policy.

The intention of the work experience placement is to introduce the student to a quality, 'real world' work experience within a supervised framework, provide them with insights into different careers and workplaces, and thereby help to inform future choices after their schooling is finished.

The work experience placement requires a coordinated approach from the school and the hosting organisation, to ensure that the student meets their learning objectives and has a positive experience from their introduction to the working environment.

The expectation is that the student takes the lead in identifying their choice of workplace, and in making contact with relevant organisations to arrange a placement with the school's support.

BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

There are benefits for both the organisation and the TY student through this experience. For example, students on work experience in DETE will learn about:

- the Civil Service and specific careers in DETE
- the workplace in general
- work-related issues such as safety, the impact of technology, importance of customers, service and delivery, workplace relations and so on
- developing a sense of responsibility and an appropriate work attitude
- their own attributes, strengths and weaknesses

Benefits to the Department include:

- introducing DETE and the Civil Service to students and showcasing Civil Service careers to future jobseekers
- creating a positive link with the local community in which the Department operates
- contributing to the general education of young people
- taking a leadership role in the Civil Service in providing these opportunities

DETE TY Work Experience Programme

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. *Oversee a Structured and Clearly Organised Programme*

The HR team are the primary organisers for the DETE TY Work Experience Programme, and will liaise with students and their schools to arrange placements. A TY coordinator in the HR team will be the primary contact point for the programme.

The HR team will liaise with different teams in the Departments to support them to develop an itinerary for each placement, which will be sent to each student in advance. The student will also be provided with a suite of guidance documents in advance of their placement to help them to prepare.

During the placement, the HR TY coordinator will remain the primary contact point for students and staff participating in the programme.

2. *Create Meaningful, Positive Experiences*

The Department will aim to provide a meaningful, practical and positive learning experience for all TY students participating in the TY Work Experience Programme with our teams. This experience will be fully onsite in our offices; there is no option of remote working for TY students.

It is envisioned that a diverse range of Units in the Department will participate in the TY Work Experience Programme, so that students will get a broad understanding of different careers within the Civil Service and different functions of the Department.

Hosting teams will develop a short work plan when hosting a student(/students), in conjunction with HR. Tasks assigned to students should reflect the student's experience level and provide some meaningful experience of work in the team's field. Further guidance is available on p. 11.

Students will be provided with a short template diary/workbook for the week to assist with processing their own learnings and understanding more about working in the Civil Service.

At the end of their work experience at the Department, students will be provided with an evaluation of their placement and feedback provided to their school. The HR team will evaluate the programme by consulting with students (at exit interviews) and hosting teams to assess if it is delivering on our key principles.

3. *Ensure an Environment of Trust and Safety for All Students*

Student safety and wellbeing is paramount. The vast majority of students who will enter the Department on work experience will be under 18, and the Department takes this responsibility very seriously.

In arranging the placement, the HR team will gather necessary documentation (see p.13) and assess parental consent for key points such as emergency contacts, medical

information, and permissions for travel, internet use, photographs, and rest breaks. An indemnity will be provided to the Department from the school to ensure the student is properly insured during their placement.

HR will appoint a TY coordinator who has undertaken the TUSLA Children First e-learning module. A copy of the Department's Child Safeguarding Statement is available [online](#) and will be provided to any student on work experience in the Department. This includes contact details for our Child Safeguarding Liaison person.

Participating teams in the Department will be asked to assign a TY team supervisor to assist the student while they are with their team, and to lead on the development of a clear work plan which provides a meaningful learning experience for the student. The role of the team supervisor is to ensure that the student is treated correctly, provide a contact and advice point for the student and to liaise with HR to develop the student's itinerary and work plan.

The TY team supervisor and team manager must complete the on-line [TUSLA Children First e-learning module](#). Other staff in hosting teams are also recommended to do this training.

All teams should also refer to p. 11 below for the key points of guidance from our Child Safeguarding Statement.

PROGRAMME CONTENT

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has a broad range of responsibilities including developing economic policy, stimulating employment creation, assisting enterprise with research and development needs, business regulation, promoting fair competition, protecting consumers and safeguarding workers. We have a global reach and work closely with international partners including at EU, European Court of Justice and International Labour Organisation level on high-priority areas such as international trade and investment, business regulation, and employment and labour market standards.

With this broad remit we aim to provide a varied and meaningful experience to TY students that will give them a real understanding of what it is like to work in a progressive and outward-looking Civil Service Department.

During a week's work experience, a student will work with 2-4 different teams in the Department, covering a selection of the following areas:

- Policy development
- Enterprise programme development/Business supports
- Company/Corporate law
- Corporate services (for example, HR, Communications, Learning & Development)

Each team will host students for short periods of time (for example, 1 – 1.5 days) to ensure manageability. This will be discussed and agreed with teams in advance. Students may be placed in pairs depending on dates agreed and the capacity of hosting teams.

The nature of the work the student will undertake will be age and skill-level appropriate and will include a combination of shadowing, research and writing, administrative work, attendance at meetings/events, and so on. Itineraries and an overview of the types of work planned will be determined by the Department dependent on staff availability and will be communicated to the student in advance of the placement.

APPLYING FOR WORK EXPERIENCE IN DETE

At present there are two recognised routes through which TY students enter into an official work experience placement (the “DETE TY Work Experience Programme”) in this Department. To ensure proper management of the programme and balance the need to create a meaningful experience without over-burdening any individual teams, limited numbers are applied for each route:

1. The student applies directly to the Department.
(5 places available per academic year)
2. The student is a participant in the North East Inner City (NEIC) TY initiative in partnership with National College of Ireland (NCI), which arranges work experience placements for a cohort of TY students from Dublin 1 schools.
(4 places available per academic year)

The option to apply directly to the Department for a work experience placement is open to all TY students whose schools facilitate them to undertake work experience.

Applications are accepted by email between the 1st September and the 31st March of each academic year to staffing.section@enterprise.gov.ie. In their application, students should identify themselves, their school, and the dates they wish to undertake their work experience. They should also identify their school’s TY coordinator.

Students should ensure to apply to the Department at least 6 weeks before the date they wish to start their work experience placement. This is to allow for arranging the itinerary, any equipment, and so on.

The Department is an equal opportunities employer and will consider all applications from TY students. However, depending on the volume received and the limits specified above, places will be allocated at first on a ‘first come first served’ basis. The Department may also need to consider the students’ available dates for work experience, and whether participating teams are available to host a student on those dates, in deciding whether to confirm a placement offer to a student.

Relatives of Staff Members

Staff members may have young relatives seeking to undertake work experience in this Department; these students are welcome to apply through the open route to the DETE TY Work Experience Programme (see 1. above), For any student who secures a work experience placement through this route, HR will make arrangements with the school and the student, oversee their itinerary and act as their liaison point in the Department.

Outside of this programme, staff members are also welcome to contact HR about making their own arrangements to bring a relative into the Department for their TY work experience. This route is not subject to the limit on numbers outlined above. In these cases, HR will provide the staff member with the necessary documentation to complete, and the staff member will take responsibility for arranging the student's itinerary, a clear work plan, and supervising the student during their placement.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Dublin-based Placements

The Department and its Offices have five separate locations in Dublin. These include:

- 23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 (headquarters)
- Earlsfort Centre, Lower Hatch St, Dublin 2
- Dame Street, Dublin 2
- Landsdowne House, Landsdowne Road, Dublin 4 (Workplace Relations Commission and Labour Court)
- Bloom House, Gloucester Place Lower, Dublin 1 (Companies Registration Office)

For the duration of the placement, the student will be primarily based in a single office location, typically our headquarters on Kildare Street, as outlined to the student in advance.

For the purposes of creating a varied experience, we may plan for a student to attend other of our Dublin-based offices on different days of their placement. In these cases students will be notified of this in advance through their itinerary, and will be expected to make their own arrangements for travel to and from the agreed office locations at the start and end of each working day.

Regional Placements

The Department and its Offices have a number of locations across the country, outside of Dublin. These include:

- Carlow (Companies Registration Office and Workplace Relations Commission)
- Cork (Workplace Relations Commission)
- Ennis (Workplace Relations Commission)
- Kilkenny (Intellectual Property Office of Ireland)
- Sligo (Workplace Relations Commission)

Depending on team capacity, it may be possible to facilitate a placement in these locations, however this cannot be guaranteed. Any student interested in a placement in these locations should contact the HR team in the first instance.

Staff members in these locations who wish to bring relatives into the office for TY work experience should contact the HR team to ensure the correct documentation is completed before any placement starts.

PLACEMENT HOURS

Placements will be facilitated between 9.30/10.00 and 16.00/16.30, with a lunch hour between 12.30 and 14.30, depending on the availability of staff and to be outlined to the student in advance. Students are not supervised during the lunch hour. Students may leave the premises during this break, as outlined in the Parental Permission form. Students are also welcome to bring a packed lunch and/or use the onsite staff canteen during lunch hour.

PROCESS OUTLINE AND BASIC ITINERARY

Pre-Placement

- TY work experience applications are submitted to the HR unit in the Department.
- All applications will be acknowledged.
- Preliminary checks are carried out by HR to establish the number of students requesting work experience, the dates requested for the placements and if insurance is covered by the school.
- HR will liaise with line managers and participating teams to confirm suitable dates and the number of students to be facilitated.
- Students will be informed whether or not their placement can be facilitated.
- HR will support the participating teams to devise a clear work programme for the TY students. The combined 'itinerary' for the week will be shared with the student in advance, to facilitate their own planning.
- Initial documentation will be issued to the TY students by HR, which must be completed and returned prior to the start of their work placement.

Work Experience Itinerary (example)

Day 1: Morning - meet and greet with HR, brief induction and overview of the Department, tour of the Kildare St building.

Afternoon – placement with first hosting team/unit for the remainder of the day.

Day 2: placement with first hosting team/unit continues for day two.

Day 3: placement with second hosting team/unit for the day.

Day 4: placement with third hosting team/unit for the day.

Day 5: Morning – placement with third hosting team/unit continues until lunchtime.

Afternoon – HR conduct exit interviews/review of week with the students and complete an evaluation.

Placement End and Evaluation

- Student who has completed their placement is provided with a confirmation letter from HR
- Feedback is given to the school as required
- The HR TY coordinator reviews the placement, gathers feedback from hosting teams, and recommends any changes/improvements to the programme.

ICT EQUIPMENT AND WORKSTATIONS

ICT will provide Direct Access Devices and chargers to TY students taking part in the DETE TY Work Experience Programme (see p.5). The devices may be shared between pairs, depending on numbers of students in the Department at a given time.

ICT will not be able to facilitate access to Direct Access Devices for any additional placements, such as for relatives of staff members who may arrange to undertake work experience in DETE outside of the DETE TY Work Experience Programme.

The DETE HR TY coordinator will arrange to collect and return any Direct Access Devices for TY students to ICT directly. While the student is working with their host teams, it will be that team's responsibility to ensure the physical security of the Device. At the end of the placements, all Devices and chargers are to be returned to HR.

Additional workstations cannot be equipped for use by TY students. Any hosting team must ensure they are able to accommodate the student within their existing office footprint. This may or may not involve having a vacant desk/workstation available for the student, depending on the workplan proposed.

TY students will be given access to the following:

- G: drive
- Email address and mailbox
- Internet
- Teams chats/calling (Teams 'channels' are not accessible to TY students)
- Microsoft Office license

Details will be discussed with the hosting teams and ICT in advance of any placement.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

SCHOOL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide the contact details of their nominated TY coordinator.
- Provide a letter of insurance to cover the duration of the student's work experience placement.
- Provide the Department with school emergency contact details.
- Schools need to inform the Department of their expectations of the work placement and the nature of the evaluation required.
- Participating schools are to take responsibility for preparing the student for the work placement, for monitoring during the work placement, and for any assessment, evaluation and administration required by the school.
- The schools' TY coordinator will need to liaise with the Department about any particular provisions in their own TY programmes regarding travel arrangements for students, length of the working day, breaks and so on.

HOST ORGANISATION (DETE) ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

HR Unit role and responsibilities

- Appoint a 'TY coordinator' to act as the primary organiser and contact point for students during their placements.
- Ensure all documentation (see section p.13) is completed and returned to the Department in advance of the placement start date.
- Coordinate the TY Work Experience Programme in conjunction with the participating teams in the Department.
- Liaise with participating teams to assist them to develop a clear work programme for the student(/s).
- As co-ordinators of the programme, liaise with ICT on any equipment needed for the student; collect and return this equipment at the start/finish of the placement.
- Organise a 'meet and greet' with students on their first day to give an overview of the Department, tour of the building and so on.
- Liaise with the school's TY coordinator to help monitor the students' work placement.
- Conduct exit interviews with students at the end of the work placements to review their experience and what they have learned.
- Review the placements with hosting teams to inform future programmes.
- as per the Department's Child Safeguarding Statement, provide the contact details of the current Child Safeguarding Liaison person to the student.

Hosting teams' role and responsibilities

- Each team participating in the TY Work Experience Programme will appoint a TY team supervisor, who will be responsible for liaising with HR in preparation for/during the placement, and who will be responsible for the student(/s) while they are assigned to the unit.
- TY team supervisors and hosting team managers must complete the online [TUSLA Children First e-Learning training](#). Other staff on the hosting team are also recommended to do this training.
- Hosting teams should ensure that at least two members of the team will be available to be onsite with the student(/s) for the duration of their placement. Teams should ensure that no one staff member deals with the student unaccompanied.
- Hosting teams will develop a clear work plan for students and provide a meaningful, engaging learning experience. The TY team supervisor will be primary contact for HR on the development of the work plan. Please see p.11 for more guidance.
- Hosting teams are responsible for ensuring there is a suitable existing or workstation/workspace available for the student to carry out their work. This can vary depending on the work planned for the student(/s), and could involve use of workstations temporarily vacant due to blended working. It will not be possible to create or set up new workstations for TY students.
- Hosting teams are responsible for the physical security of any Direct Access Device the student(/s) may be using while working with their team and are responsible for ensuring the Device remains onsite at all times.

STUDENT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students must abide by the rules and regulations of the Department, its normal hours of business, code of conduct and rules of confidentiality and so on.
- Students must ensure that all relevant forms are completed in consultation with the school and the Department.
- It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for travel to and from the appointed office each day.
- Students are expected to be punctual, to participate in team work as required and to be aware of workplace etiquette.
- Students must follow any instructions that are issued and to be mindful of health and safety in the workplace.
- Students should attend any relevant training if advised.

Staff Guidance

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Our [Child Safeguarding Statement](#) contains full details of our procedures for ensuring the safety of children on work placement in our Department, and in a number of other scenarios. To note, the relevant procedures for TY students are as follows:

- All staff in contact with children in an official capacity during their work do not deal with children unaccompanied.
- Details of Child Safeguarding Statement will be explained to the student in advance and a copy of the Statement provided.
- For all assignments, the nature of the work being undertaken is discussed with the Child Safeguarding liaison person in advance.
- Student is provided with the name and contact details of staff member to contact in HR (the liaison person). The Child Safeguarding liaison person will be obliged to contact the TY student at the time of placement.
- The Child Safeguarding Statement will be brought to the attention of all staff in the Department.
- Managers to whom a TY student is being assigned will be required to undertake the TUSLA online child safeguarding training module.
- All other staff will be made aware of the online training module and encouraged to undertake it.
- Complementary policies in relation to Standards & Behaviour, Dignity at Work Policy, ICT policy and Work Placement Guidelines are also in place.

GUIDANCE FOR HOSTING TEAMS

Planning for the Placement

- Make sure that at least two of your team members will be onsite to be present with the student(s) during their time with your team.
- Make sure that there is a vacant workstation available for the student(s), if needed for the work you have planned.
- Plan to give the student(s) a brief and easy to understand overview of your team's work when they arrive.

Creating a Workplan

- Try to avoid tasks that solely involve clearing clerical backlogs. Some level of administrative work (for example, photocopying, compiling folders, filing and so on) is acceptable but this should be complemented by other activities.
- Look at the team's workload and identify a task/tasks that will encourage the development of important skills, such as:
 - Communication skills
 - Critical and creative thinking/problem solving
 - Working with others/working as a team

- Planning and organizing
- Consider opportunities for the student(s) to 'shadow' a staff member at a meeting or presentation, or during a work-related event
- Involve the student(s) in face-to-face activities such as your team meetings
- Consider opportunities for the student(s) to take on a challenge or use their initiative to research and propose ideas to a small-scale problem in your team
- Consider creating a mini 'project' for the student to work on, with printed materials to research a problem or issue and space to draft or write a proposal or solution.

Documentation and Contacts

DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

In order for TY students to secure a work experience placement at the Department, there are a number of documents required to be provided/completed, prior to commencement. This is the responsibility of the HR team liaising with the student and the school. If these documents are not returned/completed, the placement cannot commence. These documents include but are not limited to the following:

To be issued from HR team to the student:

- Contact form (school)
- Work placement offer letter
- Parental permission form (including contacts and emergency contacts, medical consent, travel, internet and photo consent)
- Data Protection policy (contained in parental permission form)
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Official Secrets Act
- Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour
- Dignity and Work Policy
- ICT Usage Policy
- Social and Digital Media Guidelines
- Student Evaluation form

To be returned completed to the HR team, before the start of the placement:

- School insurance letter (confirmation from student's school that they are covered by the school's insurance policy for the duration of the work experience placement)
- Contact form (school)
- Parental Permission Form
- Official Secrets Act

To be completed by the HR team, before the start of the placement:

- Student details included in staff changes notification spreadsheet as 'Transition Year student'
- ICT New User Form submitted to the ICT helpdesk¹

¹ Category: "non-staff"; Grade equivalent: "non-staff (gets group emails)"; Grade: "Transition Year Student"; Unit: "Transition year Students"

CONTACTS

- The DETE HR TY coordinator can be contacted at HRStrategy@enterprise.gov.ie
 - Applications for TY work experience should be directed to staffing.section@enterprise.gov.ie
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