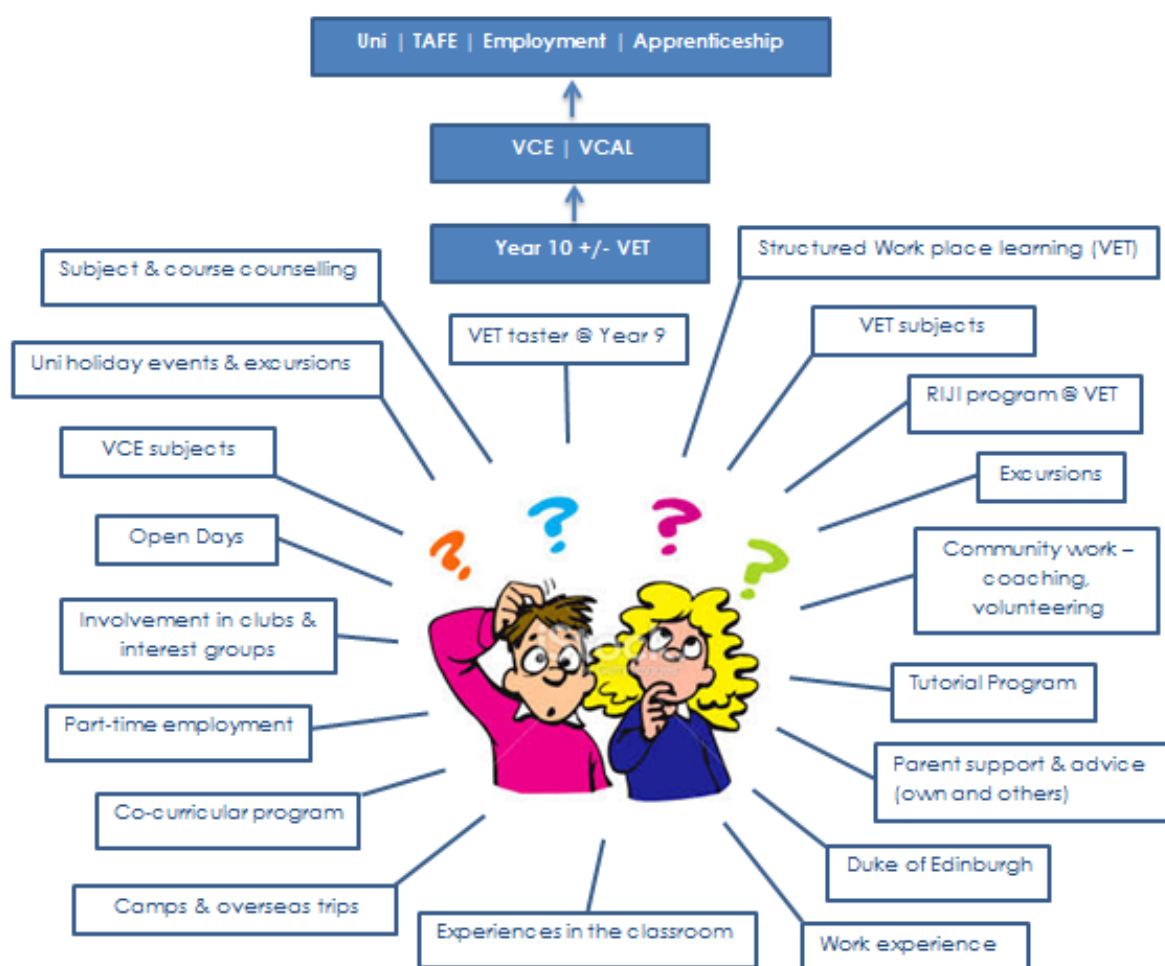


# WHERE DOES WORK EXPERIENCE FIT IN AND WHY DO WE DO IT?

Work Experience is one of many experiences that NHS offers students in order to ensure that they make good decisions about their futures. Research shows that work experience is one of the most powerful tools for helping young people make informed and appropriate decisions about their future working lives. However, research also shows that work experience can only have this powerful effect if the program is administered effectively. This means students need to undertake meaningful work during the placement, and appropriate reflection needs to take place before, during and after the placement.

Remember, “work” can be voluntary as well – there are many opportunities to experience the world of work in a non-paid environment.

## What experiences help students with their career planning decisions?



# WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT WORK ...

## Impact (of work) on Employability and Employment Outcomes

Experience in the work force is just one of many factors affecting young people's decisions about post-school options and subsequent career decisions. The general consensus amongst career development researchers suggests that part-time work by school students develops employability and technical skills to a considerable extent:

"Although career exploration can occur within many places and in multiple ways, the work environment is an especially opportune context where adolescents can explore their identities and social roles, while developing vocationally relevant skills (e.g., social skills and problem-solving abilities) and interests" (Mortimer & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007, p.258).

Studies show that students employed in paid part-time work appear to have been able to gain a clearer understanding of the world of work than those who were not engaged in part-time work. Participation in the workplace whilst at school can enhance the development of employability skills, confirm skills and interests and provide specific experiences in preferred jobs, which can confirm or deter entrance to that career. In addition, there is sometimes potential for gaining permanent employment at the same workplace, or through contacts made at work" (Smith & Green, 2005, p.8).

Studies found that paid work experience for adolescents is associated primarily with attitudinal rather than knowledge based benefits for both boys and girls... and "increased thoughtfulness in career planning and exploration" (Patton & Smith, 2009, p.6). This can be attributed to the fact that their work tends to be in unskilled work and in fairly narrow fields such as fast food, babysitting, pamphlet delivery. This means they do not necessarily gain any complex knowledge about the world of work that might aid them in their career thinking and decision-making.

Because young people often perceive their part-time job as separate from their perceived post-school working lives, not all students will use their part-time jobs to help them understand the world of work and inform career decisions. That is where teachers and parents can help them to see the connections between the two. In one example of how work experience can lead to important insight, observations that a part-time job "allowed me to realise I like dealing with people" led to a student changing her career decision from visual arts to teaching (Anna in Smith & Green, 2005, p.51). Part-time work also helped to convince some students that education is important in allowing greater career choices – "Having my part-time job made me realise how much I would hate to be stuck in that lifestyle" (Rose in Smith & Green, 2005, p.51)

Strong correlations were found between career decision-making self-efficacy, work experience and school achievement. Students' paid part-time work has also been found to have a positive correlation with work attitudes, career aspirations, career planning and exploration. Although it seems that part-time and casual paid work is associated with better career planning than vocational learning or short term work experience placements, work experience placements can still provide many of the same benefits, especially if a student's school and family work together to ensure that they reflect appropriately on the experience.

Patton, Wendy A. and Smith, Erica (2009) *Part-time work of school students : Impact on employability, employment outcomes and career development*. Australian Journal of Career Development.

Smith, E., & Green, A. (2005). *How workplace experiences while at school affect career pathways*. Adelaide: National Centre for Vocational and Educational Research.

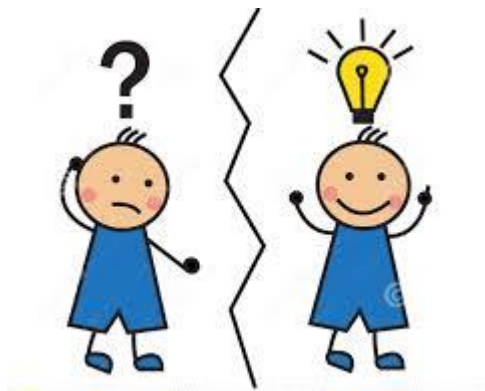
Mortimer, J. T., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2007). Adolescent paid work and career development. In V. Skorikov & W. Patton (Eds.), *Career Development in Childhood and Adolescence* (pp. 255-276). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.



# THE PROCESS:

## Students need to:

- Think about what kind of placement would suit you.
- Think about what information you need in order to answer your own questions about the future.
- Then think about where you could work to find out that information (or develop specific skills).
- Find places where you would like to work.
- See the next few pages for some tips on how to do this
- Ask them if they take work experience students, and if yes, negotiate the dates & ask them to fill out your form.



## Parents need to:

- Help your child identify what type of work placement will be suitable for him/her.
- Assist with the process of securing a placement.
- Students should do most of the work themselves, but will need help with the language, envisaging logistics (getting there and back), and networking with relevant employers.
- Ask your friends, other family members and colleagues whether they can introduce your child to a potential employer who is suitable.
- Encourage your child to try working outside their comfort zone (eg: not necessarily with a close relative) so as to experience all the challenges of the working world.

## Who can help with this process?

- Tutors will provide information and reminders during Daily Connect sessions.
- Ms Witt, the Careers Practitioner, can also help with queries.
- The Sub School and Program Leaders have the final word on any placements outside the designated time frame.

# TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING A GOOD PLACEMENT

**Brainstorm with a friend / teacher / family member & ask yourself:**

## What am I good at?



- Make a list of your skills and the subjects you are good at
- Think about whether you want to use these in your working life or just as hobbies
- Think about jobs where these skills are used

## What do I like doing?



- Think about jobs that require those activities or skills
- Then look for workplaces that offer those jobs
- Use the online Job Guide to research what activities or skills are used in various jobs

## Do I already know what I want to do?

If you already know what you want to study or do as a job later ...



- Do you know what subjects you need to study?
- Do you know what prior experience you will need?
- If it's a course you like, do you know what jobs that course might lead to?
- Use the internet (White Pages online, Google, seek.com, myfuture)

## Are there specific skills I want or need to acquire?



- You may already know what you want to study, in which case you will have some idea of what knowledge and skills you need to develop
- Talk to your networks about which businesses might be able to help you develop these skills (eg: if you want to be a teacher, work in a primary school!)

## Who can help me brainstorm & find places to work?



- Talk to family, friends & relatives (these people are your "networks")
- Ask them what they do in their jobs
- If it sounds interesting, ask if they take on work experience students
- Try NOT to simply work for a close relative because it's easy to organise – this is a time when you should be challenging yourself to try out your skills in an authentic setting, which means having to deal with strangers and unfamiliar situations



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St Georges Road Northcote Victoria 3070  
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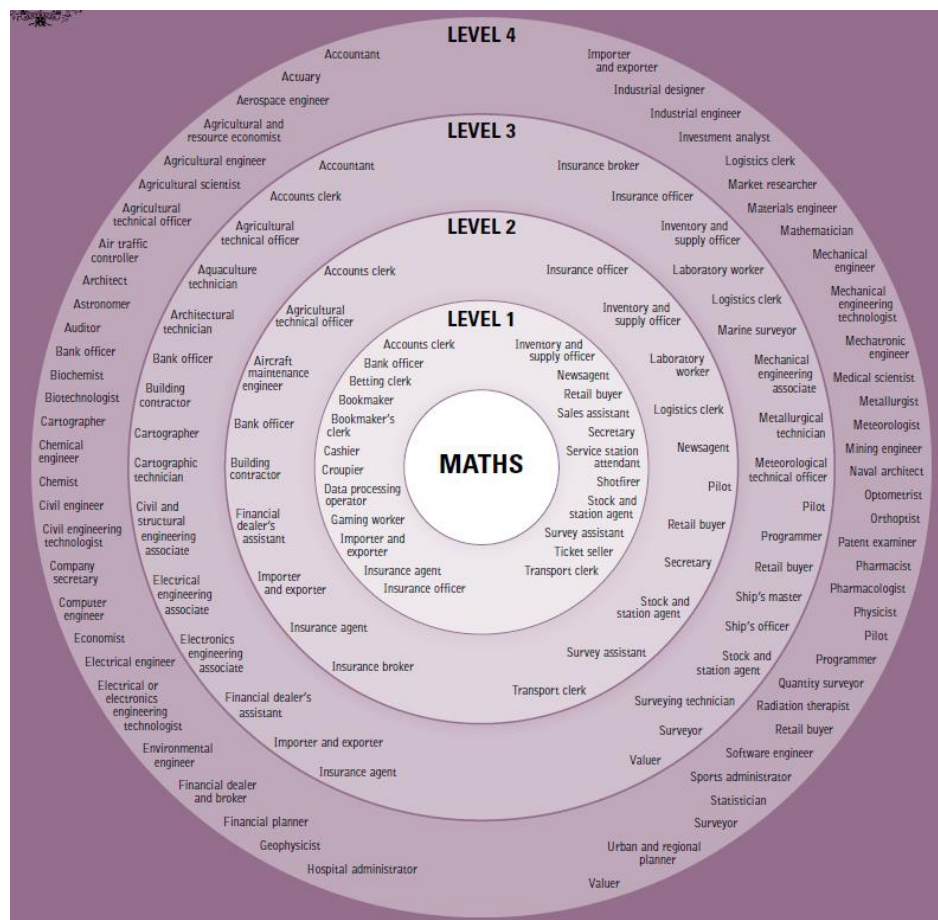


# Identifying jobs that use your skills and interests ...

There is one of these posters available for each major subject area. If you want to try and generate possible placements using a subject interest area, look at all the jobs on this poster, and circle the ones you think might interest you. Then think about people in your family or circle of friends who work in that area. Ask them to help you find a placement. Alternatively, walk through your local business or shopping area and look for businesses like the ones you have circled.

For copies of this poster or any of the others in the series, see Ms Witt or download them yourself at:

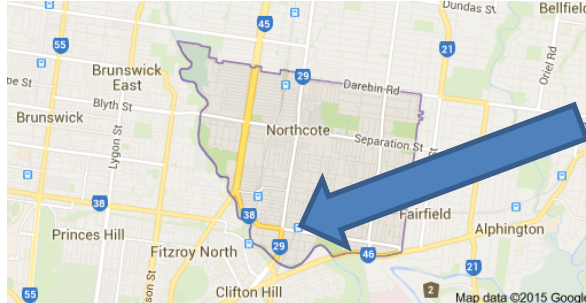
<http://www.myfuture.edu.au/tools-and-resources/learning-tools-for-secondary-students/bullseye-posters-explore-occupations-by-school-subject>



## Where do I live (or where would I like to try working)?



- Pick your ideal work location and walk down the street
- Look for businesses that do the kind of work you think you would like
- Walk in and ask if they take work experience students! (Or ring them up)



## Is it time to extend my comfort zone?



- Try something different – just because you can.
- Work Experience can be a unique opportunity to gain access to a workplace that might not take you under other circumstances (ie you can work there without having to be qualified and apply for the job)! You may even discover a new passion or develop skills that will lead you in unexpected directions.



## What do I do once I've located somewhere I want to work?



- ✓ Walk in the door (or ring up).
- ✓ Politely ask if they take Work Experience students.
- ✓ If they say "yes", ask if they would be willing to take you during our Work Experience week.
- ✓ Hand them the NHS work placement form, and ask them to fill it in.
- ✓ Bring the form back to Ms Witt at school.



# EXAMPLES OF GOOD PLACEMENTS

Below is a list of larger employers, who have proven to be accommodating and supportive. By the same token, they are popular, and you often need to apply the year before.

**Students should take a look at their websites and email, telephone, or visit them if they want more info.**

Melbourne Sports Hub (MSAC)

3RRR & other community radio stations

RSPCA Vic

Melbourne Aquarium

Australian Synchrotron

Channel 7 Docklands

Melbourne Water

Parks Victoria

Melbourne Sports Medicine Clinic

Local sporting facilities and gyms.

Lost Dogs' Home

Lort Smith Animal Hospital

Salvation Army

St Vinnies or any other op shops

Real estate agents

Arts Victoria

Australian Broadcasting Commission

Local libraries

Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

VicRoads

Australian Centre for the Moving Image

Australian Barista Academy

Accounting firms, law firms, many in the CBD who have been very good to us!

Northcote Plaza Vet Clinic/Fitzroy Vet Clinic/Reservoir Vet Clinic/Best Friends Pet Care

Royal Children's Hospital/Royal Melbourne Hospital/Eye & Ear Hospital

The local primary schools and kindergartens are all outstanding employers from a Work Experience point of view. Try the primary school you attended as your first option.

Austin Health / Northern Health (all hospitals, but you have to observe strict guidelines – see each hospital's website.

Universities (specific departments – you will usually need a contact here, so use your networks)

Local councils – they have HEAPS of opportunities in different areas, but often people don't think to look there!

Kindergartens and childcare centres LOVE having work experience students and look after them well.

Coles Supermarkets have been very good to us in the past, and provide a good introduction to the world of work (can also lead into paid employment). However, please don't go there before trying for something more specifically related to your future dreams



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