

WORK EXPERIENCE (WEX) FAQ'S

What is WEX?

It is a college requirement that every student should have first-hand experience of the workplace through work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their employment networks. **Experiences of a workplace should be in addition to any part-time jobs students may have.**

Examples of work experience include:

- Work shadowing in which a student accompanies an employee through their working week.
- Virtual WEX run by a VWEX company and advertising as work experience with an employer online.
- Extended college/subject visits to workplaces over a fixed period of time.
- Episodic work experience over a longer period of time, e.g., every Wednesday afternoon in a local Primary School.

WEX is NOT your part time paid job

Is WEX compulsory?

Yes.

Time has been allocated for this to happen during progression week beginning 30th June. Your WEX can also be completed during the summer holidays. It must have been completed before the start of year 2 and by the first day of term.

Do I need to complete WEX if it's part of my course?

You should ideally have as many experiences of different work environments as possible. However, if your courses already include mandatory WEX then this can be logged on Unifrog as your WEX placement.

Why do students need to do WEX?

- WEX will help you to discover the career that's right for you and realise what you do and don't like about specific job roles.
- WEX will enable you to develop existing skills and gain new ones (transferable and specific) that can help you be effective in future careers.
- Being able to draw on experiences you've had will help you to stand out from the competition when applying for jobs. You can reference work experience on your CV, personal statement, and LinkedIn profile to look attract potential employers and universities.

- WEX is not just relevant to students who are progressing straight into employment or an apprenticeship. Universities will expect personal statements to include enrichment activities that you have taken part in, including work experience as part of your personal development.

Does WEX have to take place in progression week?

Ideally yes, but It can also be completed during the summer holidays. It must however have been completed before the start of year 2.

We know that some employers can't be flexible with their times so we will look at any placements that happen outside the progression week or holidays on a case by case basis.

Can I use my Year 10/ Year 11 work experience?

Unfortunately not, it needs to be work experience undertaken whilst at college.

Can the college find me some 'in person' WEX?

It is a valuable aspect of the work experience process for students to actively seek out opportunities, as you would do when looking and applying for jobs. The Careers Google site and the Tutorial Google classroom has top tips to consider when looking for WEX, as well as guidance & templates for approaching workplaces, making applications and writing cover letters/emails. **However, if you 'get stuck' of course we are here to help!**

I don't know what I want to do or where to start looking – can someone help me?

Our WEX Coordinator, Teresa Hoyles, is available to support any student with careers and WEX related questions. Her email address is teh@varndean.ac.uk. Or you can drop-into the Careers room in the tutorial block. Also, look out for workshops being run by careers on CV's, introductory letters etc.

I can't find the specific job that I want as WEX – what should I do?

Securing WEX in the exact role you want can be extremely difficult. Many organisations will not take students on WEX in roles that involve sensitive data handling, security concerns, confidentiality or pose a risk to students' safety and wellbeing. Some types of jobs are just so rare and/or extremely popular (e.g., forensic psychologist) that WEX is virtually non-existent, however hard you try.

If you are finding that your ideal job role isn't as readily available as you'd like, it's best to think 'outside of the box' and consider other roles which could eventually lead to your desired job. Prioritise the transferable skills you need to develop for ultimate

career aim and then think about alternative jobs which would also promote those skills. **Come see us in careers or ask one of your teachers for some advice and ideas. There is lots of support to help you get your placement**

How do I record my WEX Week plans?

Use the WEX placement tool if it is in-person.

After the WEX placement then log what you completed on Unifrog during tutorial after the progression week.