



A Guide to Work Placements

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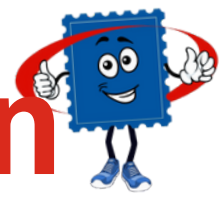
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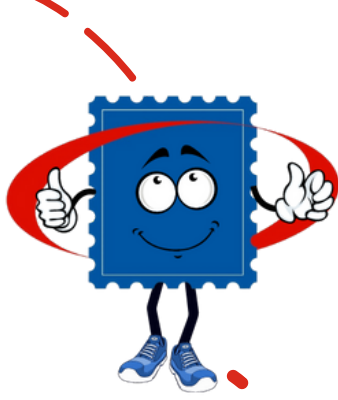
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Introduction



This booklet is designed to answer common questions that you may have. If there are still unanswered queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Blue Stamp team.





Pre-Placement Advice

- Where possible it is recommended to visit your work place before your first day.
- Have a map or an idea of where you're going. Keep track on timings to get an idea of commuting time (Sunday transport is often different to weekdays.)

Sometimes, placements aren't easy to spot,

- high street shops and offices may not have a street number, in this case, look for their name.

If your work place is not on the ground floor, a

- sign for it may be inside or in a reception building.

- If you go in the wrong direction or are completely lost - don't panic! Speak to locals for directions and try get back on track. A great chance to practise your speaking.

- If all else fails, contact your work placement, your group leader (if you have one) or the Blue Stamp office. We are here to help things go smoothly.



'My work place looks grotty. It's in a really dodgy area of town!'

- Don't be too quick to judge, on Sundays many shops are closed and it will be quiet especially if the weather is dreary.



- Many areas of Europe have extensive graffiti on the walls and lots of shops and cafés have shutters, which look very different when they are open..

'My workplace is a really long way away'

- We aim for a commute of 45 minutes or less.
- Any placements that are further afield are ones we believe are well worth the travel times.
- Information on public transport will be provided in your placement details.



First Day Queries

'They speak too fast, I can't understand them!'

- You may find the people you work with are hard to understand at first. Many students experience this. However, after a few days, you will get used to it and your speaking and listening will rapidly improve. Always ask for things to be repeated or said more slowly, people will understand!



'Nobody speaks to me'

- Establishing new relationships can be tricky especially in a foreign language and country. We provide a booklet of example questions to help start conversations. If you initiate conversations, your colleagues will soon realise your level of language and speak to you more freely. If you are lacking confidence in speaking, remember to keep an open, approachable and friendly body language.



'I don't like my work placement'

- Give things a chance, working abroad means different customs, so working conditions, hours and practices may be different to what you know or expect. It takes time to adapt and get to know people.



'It's very quiet'

- Businesses have busy and quiet times so sometimes there is less to do, but, this gives you a chance to get to know the staff and ease into the job role. Make allowances, your supervisor might be busy and take a bit of time to get around to you. Be proactive and offer to do tasks that you see need doing. Your supervisor will be thankful especially if they are occupied with other bits. Some placement, which are quiet at times can often be more relaxed and can offer a more personal experience. In general, work placements allow the chance to undertake more challenging tasks when you are more familiar with the business.

'They weren't expecting me'

- Your placement has been confirmed with the person named in your placement details. Please ask to speak to them, they will be expecting you. Some colleagues might not be aware that you are joining them.

Problems

If there is a genuine problem that needs to be addressed or solved, like you are ill or genuinely unhappy, we are here to help.

For example, a student who chose to work with animals but found she was allergic to certain fur! Within minutes of arriving at the pet-shop where she had been placed, she was sneezing and her eyes were red and itchy. For these very rare and unusual eventualities we have arrangements with a few employers who will take an extra student at short notice. Remember these situations are rare and obviously unavoidable. We cannot change a student's work place without a very good and genuine reason.

Last Words

- By practising your language in a work place you can expect your speaking and listening abilities to improve. As well as this, work placements abroad boost skills such as independence, confidence and cooperation.
- Remember, the more you put in, the more you will get out!

