

# Student Guide to finding Work Experience



## 7 Step Guide to finding work experience

*A guide prepared by the Technology Industry Association, to assist schools, students and parents in sourcing meaningful unpaid work experience within the technology industry in South Australia.*

Work experience while you are completing your schooling can be a valuable career planning exercise and a great way to test-drive careers you are considering studying for or working in.

### Step 1: Decide

**When considering what type of workplace you'd like to do your experience in, ask yourself these questions:**



- ? What subjects do you like doing at school?
- ? What are you good at?
- ? What would you like to be?
- ? If you aren't sure, talk to your school careers adviser to help come up with ideas.

**You need to do some hard thinking to decide where to conduct your work experience. South Australia has plenty of great technology-based careers to sample in many different sectors such as:**

**ELECTRONICS   ICT   DIGITAL MEDIA**

**CLEANTECH   TELECOMMUNICATIONS   DEFENCE**



**To find out more about these industries, visit the careers pages of the Technology Industry Association's website at [www.tia.asn.au/careers](http://www.tia.asn.au/careers)**



## Step 2: Shortlist

Here are some companies below in the industry you may be interested in. To help you seek out the companies you may want to conduct your work experience at; search the Technology Industry Association's website for companies you may want to conduct your work experience within. Visit <http://www.tia.asn.au/membership/tia-members>.



**TASK 1: Shortlist of 10 companies you may want to do your work experience in**



**TASK 2: Research these companies**

Once you have made your shortlist of 10 companies

### Company research checklist:

- Read their website
- Find out what products and services they offer
- Find out who the main managers are
- Find their address

Here are some of the big technology companies



<b>BAE Systems</b>	Large global defence company
<b>Internode</b>	Internet services provider
<b>Quest</b>	Electronic cash registers
<b>Minelab</b>	Metal and mine detectors
<b>Sydac</b>	Software development
<b>Robway</b>	Crane and safety systems
<b>Codan</b>	Two-way radio & satellite communication

South Australia's technology industry is one of the largest industries globally and indeed one of the largest for Adelaide.

Our innovative designs have captured the world market.



## Step 3: Contact

### Before you contact

Before you make contact with the companies on your list, prepare what you will say and how you will say it. Remember that your school Careers Advisers are available to assist you in this process.



### Some tips for phone conversations:

- Speak clearly and confidently,
- Know what you want to say,
- Be patient and friendly – do not demand,
- Be prepared to call back and speak to the appropriate person if he/she wasn't available the first time.

### Phone

Phoning a company is one of the best ways to initially approach to enquire about work experience. Emails can be easy to ignore, but phone calls are more direct.

A receptionist may answer the phone call so you will need to introduce yourself to them and ask for the person responsible for high school work experience programs.

### Phrase you may like to use:

*"Good morning/afternoon, my name is (your name) and I am in year (year level) at (name of school) I would like to speak to someone within (name the company) about undertaking work experience?"*

The rest of the conversation will be guided by the person to whom you are speaking. It will depend on the other person, they may wish to know: more about you, why you want to work for them, what you know about the job etc.

**If you get a no:** If you get a no, finish the conversation by thanking them for their time and move on to the next company on your list.

**If you get a yes:** If they say yes, they may ask you for a resume and/or covering letter. If they ask for this and you haven't prepared one yet, please refer to **Section 4** of this Guide to assist you.



## Step 4: Resume & CV

**If you don't have a resume / covering letter, now is a good time to prepare one. A company will be impressed that you have organised yourself and even though you are applying for unpaid work experience, they may still ask you for your basic resume.**

### Covering Letter

The covering letter accompanies your resume. This document introduces you and explains why you are applying for work experience with that company.

Remember to use wording that explains that you are seeking unpaid work experience as part of your school studies.

#### Some tips for preparing a covering letter:

- ✓ Don't email a generic address and start it 'Dear Sir/ Madam' because it may be deleted. Find out the name and email address of the manager (you may want to do this in **Step 3**).
- ✓ Keep it to one page
- ✓ Check for spelling or grammatical errors
- ✓ Always have this proofread by someone else



### Resumé

A resumé is a document that presents your background and skill sets.

For school students it is not expected that you state anything other than your basic information: what school you are at, what subjects you study and any casual work experience.

There are plenty of career resources on the web to assist you. Seek out your school career advisors for guidance as well.


#### Some tips for preparing a resume:

- ✓ Proofread it twice
- ✓ Use bullet points
- ✓ List your achievements instead of responsibilities (i.e. awards at school)
- ✓ Use Mr. and Ms. if appropriate



## Step 5: Interview

If a company has expressed interest in accepting you for work experience, you may be invited to talk with them face to face. This is an opportunity for you to gain insight into what the company expects of you and for you to talk to them about what you would like to gain from the experience. You may also need to inform the company that you will send in your school work experience papers. Also inform your school and parent/guardian of these details.

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- ★ Treat this like a real job interview,
  - ★ Be on time,
  - ★ Present a clean and tidy image,
  - ★ Answer any questions they may have,
  - ★ Have a list of questions you would like to ask.



## Step 6: On the Job

Congratulations, you have made it to your first day in work experience. The company is doing you and your school a favour by offering to help you in your future career planning. Pay them the respect and gratitude they deserve and treat the placement like you were a paid employee of that company.

### Remember to ...

- Turn up on time,
- Dress appropriately for the workplace (if in doubt, ask your contact at the company before you begin),
- Not leave the premise without someone knowing you have left,
- Comply with all policy and procedures such as, occupational safety and health standards,
- Behave appropriately – do not gossip, swear or put anyone down



### Confidentiality

Treat all information that you learn from your work experience, such as finances, products and services as private and confidential. Some host employers will ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to commencing your placement.

### Safety

If you feel unsafe at any time during the placement, or it is not what you thought it was going to be, speak with your teacher / parent / guardian immediately.

### Know Your Rights

The Fair Work Act is a the federal legislation that ensures that individuals participating in unpaid work have a set of terms and conditions, rights and abilities to enforce any misuse of service. For more information visit [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au).

## Step 7: Afterwards

**If you enjoyed your work experience placement, be sure to stay in touch with the host company. It could lead to further work experience and a good reference.**

### Thank the company!

It is only good manners to write a formal thank you to the host company and the key personnel who have helped you. It leaves a positive impression and re-states your appreciation for the company to have assisted you.

**You can send this as a hard copy in the mail (a letter or card) or simply as an email.**



## Your Checklist

	YES	NO
I need to research jobs I would like to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need to know which companies I can apply to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need to know what am I going to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need to write a resume	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need to write a cover letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need to contact my school for assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I need a copy of the <i>Workplace Learning Guidelines</i> (see DECS website or your school)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



### Background

The Technology Industry Association (TIA) is the peak body representing the \$10 billion South Australian technology industry. The TIA is a non-profit, member based organisation that delivers tailored networking events, professional development courses, skills and workforce, business advice and lobbying opportunities.

**To find out more about the industry, visit the careers pages of the Technology Industry Association's website at [www.tia.asn.au](http://www.tia.asn.au)**