SPEAKERS
for schools
EXPERIENCE

VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE (VWEX)

EDUCATOR HANDBOOK

VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE (VWEX) EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

In addition to our existing programmes, we are now offering state funded schools the opportunity to access opportunities with leading employers through our VWEX programme.

This document outlines the impact VWEX can have on your students and how the programme works.

WHY VWEX?

Virtual placements are remote and have the following benefits:

✓ **ACCESS TO MANY OF THE UK'S LEADING ASPIRATIONAL EMPLOYERS**
By applying for remote placements, young people in parts of the country where employers don't have a physical presence have an opportunity to gain important skills and insights into the reality of work, especially in social mobility cold spots and opportunity areas around the UK. This helps schools to meet GATSBY Benchmark 6, by expanding students' networks.

✓ **REAL EXPERIENCE OF HOW MANY ORGANISATIONS ARE INCREASINGLY OPERATING**
Students get a chance to experience remote working, which is becoming more and more prevalent due to advances in technology, helping young people to be better prepared for their future careers. This helps schools to meet GATSBY Benchmark 5 as students gain good quality information about labour market opportunities.

✓ **ACCESSIBLE AND MANAGEABLE**
By completing structured, online activities set by employers, students gain self-belief and can engage with the employers for online meetings and work reviews, as well as for specific workshops, relieving the need for constant student supervision and helping to develop students' independence. This helps schools towards meeting GATSBY Benchmark 5 as young people are engaging in meaningful encounters and learning about skills valued in the workplace.

WHICH TYPE OF VWEX SHOULD MY STUDENTS DO?

Speakers for Schools offers two models of VWEX, each with their own benefits. Settings can choose to follow one model or to access both.

All schools and colleges are different and your Senior Leadership Teams and teachers can decide which will work best for your school, as well as what will have the greatest impact on your young people.

REMOTE WORKING

Employers advertise a VWEX placement for a particular week and encourage students to apply.

After students have submitted their applications, the teacher then writes a short covering note and confirms that parental consent has been given (for students under 16).

After applications close (approximately one month before the placement), employers select the student(s) they wish to offer the virtual work experience (VWEX) to.

Speakers for Schools will host the work experience through Google Classroom, and Google Meets, with the employer and students.

One week before the placement, Speakers for Schools will generate a temporary G-Suite account for every confirmed student. This will allow the students to take part in the placement and ensure employers do not have access to students' personal contact details.

On the first day, students will be talked through the tasks that the employer has set and given a timetable for the week (please see our example weekly timetable for more information), which will include a mixture of interactive sessions, talks, collaborative tasks and independent project work.

EXAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULE:
ONE-WEEK REMOTE VWEX PLACEMENT

This example schedule is indicative of how a one-week placement might work. Our employers choose which sessions to include in their Google Classroom and may offer sessions or activities not listed below, as well as omitting some of the activities below.

Interactive sessions take place over Google Meets via a link in the Classroom and work would be sent to students and submitted back to employers on the classroom by students.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10am	Introductory Session	An introduction to team one	An introduction to team two	Join an external client call or online meeting	LinkedIn workshop
11am	Meet the boss	Meet the apprentices / graduates	An independent short activity	Interview Skills	Final independent project preparation
12pm	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK
1pm	Independent project introduction and starting workshop	Join an internal call or online meeting	An introduction to team three	CV workshop	Independent project presentations or reviews
2pm	Independent project work	Independent project work	Independent project work	Independent project work	**Final Review Session**
3pm	Close	Close	Close	Close	Close

If you'd like to know more about how we advise employers to structure their placements or have any questions, please get in touch with us at **expereince@speakersforschools.org**

WHAT DO STUDENTS NEED TO TAKE PART?

If your students are selected for remote VWEX placements, they will need access to:

- A laptop or desktop computer or tablet with:
  - A working camera and microphone
  - Microsoft Office installed (Word, Excel and PowerPoint)
  - The ability to access the internet

- An internet connection

- A quiet space in which to join online meetings and calls, where they can hear what presenters or other participants are saying and others will be able to hear their replies

- A comfortable chair and table to work from

Speakers for Schools works to level the playing field for all students and our partner employers prioritise high need students. We know that, for some students, having access to the above at home may be a barrier.

If students do not have access to these resources at home, please consider whether there are computers that they can use at school or college. For example, students could be based within a computer suite and use head-phones to minimise the disruption to other students working there.

VWEX LIGHT

VWex Light is designed to be more flexible around staff and students alike and is a lighter touch option for employers.

Employers create a work experience brief that can be used by teachers to run a project-based placement with a group of students over several allocated days. These days could run concurrently, for example, three-five days in one week, or be spread across a longer time period, for example, every Thursday for six weeks.
Teachers register their interest in the opportunity and gain access to the materials through Google Classroom.

The Classroom will include documents outlining a timetable of activities to complete a project over a certain time period, a project proposal outlining what students need to do and which skills and experience they will develop and gain through the project.

Students will then complete the project over the allotted time, supported one of their teachers, who will give them feedback on what they produce using help guides and examples of project work provided by the employer.

At the start of the placement, the employer will live stream a welcome message to all participating teachers and students, welcoming them and introducing the problem they'll be solving. Employers will also pre-record short video messages for certain points throughout the placement, for example, the start of each day, or at the start of each new task. Teachers can watch these with their students through Google Classroom.

At the end of the placement, employers will live stream an end message to the young people who have taken part, thanking them for their participation. Depending on cohort size, it may be possible for teachers to send examples of what the young people produce to employers for feedback within the final live stream.

Speakers for Schools will then ask teachers for feedback on the project via our simple feedback forms and will pass this feedback on to employers. Students will also be sent a pdf certificate confirming they have completed the project.

Top Tip: Sessions can be run by the teacher remotely if necessary, as students can access the Google Class room from anywhere, and can complete work independently before receiving feedback.

WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL EMPLOYERS PROVIDE?

The activities that employers will set throughout a set VWEX Light programme will vary depending on the industry and departments taking part.

Employers will be providing examples of industry relevant tasks that their staff complete on a daily basis, a workplace 'problem' to solve, or other activities designed to help students understand the industry as a whole. For example, a financial services company could set up an activity that helps students understand how the stock market works and how various responses could impact the client's outcomes. Other activities could include a video introduction to the team and their roles, a virtual tour of their workplace, a research project or examples of client briefs.

SAFEGUARDING YOUR STUDENTS

What you should do to keep your students safe:

As with face to face work experience placements, Speakers for Schools is a facilitator, connecting schools, young people and employers. In the same way as you retain responsibility for the safety and well-being of your students during face to face work experience, the school is responsible for safeguarding during VWEX.
Please follow the usual safeguarding policies and procedures you have in place for work experience.
What we do to keep young people safe:

- We only facilitate placements for five or more students. These students may be from different schools, rather than just your own. This minimum placement cohort means students will never been in one to one calls or online meetings with employers.
- Before the placement, we ask all participating employers involved in direct delivery of the placements to students to read and sign a code of conduct, which outlines how they should interact with students and responsible handling of data.
- We also ask all students to sign a code of conduct relating to professional behaviour and keeping them selves safe during placements. We make it clear to students that they should report anything unusual or uncomfortable to their teachers and Speakers for Schools as soon as they can.
- We generate temporary G-Suite accounts for all students so that employers cannot view their personal contact details.
- We run the placements through our own Google Classroom account, meaning we have full visibility of all interactions taking place between employers and students.
- We record all video meetings and calls.
- Students should not share personal contact details with adults or other students, instead using the Google Classroom accounts which we provide.

For the VWEX Light, ensure that students are aware of safeguarding procedures when accessing the livestream events.

HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS GET THE MOST FROM VWEX

✓ **PRIOR RESEARCH**
Setting a task for students to research the company through the internet and have a clear understanding of what they do and why the student would like to apply for the role.

✓ **ACHIEVEABLES**
Having a clear understanding of what students would like to achieve throughout their placements. Having a system where students can report on skills or insights gained from seeing how to join organisations and what to expect at entry level. This could be through having a diary or online reporting tool.

✓ **COMMUNICATION**
Most employers working with Speakers for Schools prioritise candidates from disadvantaged communities or schools that are high need. We will ask for a teacher covering note for all applications, please reply as soon as possible as places are limited. These notes are necessary for employers to choose the best pool of candidates and also help employers in cases where students might have disabilities that require the technologies used to be modified or extra support to be provided. We advise teachers to regularly login to their Experience account and check their junk folders so as not to miss emails about pending applications.

✓ **FEEDBACK**
Providing feedback to Speakers for Schools on your experiences is an integral part of the process, as it will help us to further improve the opportunities offered to students and measure the impact of the virtual work experience programme. Employers also provide feedback to schools on students' performance.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Who is eligible to apply?
All state maintained secondary schools, colleges and academies are eligible to apply for virtual work experience. Please note that we prioritise under-resourced, higher needs schools and our employers aim to reach students that are underrepresented in their industry, and with the least access to quality work experience, so we highly encourage these schools to apply.

I'm already registered for the Experience portal, should I apply again to access VWEX?
Teachers already registered on our online portal for our face to face work experience programme do not need to apply for portal access again. All VWEX opportunities will be available through the portal.

What is VWEX? How does it work?
Virtual Work Experience (VWEX) is work experience offered by employers that can be accessed by schools and students without having to travel to the employers office or base. Speakers for Schools offer two versions of VWEX for students to access.

1) VWEX Remote – A remote-working model, where students still make an application via the Experience portal to take part. They undergo a selection process by the employer and are notified whether they have been successful. After students have been successful, they will be provided information on the VWEX week, team meetings and the tasks that will be discussed throughout. They will interact with the employer and work alongside the team as if they were a remote worker.

2) VWEX Light – A module created by the employer which can be distributed by teachers to students as a body of work. Teachers will be able to access the full set of tasks to introduce to interested students. It requires introduction and review input from the teacher, however the work is independently completed by the students. Employers provide all the resources needed to run their opportunities, including 'answer' sheets for teachers and students to check their work against industry suggestions.

What will our students need to take part in a VWEX opportunity?
Students taking part in VWEX Remote-working format will require access to a computer or device with access to the internet. They will need to commit to the full schedule set out by the employer.

Which industries are offering VWEX opportunities?
There are a variety of industries who are taking part in VWEX with Speakers for Schools including the finance, marketing, construction and creative industries. We have 50+ employers interested in taking part including The Southbank Centre, The Bank of England, British Airways, BP and Balfour Beatty PLC.

How much does it cost?
VWEX opportunities are completely free for schools, colleges and academies thanks to the generosity of our employers and supporters of the charity.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Who creates VWEX Resources / What sort of activities will students take part in?
All resources will come directly from the employer. This ensures that students will be accessing industry level tasks and information.

During a remote-working placement, students will be given tasks and activities similar to how they would if they attended the workplace physically. Specific activities will vary on employers and on the type of work experience provided.

The activities in VWEX light (lead by teachers) will also be provided by employers and could consist of tasks such as client briefs, research projects or industry problems to solve.

How long does a VWEX programme last?
VWex remote opportunities timings are set by the employer and are visible in the adverts on the portal. Remote-working work experience are 1 week long and run on specific dates, where students will take part each day (e.g. 9am-5pm or 10am-4pm, depending on the employer requirements).

The duration of VWex Light is more flexible. Teachers can access a body of work for students to complete over a recommended amount of hours.

How is student data secured / Is our data protected?
Your data will be processed in full compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Parental permission will be obtained where necessary and no personal data will be shared with third parties except with the express permission of the teachers/ students.

All VWEX placements take place through a Google Classrooms account administrated by Speakers for Schools, giving us full visibility of student and employer activity, whilst ensuring employers cannot see other employer's data or any student contact data.

How does VWEX relate to GATSBY Benchmarks?
VWEX helps educators to link careers with curriculum learning. Our Remote Working Model helps schools towards meeting their GATSBY Benchmark 6. It can also be linked to Benchmark 4 as our employers will virtually assist students to gain insights into the world of work, relate their learning to a real-world job and help develop their employability skills.

Through accessing VWEX Light, schools can work towards meeting GATSBY Benchmark 4 by incorporating career learning with other subjects. This can be assessed using the resources provided and via employer feedback and accredited via the certificate provided to students at the end of the VWEX opportunity.

Can I share VWEX Light resources with my colleagues?
To access VWEX resources, teachers must register to the program. Applied teachers can also add colleagues to their school account via their dashboard. This will enable their colleagues to receive information about opportunities, approve students' VWEX applications and if successful, then lead VWEX Light sessions.

If you have a question that is not answered here, please get in touch with the Experience team at experience@speakersforschools.org

SPEAKERS for schools

www.speakersforschools.org