WORK EXPERIENCE

A Student's Guide



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NYBEP education and business in partnership

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How do I choose my own work experience placement?

So, how do you decide what work placement is for you? You don't necessarily have to choose something that you want to do as a job when you leave school, but if you do have a career goal in mind then why not try it out? Or there may be advantages to considering something new.

The overall aim is for you to experience life in an adult workplace and develop transferrable work skills.

Be positive – work experience, whatever the placement, is an opportunity to learn new things and find things out about yourself.

Why not start by writing down a list of as many possibilities that come to mind – use the following questions to help you do this:

- What do I want to do when I leave school?
- What am I good at? What are my interests and hobbies?
- What new skills would I like to learn?
- What jobs have I seen people doing that I think look interesting?

Now look at your list and try to reduce it to 3 or 4 possibilities. The following questions may help you with this:

- Is this a realistic work placement for my age group?
- What sort of work am I likely to be doing?
- Will there be a variety of tasks to do or could I become bored?
- Would I experience skills and tasks related to a profession I am interested in?
- Could this be an opportunity to try something completely new?
- Finally, put your list of ideas on order of preference. Maybe talk to your parents/carers and teacher about your ideas.

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How can I find my own work experience placement?

There are many **advantages** of finding your own placement; you can choose exactly what you want to do, and where you want to work, you can also test out any career ideas and make useful contacts for future employment.

Firstly, you need to use your **'network' of contacts**: friends, family, teachers, neighbours etc. Speak to them about the type of placement you are looking for and see if they can help directly (for example by speaking to their employer). If not, ask if they can think of anyone else in their network of friends and colleagues who might be able to help.

Otherwise, why not search for a company yourself…….

- Use your local knowledge of businesses in the area. For a small firm (like a local hair salon) you might want to call in in person during a quiet period of the day and ask directly if they would be interested in taking you on for work experience. For larger firms, such as a solicitors or bank, it would be more appropriate to send an email or letter.
- Another way of going about finding a placement is to use local business directories, such as www.yell.com and www.thompsonlocal.com these detail local firms, by category, with their addresses', telephone numbers and websites.
- Alternatively, try typing the type of placement you are looking for into a search engine i.e. "finance companies in York".
- Send a well written email to the company enquiring about the possibility of work experience.

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How do I make contact with a company?

There are several ways you could contact a company:

- In person
- By phone
- By email

In a large company you are best to contact the **Human Resources Department**. In a smaller company you will normally need to write to the **Manager**.

Email can be the most effective way to contact a company, as it is very convenient for the company to reply to you. You will probably need to look at the company's website to get an email address. Even better, if you can, is to try to find out the name of the appropriate person so you can send your email enquiry directly to them.

If it is a local shop that you are interested in working in then it might be a good idea to **go along in person** when the shop isn't very busy and enquire about a placement.

It is best to contact several companies as often you may not receive a reply or they may take weeks to say 'no'. Don't get disheartened by this, it is nothing personal, they are usually just very busy! However because of this it is important to approach several companies so that you have a number of options open to you.

Suggested outline for an email to ask an employer for a placement.

If you are sending an email and don't have an individual's name or email address at the company, mark your email at the beginning or in the subject line "FAO Human Resources Department" or "FAO the Manager".

Remember – this is the first contact you will have with an employer and therefore you want to create a good impression so check that the following are correct:

- Presentation and layout.
- Spelling.

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- Company name and address.
- That you have the right dates for your work experience.
- Make sure you have a sensible email address as a silly one may put an employer off.
- If you include your telephone number don't have a silly answer phone message in case they call and listen to it.

Guide to writing your email.

SUBJECT: Work Experience

Dear Sir/Madam (or the person's name if you know it)

1st paragraph

I am a year xx student at XXXXX, and I am …… years old. I am pleased to have the opportunity to go on work experience for one week from XXXXX 2025 and I wondered if it would be possible for me to work in your company/organisation (use the correct term).

2nd paragraph

Briefly say why you want to spend a week with the company or organisation and what you hope to gain from the experience.

Ideas: you are a well know national/local company… I would like to gain an insight into… It is my ambition to pursue a careers in …

3rd paragraph

Give details of the subjects you are studying – say what subjects you particularly enjoy and why. Give details of any activities or areas of responsibility you take part in at school.

Ideas: sport, clubs, voluntary work, ambassador etc.

Finish

Finish the email by signing off "Yours faithfully" (Or "Yours sincerely" if you know the name of the person you are writing to).

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Preparing for an interview/introductory phone call.

Part of the process of getting work experience is to present yourself at an interview or calling the placement to introduce yourself.

Attending an interview and/or calling the placement gives you an opportunity to check out the placement and make sure it is right for you – and also for the employer to decide whether or not to offer you the work placement.

Good preparation is essential if you are going to have a successful interview whether it be in person or over the telephone.

Before the interview

- Do your research to find out what the company does.
- If you are attending an interview ensure your parent/carer are aware beforehand as they may wish to accompany you on the journey. Plan the route and arrive in plenty of time – 5-10 minutes early than your appointment time.
- If you are attending an interview, wear appropriate clothes and look smart.
- Know the name of the person you have come to see or to ask for on the telephone.
- Think of some questions to ask them (i.e. about the kind of work you will be doing or what to wear).

During the interview

- If you are attending an interview, give a firm handshake.
- Try to look and sound positive, interested and confident.
- If you are attending an interview, try to make eye contact with the interviewer rather than looking out of the window.
- If you don't understand a question don't be afraid to say so. Simply ask 'Would you repeat the question please, I didn't hear it/understand it properly'.

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At the end

- Thank the interviewer for his/her time.
- If you are attending an interview, shake their hand just before you leave.

What sort of questions might you expect?

These are only to give you an idea of the kind of questions you might be asked. If you want to feel prepared, think about how you would answer the following:

- Tell me about yourself and what you enjoy outside of school?
- What are your favourite subjects at school and why?
- Why did you choose this work placement?
- What ambitions do you have for the future?
- This placement may involve low level tasks, how would you feel about that?
- If I were to ask your best friend to tell me about you, what would they say?
- What computer experience have you got? What software are you familiar with?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Have you got any questions you would like to ask me?

Finally, some top tips to make the most of your work placement:

1. Keep busy and show enthusiasm
2. Be helpful and cheerful
3. Do ask questions if you are UNSURE
4. Take responsibility
5. Be punctual and dress appropriately
6. Use your initiative
7. Believe in yourself
8. Make the most of the opportunity and enjoy it

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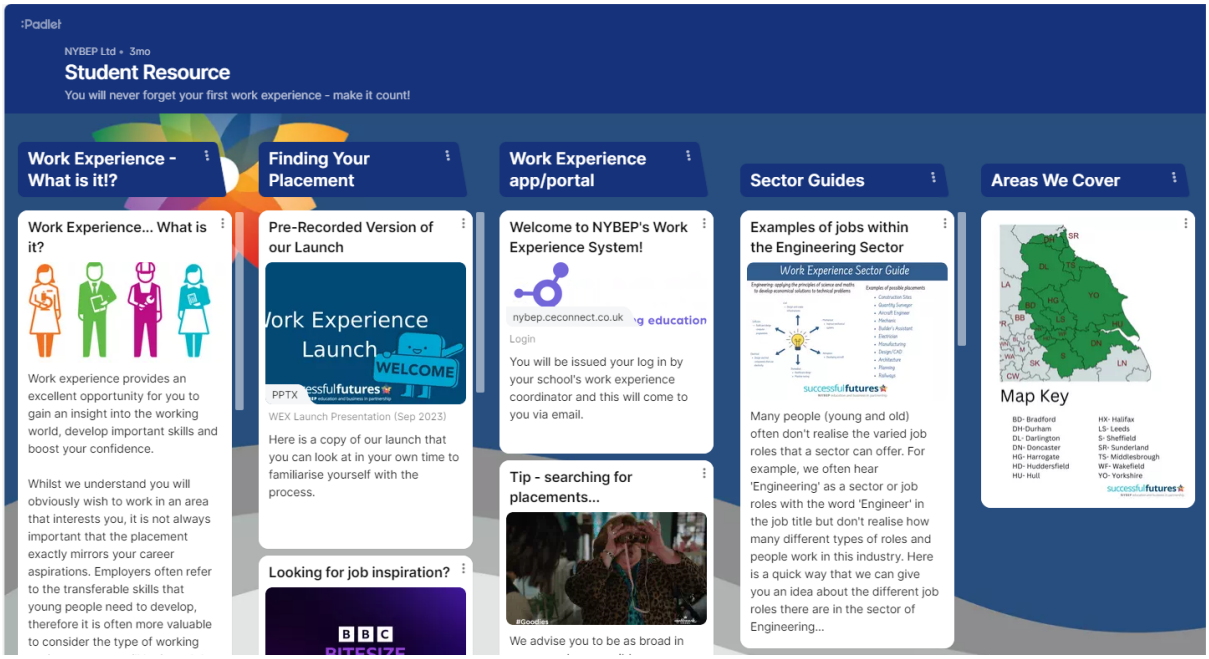
How can parents help?

- Support your child throughout the process of finding a work experience placement. Please try not to email or call the employer on their behalf. Explore ideas of what they might like to do and read this booklet for tips on how you can help them to source their own placement.

- Finding the right work placement might take some effort, depending on what they want to do. Support and encourage your child to keep trying, and not to give up if they don't succeed straight away.

- **Log into NYBEP's useful tool Padlet-** link to this can be found on the students introduction email sent to their school email.

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- • Work Experience – What is it!?
- • Finding your placement
- • Work Experience Portal
- • Sector guides
- • Employability Skills
- • Contacting Employers
- • Interview – you got this!
- • Work Experience Journals

click here for access to Padlet **https://padlet.com/NYBEP/nybep-work-experience-resource-74s0nlncsc4v7ut8**
Students Password: **KCz23!72**

Steps to take when you have found a work experience placement

After the work experience launch you will receive an email to your school email address from workexperience@nybep.org.uk inviting you to login to Connect. This can be done by clicking the link highlighted below.

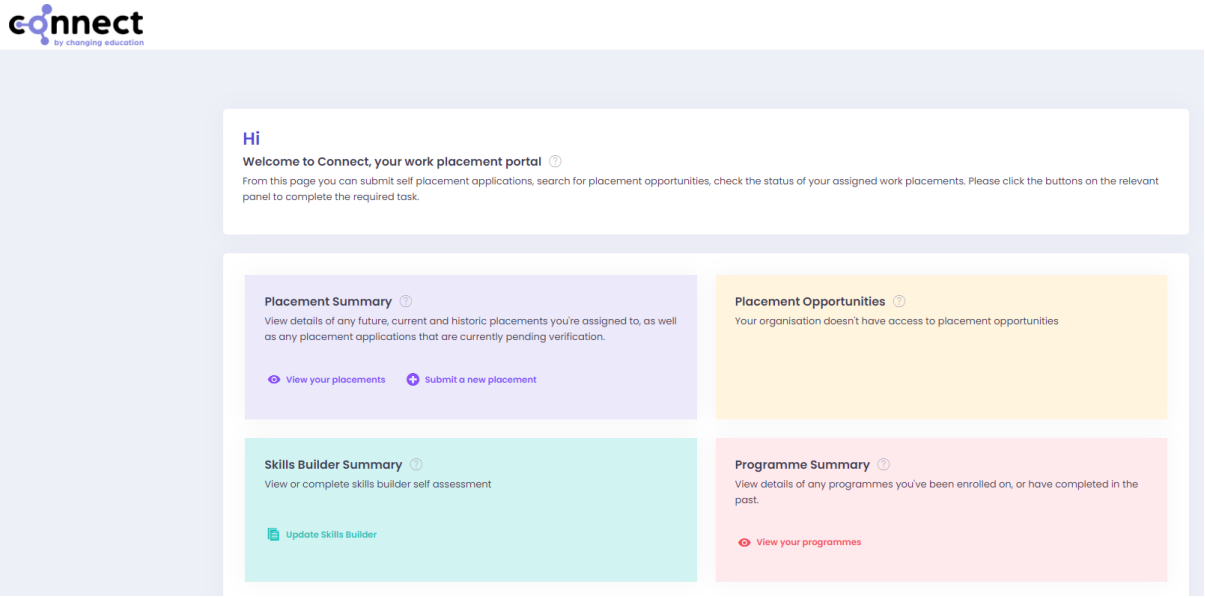
Example:

Connect Web App

You can also view some information, and take some actions in a web browser via the following link. This link is specific to you and should not be shared. Connect Web App

This link will then take you to the Connect Portal

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Here you will be able to

- Set up your profile
- Complete Skills Builder
- Build your C.V
- Manage your work placement
- Take the first steps of your journey

Example:

When you go into the portal you will see the Dashboard, here you can navigate your way around. You can create your placement by clicking Placements, ensuring that you complete all sections of the page, including dates of the placement, job role, hours address and employer contact details. Please also include any relevant health and medical information that the employer needs to be aware of whilst you are on placement. Once your placement is submitted you will receive a notification to confirm when this has been approved by your teacher or an administrator.

On the portal you can also access Skills Builder where you will be able to complete a post and pre-evaluation of your skills to see if you have made any progress after your work experience placement. Your Careers Advisor can also set you achievable targets.

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Finally, some top tips to make the most of your work placement:

- Keep busy and show enthusiasm
- Be helpful and cheerful
- Do ask questions if you are unsure
- Take responsibility
- Be punctual and dress appropriately
- Let the employer know if you cannot attend, for example if you are unwell
- Use your initiative
- Believe in yourself
- Make the most of the opportunity and enjoy your time on work experience

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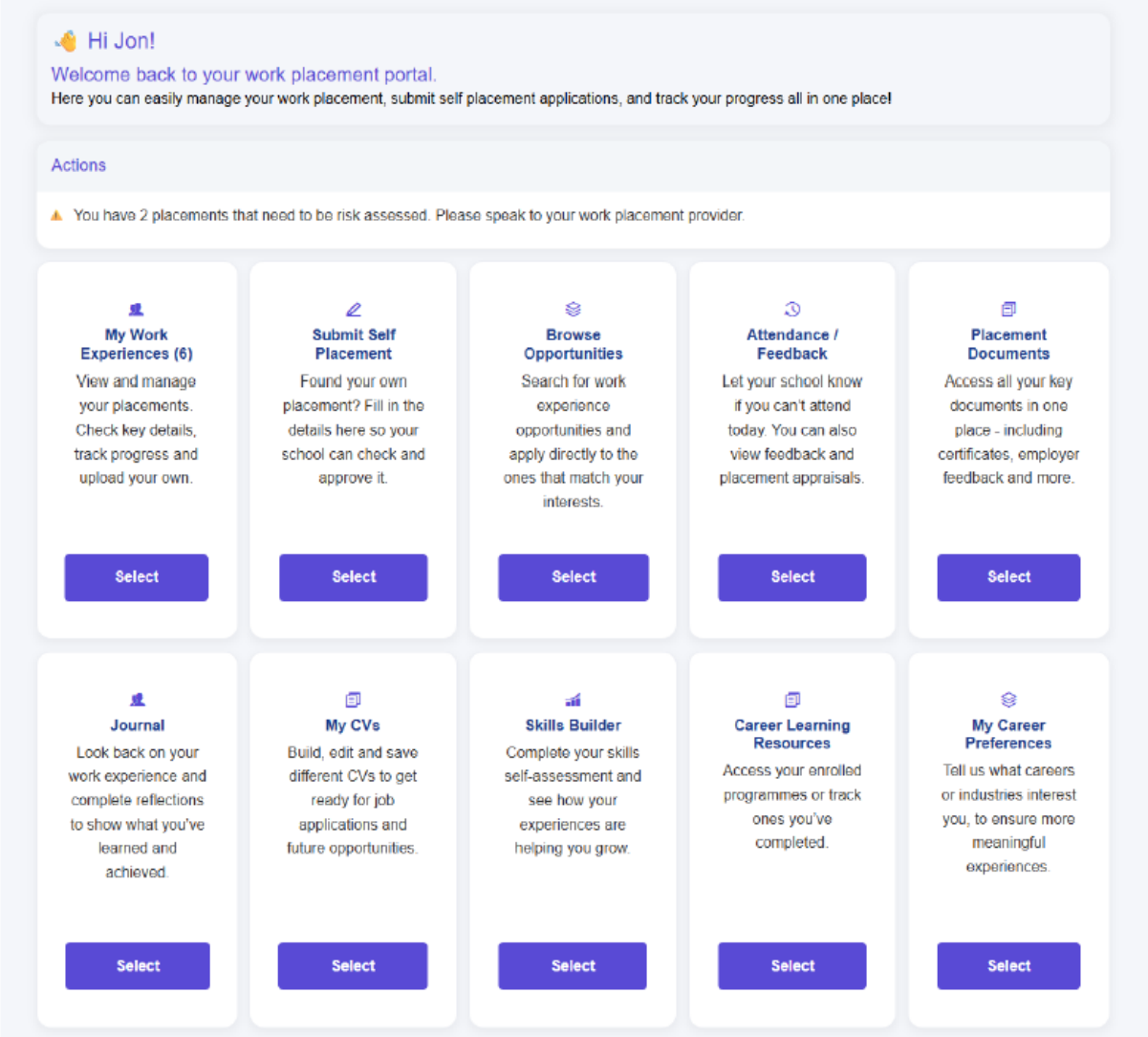


Welcome to your Connect Learner Portal

This is your space to manage everything about your work experience journey. Here's what you can do inside the portal:

- Tell us about your career interests, sector choices and skills you'd like to build
- Find your way around using the simple menu at the top of every page
- Complete Skills Builder (if your school has asked you to)
- Submit your own placements
- Browse live opportunities from employers
- View and download all your placement documents
- Record attendance and feedback
- Keep a daily and programme journal
- Build the first draft of your CV
- Look back and review all the experiences you've had

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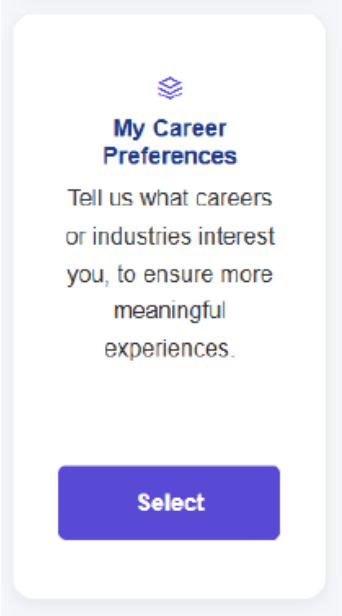


Preferences

When you log in for the first time, start by updating your preferences. This means selecting the sectors, careers, employers and skills that interest you most. Think about your future ambitions, not just this year's placement. Your choices will help shape your opportunities and show how your ideas develop over time.

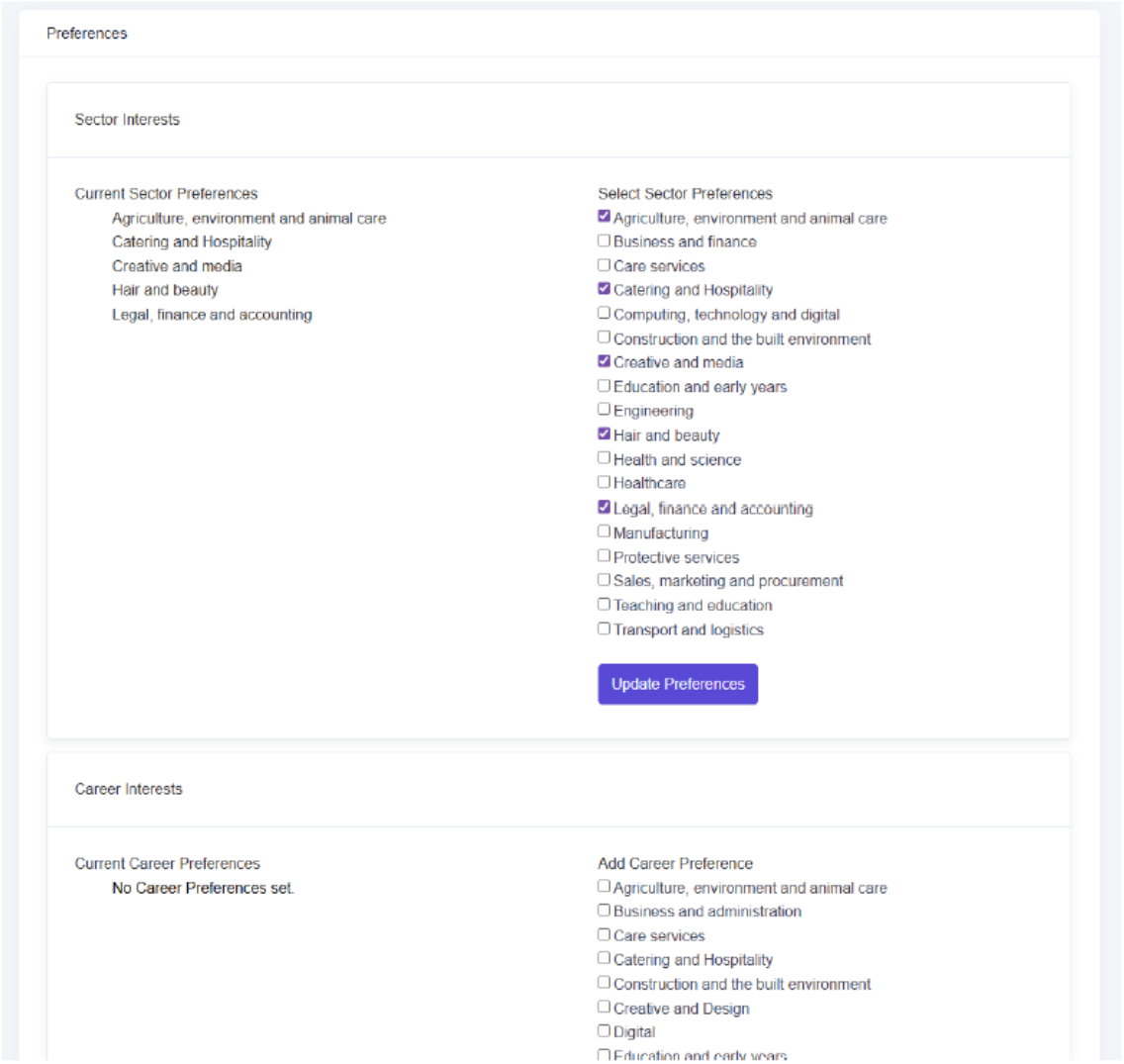
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To do this, you need to select the following card:



You will then be presented with the screen shown on the next page:

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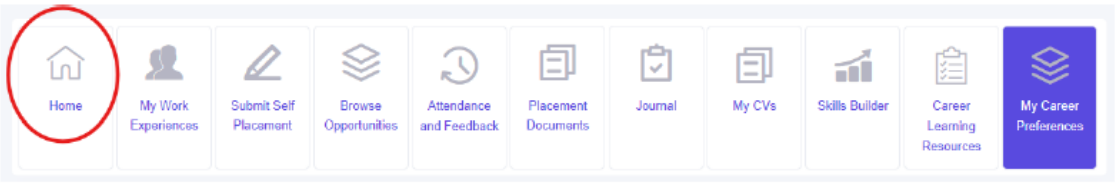
Please navigate through the screen and select the items as appropriate. Please ensure that you press "Update Preferences" before moving on to the next section.

When you are being prompted to record employer preferences, please think about an employer that you may wish to eventually work for in the future, not just in relation

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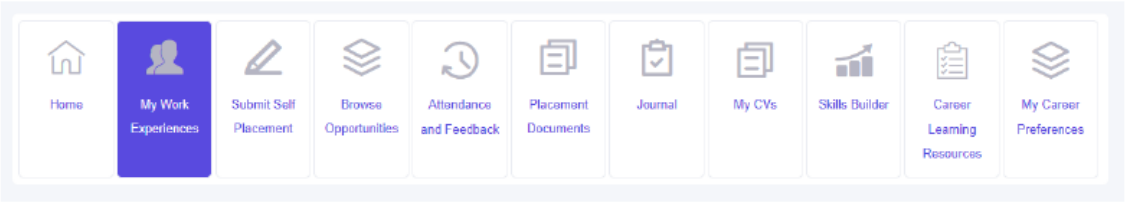
to your work experience. The reason this preferences section is important is because it will allow you to record your aspirations, and will serve as a base to show how your interests and preferences may change over time.

Once you have completed this section, you can click on "Home" at the top of screen, as shown below:



General navigation

Finding your way through the learner portal is really easy. Once you select any card from the front screen, you will always see the below navigation menu at the top of all other screens:



This means that you can easily jump to other parts of the portal, without returning to the homepage, but if you wish to any point, you can do this by selecting home.

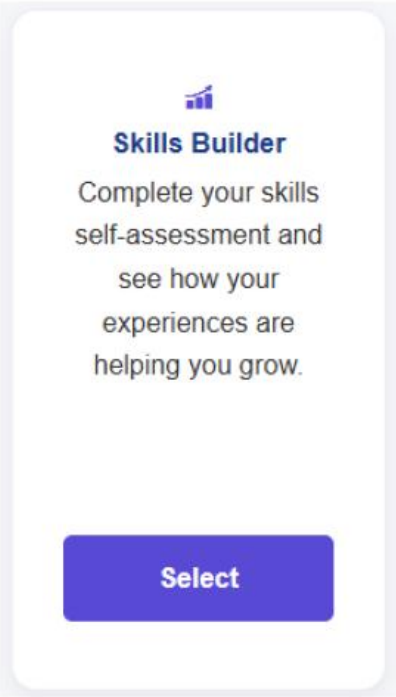
To make it clear as to what part of the portal you are currently in, the appropriate section will be highlighted in purple as shown above.

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Skills Builder

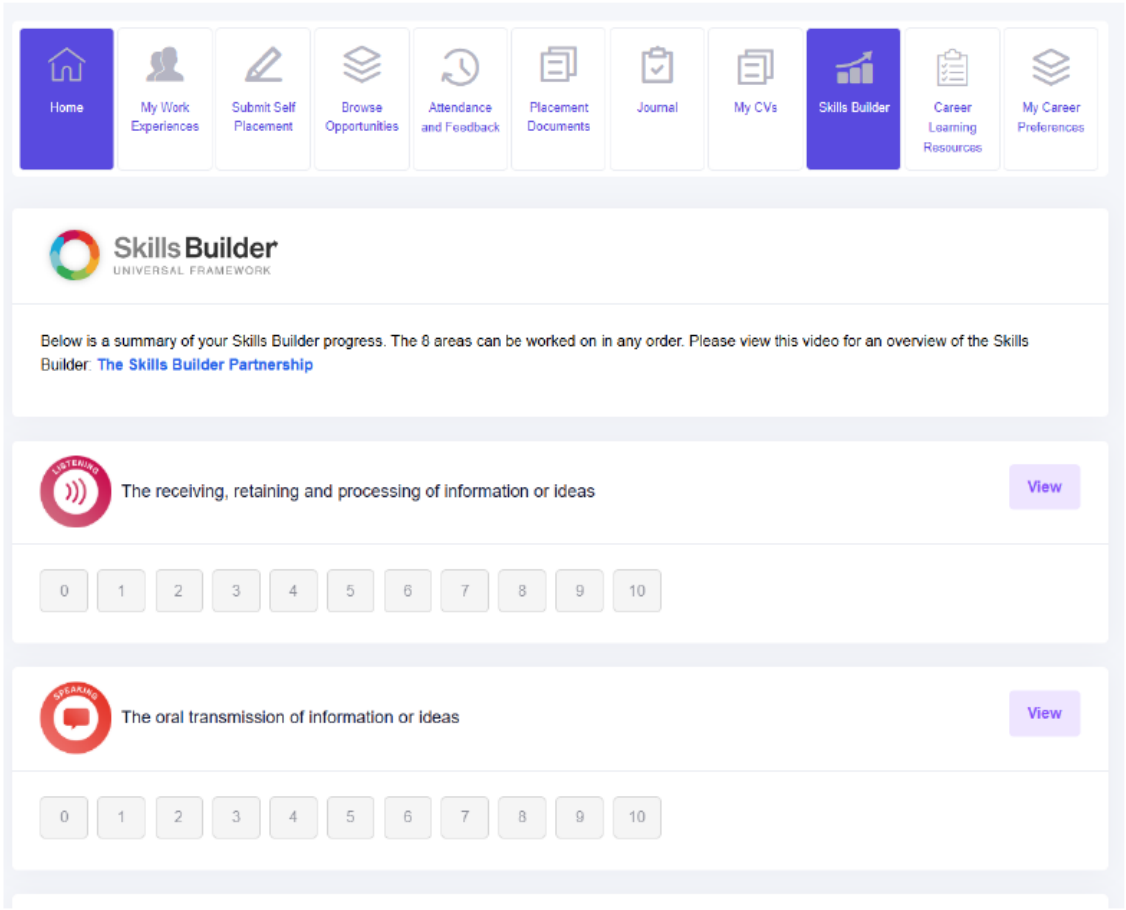
Skills Builder helps you focus on the eight essential skills that every employer looks for, like teamwork, problem solving and communication. If you have been asked to complete it, you'll find the activities quick and easy to follow. The aim is to help you see what you're already good at and where you can improve, so you feel more confident when you go into your placement and beyond.

You can access this by clicking on the following card from the home page:



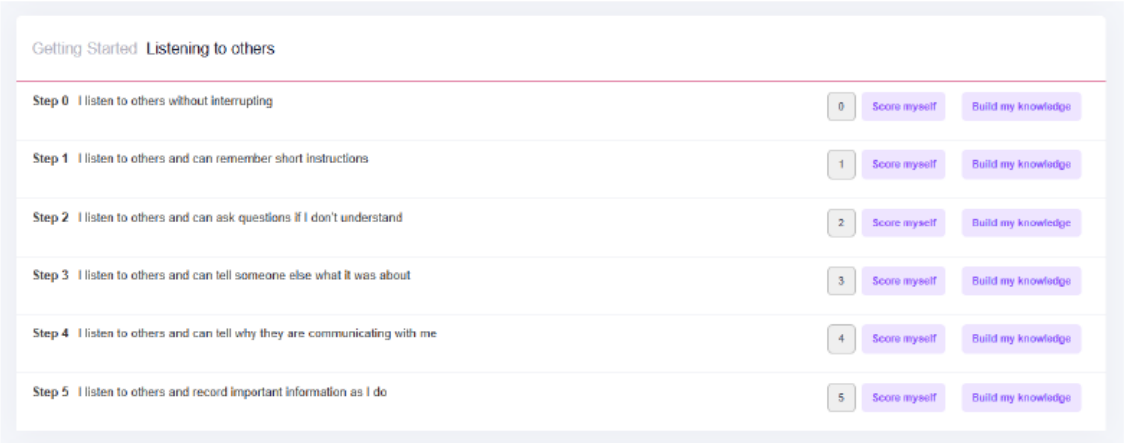
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There are 8 core sections that can be completed here:



If we choose to "View" the first section, "The receiving, retaining and processing of information or ideas", you will be presented with the screen shown on the next page:

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From here, you can select to score yourself on a particular skill, or press "Build my knowledge", which will allow you to watch an informational video.

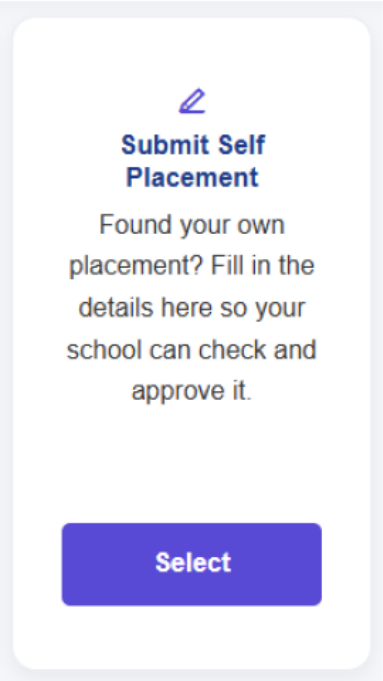
Skills Builder does not have to be completed in one session. Please take your time when going through this. Once you have finished, feel free to return to another part of the portal using the navigation menu.

Submitting placements

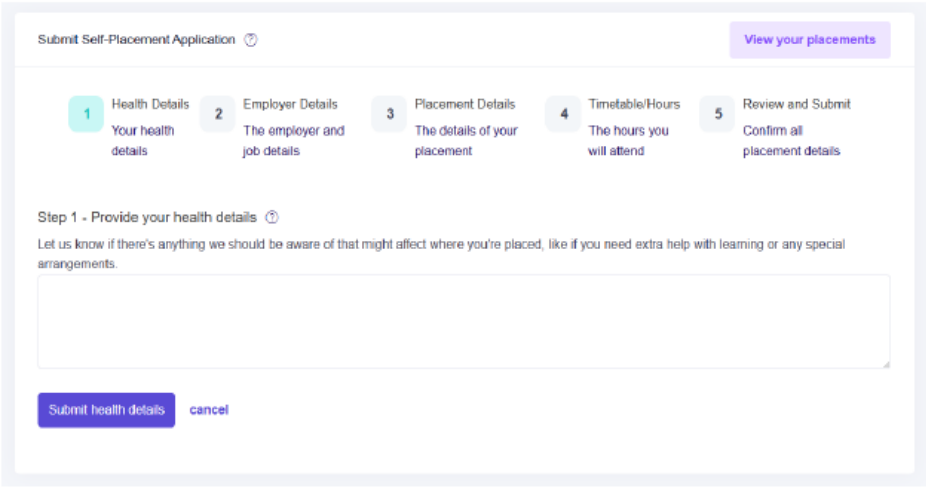
If you've arranged your own work experience, you can add the details here. This makes sure your school has all the information they need to check it's safe and ready for you to attend.

To access this section, please click on the appropriate card from the home page:

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You will then be provided with the following screen to allow you to record your placement in a clear, structured manner:



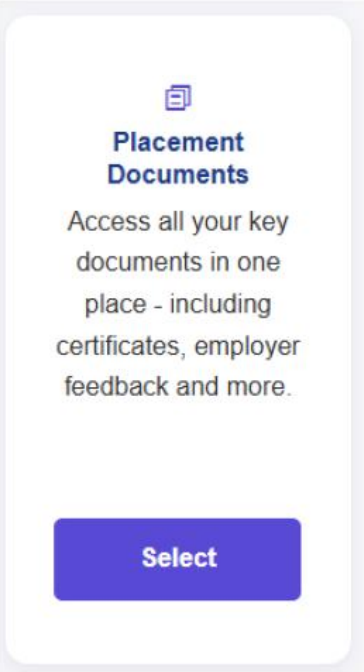
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As you progress through this, it is particularly important that you record the employer details correctly, especially their email address and phone number. If you aren't sure of the employer details, please do not complete this section until you have all of the important information, as your Careers Leaders will review all of this information.

Access placement documents

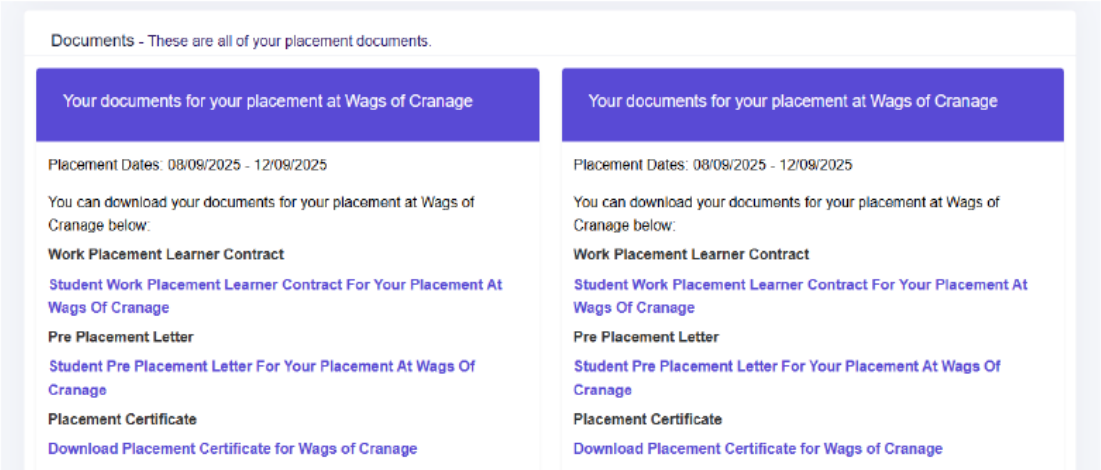
Here's where you'll find everything you need for your placement, like forms, agreements, or health and safety details. You can download and keep them safe for when you need them.

You can access this by selecting the appropriate card from the home page:



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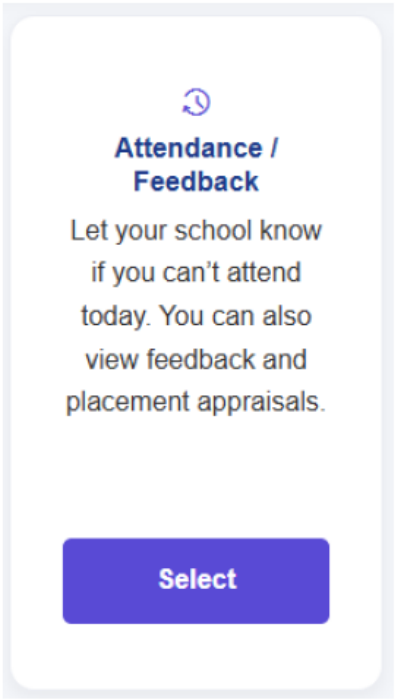
This will show all documents related to any placement, past or present, as per the below:



Manage attendance and feedback

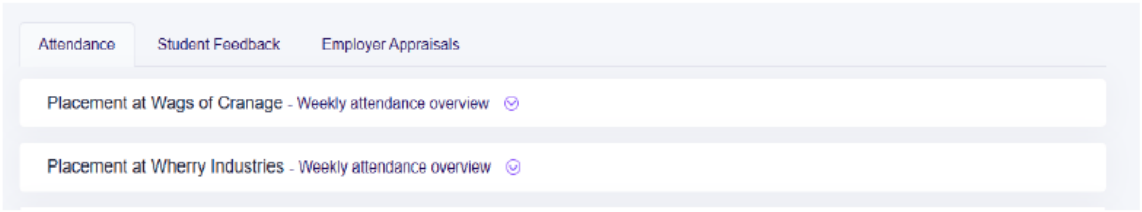
During and after your placement, you'll be able to record your attendance and get feedback from your employer. This feedback is important because it shows the progress you've made and what you did well.

To access this, select the correct card from the home page:



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You will then see the following screen:



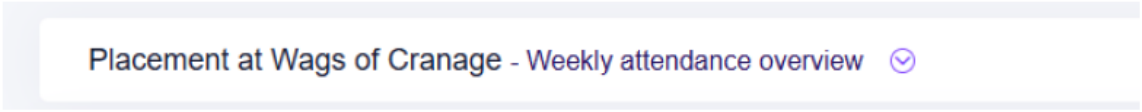
There are 3 key sections here:

- Attendance
- Student feedback
- Employer Appraisals

After the placement has finished, you can select the "Student Feedback" section to submit your feedback with respect to your work experience placement. Once your employer has completed it, you can view their feedback for you, on the "Employer Appraisals" section.

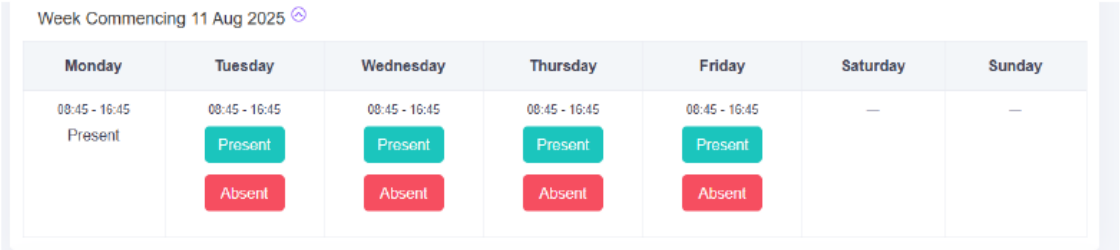
During a placement, the key section for you is "Attendance".

Your placement will be displayed as follows::



Please click on the purple arrow to expand this section.

You will then be presented with an attendance screen where you can mark your attendance on the day:



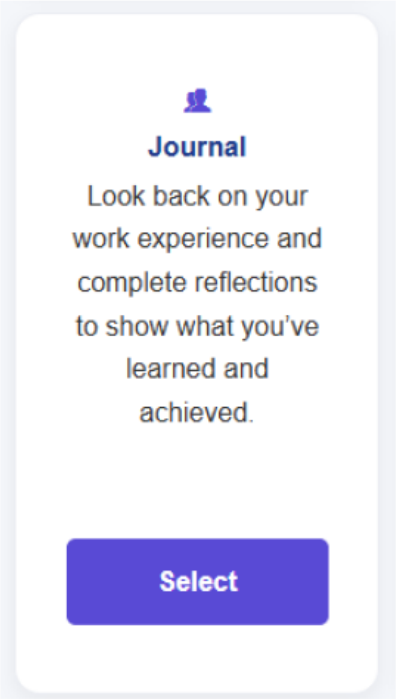
You do this by simply clicking "Present".

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Journal

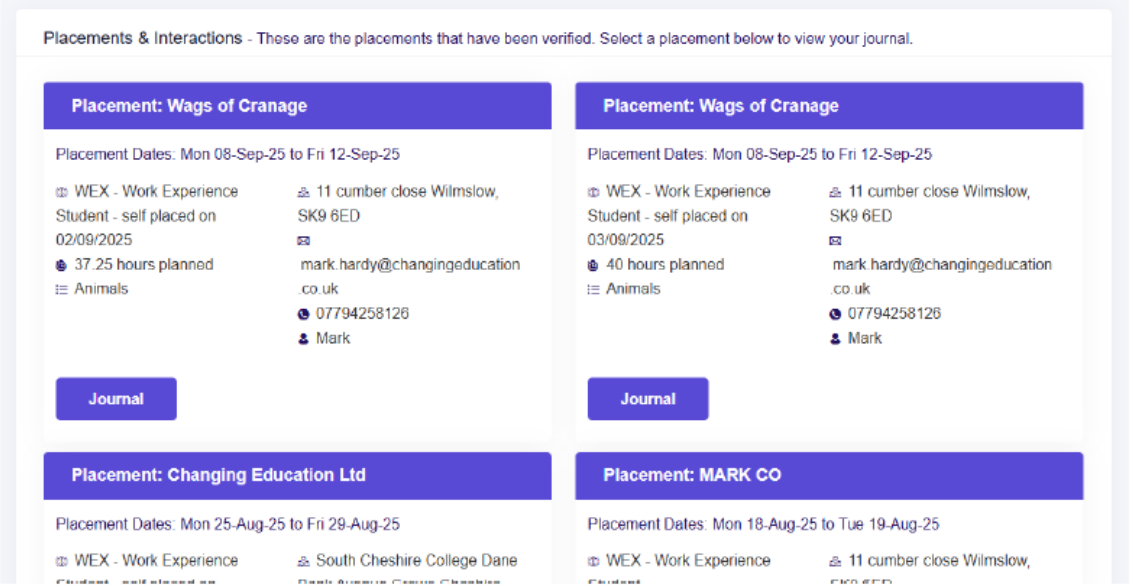
Your journal is your personal record of the experience. Use it to write about what you've done each day, what you've learned, and how you've developed. It's a great way to look back and see your growth.

To access this, please select the correct card from the home page:

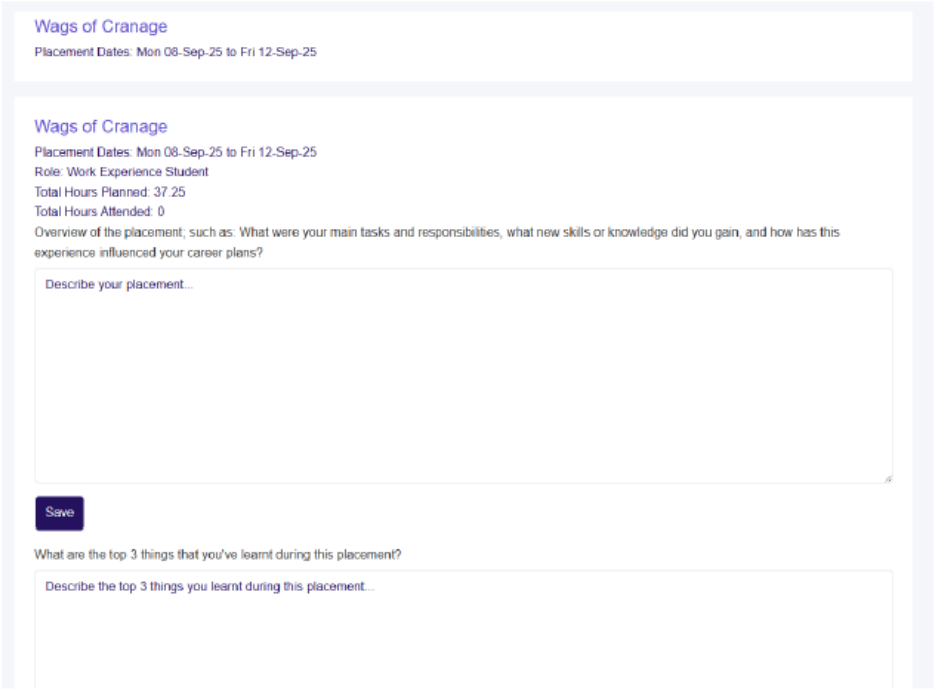


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You can then select the appropriate placement by clicking on "Journal":



You will then see this:



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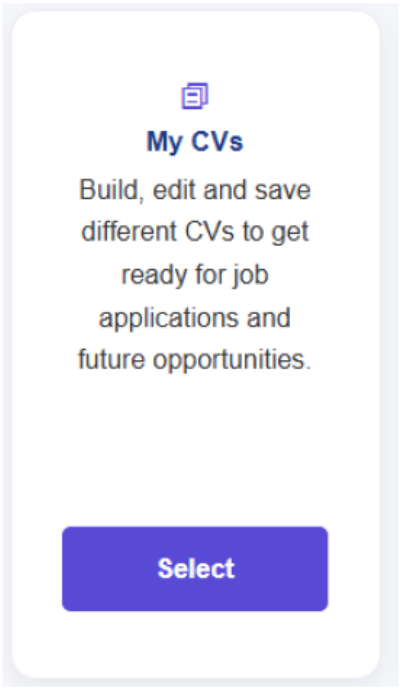
It's really important that you complete this at the end of every day. Please read all of the questions carefully, and then press "Save" before proceeding to the next section.

Once you have completed your placement, you will have the opportunity to fully reflect upon it, and record this information. Once again, please make sure you "Save" each section before proceeding.

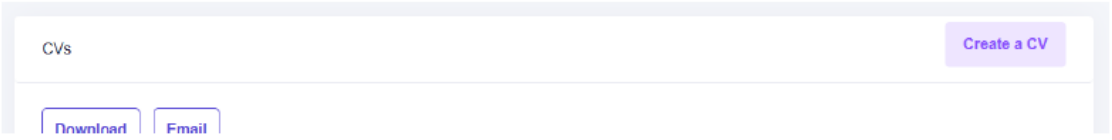
Your CV

Build and update your first CV here. The portal will guide you through the steps so you can create a document that shows off your skills, experience, and achievements.

To access this, click on the correct card:

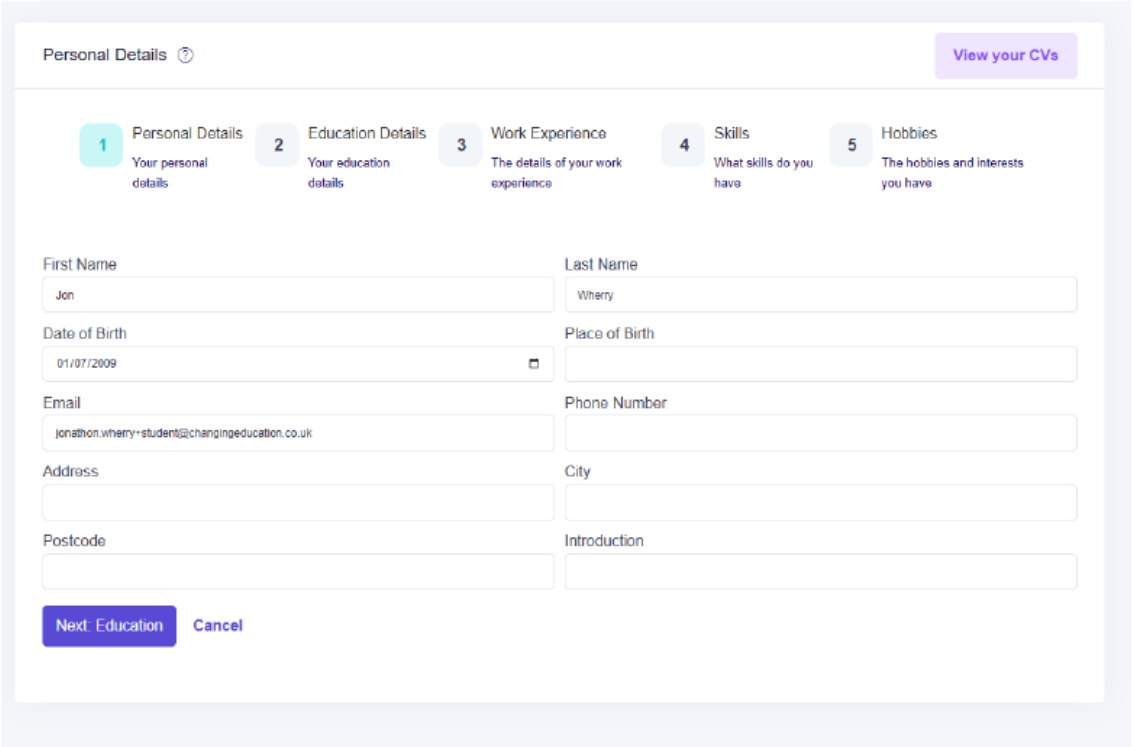


Once this new page loads, please press on "Create a CV":



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You will then be presented with the following screen:

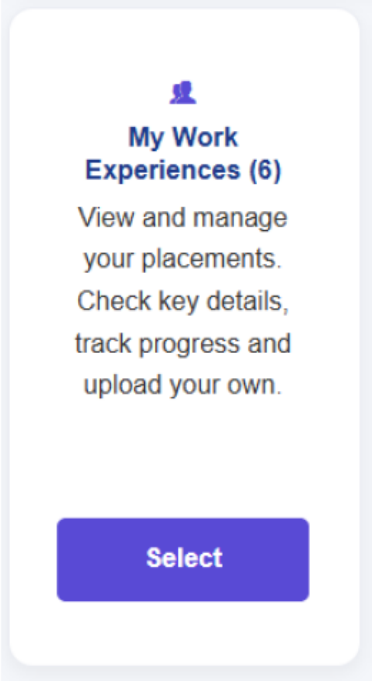


Please go ahead and complete the sections carefully. As you find yourself having gone through more work experience placements, you will be able to grow this CV.

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Review all your work experiences and interactions

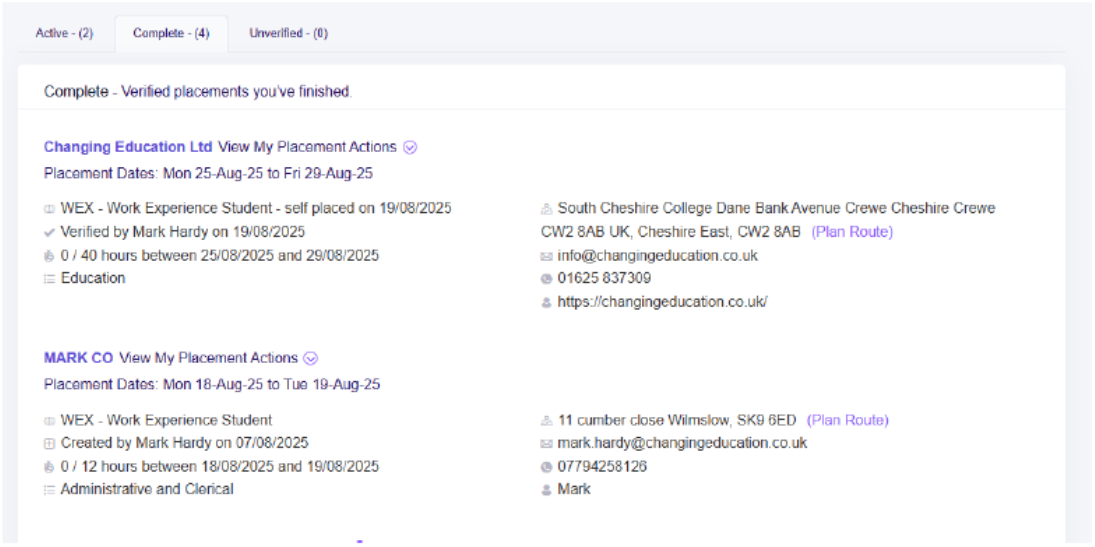
At any point, you may select the following card from the home page:



You will be able to view active placements, active work related interactions, completed work experience placements, completed work related interactions, and any unverified placements (i.e. placements that you have submitted, but not yet verified by your Careers Leader).

This will be presented as follows:

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Here you can navigate through the tabs and sections as appropriate, and see all relevant information.

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