

How to create a work experience placement pack



Overview

York Theatre Royal has been producing great drama in the beautiful city of York for over 250 years and is one of the country's leading producing theatres.

The ethos of our approach to Arts Award is to make it a core aspect of our programme and to integrate it in all projects where it is relevant and would benefit the young people involved. We offer it as a voluntary option in every case so the young people will always opt to participate. We have been running Arts Award at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels for five years, and we were part of the pilot for Discover and Explore and have since rolled out Explore.



Why work experience placements are compatible with Arts Award

- Working towards an Arts Award gives more meaning and a structure to a young person's time with the organisation
- They can gain a qualification during the placement
- The intensive placement period suits Arts Award participants well as it means they can achieve in a relatively short amount of time
- It is also good for filling short gaps between sessions with other departments as the young person can work independently at a desk

All of our work experience placements are offered the opportunity to gain their Bronze in the week or two weeks that they are with us. The majority take up this offer, which is made during the work experience interviews.

We created a Bronze pack for placements so that they could have a resource to work from, should they wish. Although the programme is different for every placement in terms of departments visited and members of staff who they spend time with, we can adapt their pack as necessary.

This resource aims to provide guidance on creating a work experience placement pack to support young people to achieve Bronze Arts Award when on work experience.

Breaking it down

Part A: explore the arts as a participant

Think about what the young person will be doing during their placement. Are they going to learn new arts skills from members of your team? Will they then try it for themselves? If they are doing several different new arts activities, could you create a log in the pack to encourage them to summarise these, and then pick one to look at in more depth?

Part B: explore the arts as an audience member

Pre-planning this into the placement is essential if you want the young person to be able to achieve all sections during their time with you. If you are an arts organisation with a varied programme at that time, can the young person select their event? If you are not an arts organisation, what have you got going on at the time? Are there school shows on, concerts in the music department, exhibitions of students' art?

Can you provide a section of your placement pack which gives them ideas for sharing their review? Can you allocate some time during their placement for them to share their review with one another if you have more than one placement, or even with someone who was involved in the event, eg some of our young people have talked about their review with an

actor who was in the show that they saw. Do you have a website or newsletter, either external or within your organisation, on which they could share their review?

Part C: arts inspiration

This section is great for filling gaps during the young person's placement as they can use the time to research artists that inspire them or interview them in person or via email, and create their personal response (poster, fact file, piece of work in their style, etc). If you can provide a biography or CV for people that they could have the chance to interview then it may be that they pick one of them, such as practitioners leading workshops, visiting companies if you are an arts venue, members of your staff who have an artistic hobby or past or current career.

Part D: arts skills share

It is good to offer a few varied opportunities for this to happen with different groups or individuals within the placement time. If the young person is attending a session with a group of young people, this could provide time to do this. Some of our placements participate in a youth theatre session, and could have the opportunity to run an exercise with the group if their skill is theatre based. However, they may prefer to share with a smaller number of people, in which case they could have time to share with another placement or member of staff or yourself as their adviser.



Top Tips

1 Making it work

Your pack can include details about their time with you, a timetable for the duration, and any objectives. It should also contain details about what the award is and what they need to do for each section in order to complete it. It can be specific to your organisation and include any resources that might be useful, eg website addresses.

Think about the creative opportunities that your young person will have whilst on placement. Who will they meet and spend time with? Could they interview them? What will they observe? Who will they learn from? Think about linking each section of their placement with a section from Arts Award.



For example, with Part B (explore the arts as an audience member), what will they see in their time with you that they can observe? How can they review this? Who can they share this with? Can you enhance this experience such as a post show discussion to find out more about what they have seen.

2 Make it clear

Have a front sheet with the Arts Award website address, Artsbox website, a deadline for when you would like the portfolio to be submitted for marking and the date of the moderation that they will be submitted for if you've booked it. If you run Arts Award with other groups, can you pre-book a moderation for the final day of the placement for all young people? This marks the end in a really positive way and means they can see the portfolios of other young people, potentially at several levels. Please note that if you decide to take this approach to moderation you should build in time during the placement to assess complete portfolios before moderation. You could do this by assessing each part as it is completed. Please also remember that you need to book your moderation eight weeks in advance. You also will need to confirm names of the young people at least 21 days in advance of the moderation date.

3 Use the people around you

When designing your placement package, think about the people who are available to spend time with, observe and/or interview. Some of these may be creative in their day jobs like a set designer or director, but others in their evenings and weekends for example amateur dramatics or dance teachers. They could be a relative that the young person is in contact with when they leave for the evening, who they could also interview during the week.

4 Portfolio-tastic

Use your pack to get them thinking about the presentation options open to them. Try to give visual examples of sections of work by previous Arts Award achievers at your organisation, such as screen prints from Artsbox, reviews shared on a website, photos of young people learning

an arts skill. Some of our placements have used Artsbox as the format as it is really compatible for the timescale and they can self manage it easily; others prefer scrapbooks or paper based options.

5 Options, examples and opportunities

Wherever possible include options for each section, ideally of different scales and to suit different tastes. Our placement might be spending time in costume hire, with a lighting technician and taking part in a youth theatre workshop. All of these could fulfil Part A (explore the arts as a participant), but they have the choice of which they focus on and then we give them examples of what they will need to do to complete this section. They then know which departments they need to evidence their time with and what to collect.



6 Check it out and tick it off

Include a tick list at the end of the pack with details of what they need to include for each section. Then they could note where in their portfolio this is, and this will make your report form easier.

It is also good to include a summary text box at the end of each section with a question about what the young person has chosen, eg for Part D (arts skills share): Which skill will you share? Who will you share it with?

7 Never have a take-away

Some of our placements have begun their Arts Award with us but not completed it within the placement and asked to complete finishing touches at home and moderate at a later stage. We have then lost them, as they have lost impetus when regular contact has stopped. Where possible, agree targets and opportunities that will be completed in your time together.