

Modern Work Experience (Equalex) Toolkit

A guide to supporting employers with
delivering modern work experience



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THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Introduction

Work experience is one of the most powerful ways to connect education with employment. Research from the Education and Employers Taskforce shows that young people who have four or more meaningful encounters with employers are **86% less likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training)** and can earn up to **22% more in their careers**.

Work experience is not just a week of shadowing; when structured well, it gives young people confidence, skills, and networks while offering employers fresh perspectives and new talent pipelines.

This guide combines:

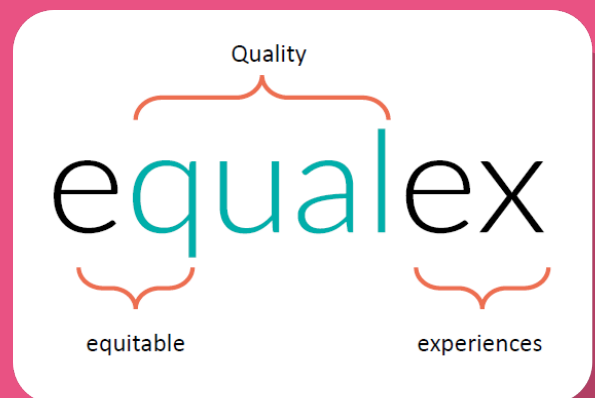
- [The Equalex Framework](#), a structured national model developed by the Careers and Enterprise Company
- [The Access Aspiration Toolkit](#), a practical employer guide shaped by real-world practice in London. Together, they offer a comprehensive approach to hosting, planning, and evaluating high-quality work experience

What is Modern Work Experience (Equalex)

Equalex is a structured framework developed by the **Careers and Enterprise Company** to support high-quality, meaningful work experiences for all young people.

It includes:

- Progressive learning outcomes: clear and concise aims for activities.
- Learner-level objectives: specific and measurable goals that guide delivery and assess impact.
- One week's worth of work experience activities in Year 7-9.
- One week's worth of work experience placements in Year 10-11.



Benefits to the Employer

Attract Diverse Talent

Open up opportunities for all young people, widening your talent pool and improving retention.

Boost Reputation

Show your commitment to inclusion and stand out to employees, clients, and partners.

Drive Innovation

Diverse teams bring fresh ideas, boosting creativity and business growth.

Objectives of Work Experience

For Young People

- Gain awareness of different careers and workplaces
- Develop essential skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication
- Build social capital by meeting professionals outside of their immediate networks
- Strengthen applications for jobs, apprenticeships, college, and university

For Employers

- Widen the future talent pool and reach more diverse candidates
- Contribute to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals
- Develop staff through mentoring, coaching, and supervising young people
- Showcase organisational values and commitment to inclusion

Core Principles of a Meaningful Experience

A high-quality placement should:

- Have a clear **purpose** understood by the student, employer, and school/college
- Be underpinned by **learning outcomes** that match the needs of the young person
- Provide **two-way interaction** between students and employees
- Allow students to **meet different people** in the workplace
- Involve activities or projects that are relevant and purposeful
- End with **feedback and reflection**, so students can recognise the skills and insights they've gained

These principles are embedded in the **Equalex Framework** and can be applied across mainstream and SEND-inclusive settings.

A Progressive Approach

A progressive framework that helps employers open doors, embrace diversity, and grow stronger teams.

APPLY & DEMONSTRATE

Outcome: Applying knowledge and skills in real or simulated workplace settings

Objectives:

- Evidence skills and behaviours in work environments
- Reflect on experiences to inform future decisions
- Evaluate impact and challenge stereotypes

INVESTIGATE & EXPLORE

Outcomes: Career readiness, role exploration, and understanding of growth sectors

Objectives:

- Develop and demonstrate essential workplace skills
- Understand career pathways and roles in organisations
- Explore local and national labour market trends

INTRODUCE & INSPIRE

Outcomes: Opportunity awareness, self-awareness, and inspiration

Objectives:

- Understand different types of jobs and workplaces
- Identify personal interests and how they relate to careers
- Recognise and challenge stereotypes

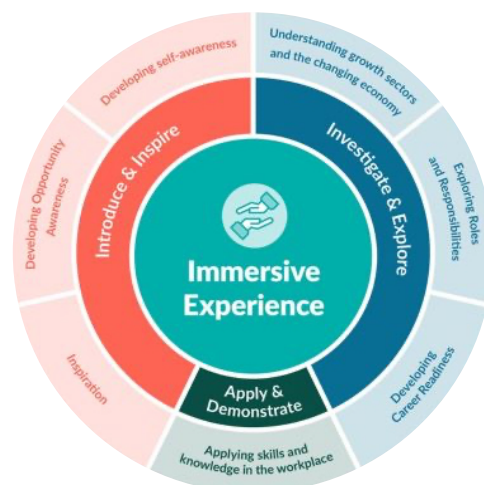
The Equalex Learning Outcomes

The Equalex framework is built on a set of **learning outcomes and objectives** that ensure work experience is purposeful and measurable.

- **Learning outcomes** define the overall aim and intent of a careers programme - what we want young people to gain
- **Objectives** break these outcomes down into specific, measurable goals for each activity or experience

Together, they describe the **knowledge, skills, and behaviours** that learners should be able to demonstrate after completing an activity. This creates a clear link between the programme's planned intent and the tangible outcomes achieved.

For employers, the Equalex learning outcomes provide a valuable guide. By aligning activities to these outcomes, employers can work with educators to identify exactly how their placements support the wider framework - ensuring every experience is both meaningful for students and impactful for the organisation.



You can explore the full set of learning outcomes and objectives by scanning or clicking on the QR code.



Employer Checklist

To deliver meaningful work experience, please use this checklist to assess and improve offerings:

- ☐ Does your programme offer multiple types of experiences (job shadowing, virtual projects)?
- ☐ Are your experiences accessible to learners with SEND and disadvantaged learners?
- ☐ Have you completed the **Employer Standards Self Assessment Tool** to support your organisation with the delivery?
- ☐ Does your experience align with the Equalex learning outcomes shown above?
- ☐ Can you scale your offerings to meet the new Equalex framework?
- ☐ Can your offer be adjusted to suit SEND learners?
- ☐ Are your staff trained to support young people effectively? *1
- ☐ Do you evaluate the impact of your work experience programmes?
- ☐ Does your organisation have public liability insurance? *2
- ☐ Do you have a risk assessment to share with the school? *3
- ☐ Do you provide feedback and reflection opportunities for students? *4

1

The Local London Careers Hub can deliver a virtual CPD session for your staff on how to best support young people.

2

Your existing employer's liability insurance policy will cover work placements provided your insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers (ABI), or Lloyds, so there is no need for you to get any additional employer's liability insurance. The ABI website confirms this.

3

If you do not have a risk assessment already in place, the Local London Careers Hub can provide a template.

4

If you do not have a feedback form already in place, the Local London Careers Hub can provide a template.

Scan or click to view the Employer Standards



Examples in Practice - Mainstream School

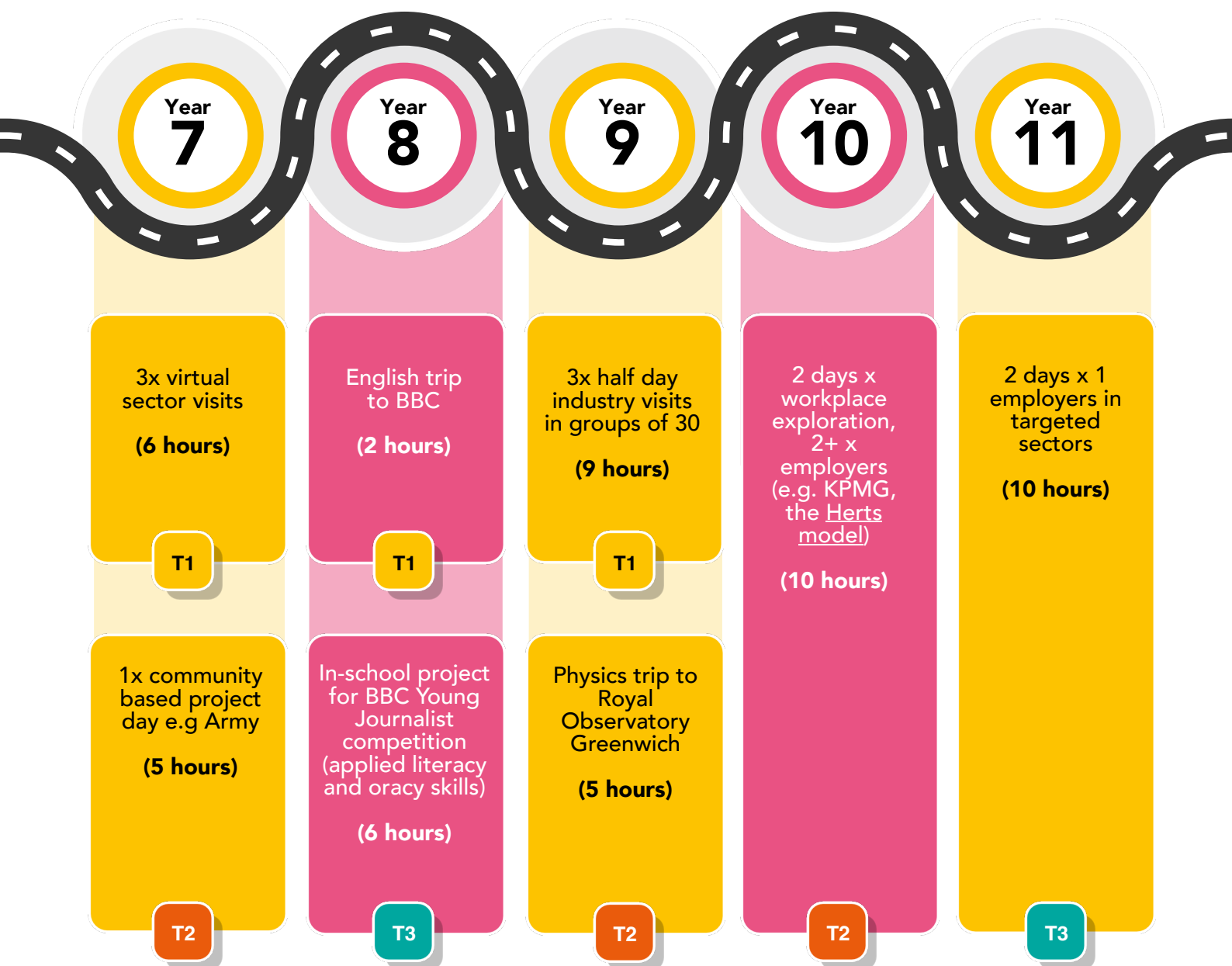
Mainstream secondary schools offer structured work experience as part of a broader careers programme. Opportunities are spread across different year groups so that students gradually build confidence, awareness, and skills. Early activities might include employer visits or project days linked to the curriculum, while later years introduce extended placements and targeted experiences in specific sectors. Employers can see how their involvement at different stages - from hosting visits to offering workplace placements - helps create a progressive pathway that prepares young people for their next steps.

Learner 1 experiences:

- 53 hours = 10 + days = 2 weeks min
- 3+ sectors
- 9+ employers

Equalex tiers:

- T1 - Introduce & Inspire
- T2 - Investigate & Explore
- T3 - Apply & Demonstrate



Examples in Practice - SEND School

The focus is on ensuring activities are accessible, meaningful, and tailored to each young person's abilities and aspirations. Experiences may be introduced gradually, with strong emphasis on supported visits, small group projects, and placements that provide routine and structure. Employers can see how small adjustments - such as providing clear instructions, buddy systems, or quiet working spaces - can make a significant difference in enabling students to thrive. By engaging with SEND schools, employers help young people build essential skills, confidence, and independence for the future.

Learner 2 experiences:

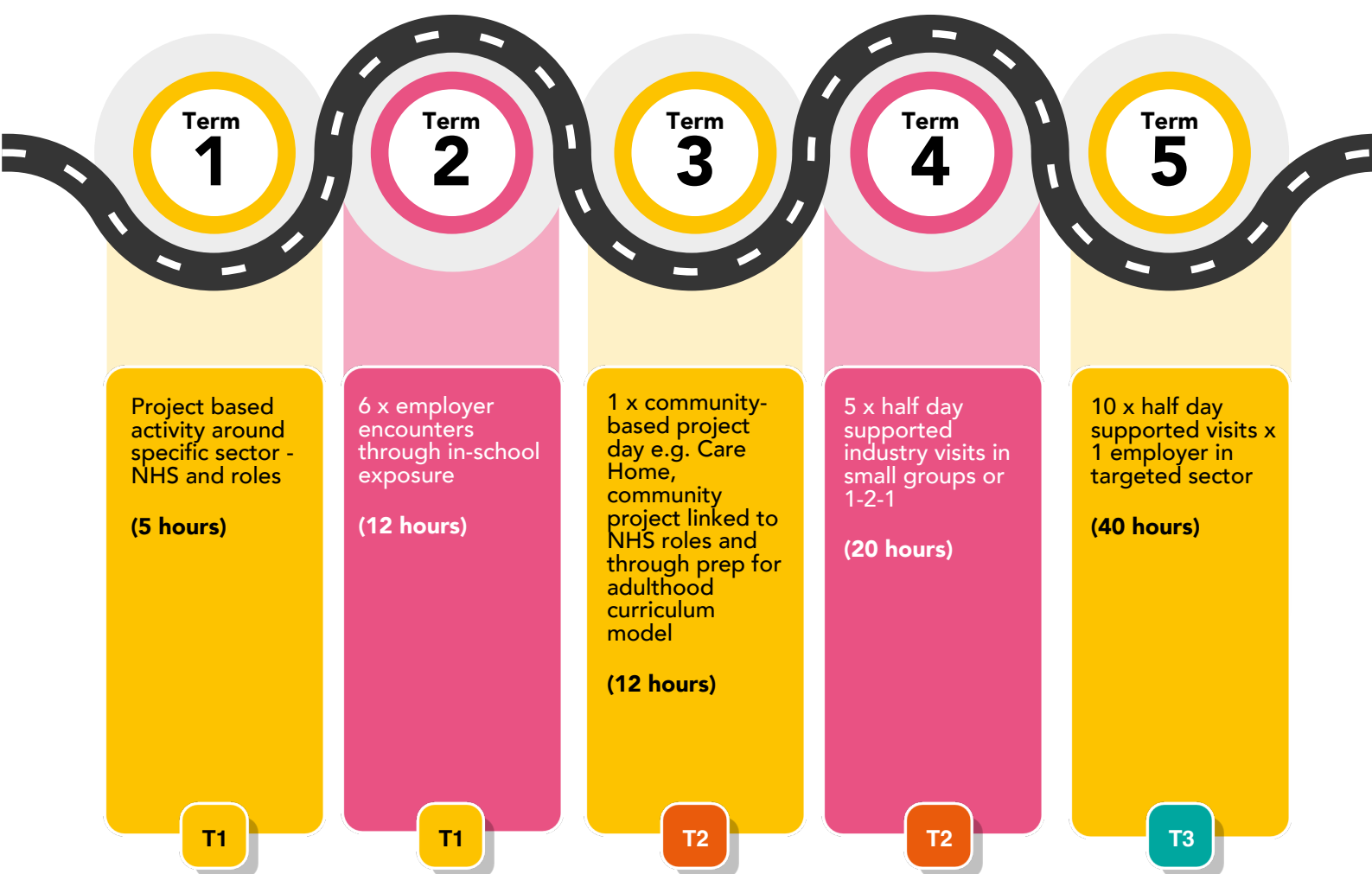
- 89 hours = 10 + days = 2 weeks min
- 2+ sectors
- 9+ employers

Equalex tiers:

T1 - Introduce & Inspire

T2 - Investigate & Explore

T3 - Apply & Demonstrate



Scan or click to see how your business can make an impact



Short-Format Work Experience Approaches

The following examples show different ways employers and schools can work together to deliver meaningful experiences for students. From short themed activities to extended placements, these models highlight the variety of flexible approaches which will better suit an employer's needs as well as provide young people with the opportunity to build skills, confidence, and career readiness.

Example 1: Explore the World of Work

Theme: Self-awareness and career exploration

Activities:

- Interactive career quiz and reflection
- Virtual tours of different departments
- Meet-the-team Q&A sessions

Outcome: Students identify interests and link them to career paths

Example 2: Skills in Action

Theme: Skills for work and life

Activities:

- Team challenge (e.g. build a product pitch or solve a workplace scenario)
- Communication and problem-solving workshops

Outcome: Students practice key employability skills

Example 3: Real-World Projects

Theme: Experience of the workplace

Activities:

- Mini-projects (e.g. marketing campaign, sustainability audit)
- Shadowing staff or participating in a simulated task

Outcome: Students practice key employability skills

Example 4: Inclusive Innovation

Theme: Equity and accessibility

Activities:

- Workshop on inclusive design or community impact
- Group presentations on how business can be more inclusive

Outcome: Students reflect on diversity and inclusion in the workplace

Example 5: Reflection and Celebration

Theme: Career readiness and progression

Activities:

- Personal reflection journals
- Certificate ceremony and feedback session

Outcome: Students consolidate learning and celebrate achievements

Extended Work Experience Placements

These examples show how employers can offer longer, more structured opportunities that go beyond single-day activities. Placements allow students to experience the workplace in depth, take part in real projects, and build meaningful relationships with staff. They can be adapted in length and format to meet both employer capacity and student needs.

Example 1: Explore the World of Work

Format: 5 days in-person and 2 hybrid experience placements

Features:

- Completion of Self-Assessment Tool to support project delivery
- Tailored project-based learning aligned with the curriculum
- Pre-placement planning session with the Careers Hub team
- Mentorship pairing: each student is matched with a buddy
- Q&A or career panel (speed networking) with a diversity of senior leaders
- Digital skills workshop delivered by employer or partner
- Employer-branded certificate of completion
- Digital badge for student LinkedIn profiles

Example 2: Blended VIP Experience

Format: 2 days in-person and 1 virtual experience (VIP Days)

Features:

- Completion of Self-Assessment Tool to support project delivery
- Structured timetable with job shadowing, tasks, and reflection
- Career insight session with different departments
- Mini project or challenge for students to complete
- Q&A or career panel (speed networking) with careers staff
- Employer-branded certificate of completion

Example 3: Focused VIP Days

Format: 2 days in-person experience

Features:

- Company overview
- Career journey talks
- Interactive task
- Q&A or career panel (speed networking) with early careers staff

Equalex: Modern Work Experience

Helping employers create meaningful opportunities for every young person.

Learn more and access resources: www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers

The Local London Careers Hub can offer you:

At the Local London Careers Hub, we're here to support employers, education providers, and stakeholders who want to make a real impact on the futures of young people across the boroughs - Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Bromley, Enfield, Greenwich, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

Whether you're looking to give back, build your pipeline of future talent, or collaborate on education-to-employment pathways, the Hub provides a range of opportunities to get involved and make a difference.



VIP Days

Join exclusive employer engagement days to showcase your industry, connect with schools, and inspire the next generation.



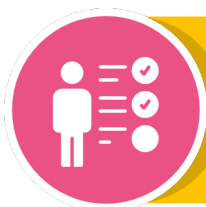
Become an Enterprise Adviser

Volunteer as an Enterprise Adviser and work directly with a local school or college to shape their careers strategy and link curriculum to careers.



Access to 220+ Schools and Colleges

Collaborate with our 9 boroughs giving you direct access to students, teachers, and leadership teams.



CPD (Continuing Professional Development)

Take advantage of our CPD sessions to enhance your skills in careers education, employer engagement, and youth mentoring.



DBS Checks

We can help you with DBS checks to support safe and secure school engagement for volunteers and employers.

Get Involved – Contact Us

We'd love to hear from you and explore how we can work together. Whether you're ready to get started or just want to find out more, the Careers Hub is here to help.

Email us at: careershub.east@redbridge.gov.uk