

Oxford Materials: School Pupil Work Experience Placement / Short Research Project – Staff guidelines

1. Introduction

This document is a check-list to cover the administrative and legal/safety/safeguarding aspects regarding school pupils (usually minors) who work in the Department under a work experience scheme (typically 1-2 weeks) or on a short research project (typically several weeks, eg Nuffield scheme).

As summarised in the [OU Safety Policy document S1/13](#) and the [OU Safeguarding Code of Practice](#), legislation imposes particular restrictions in respect of persons under the age of 18: restrictions which are more severe for those under the Minimum School Leaving Age (MSLA*). Prospective supervisors should familiarise themselves with these documents before they consider offering a project or placement.

The University prohibits the employment of young people under the MSLA* except on work experience schemes approved by a local authority or the governing body of an independent school. Under Health & Safety law, school pupils engaged in work experience placements are regarded as employees. Temporarily they have the legal status and rights of an employee.

The Materials HoD has deputised the AOM to act as the Department's Safeguarding Lead in respect of activities involving school pupils.

* MSLA: A pupil can leave school on the last Friday of June in the year in which they reach the age of 16 by the end of the school summer holidays.

Notes

School pupils below the age of 14 or who have not completed at least two school terms of study at GCSE level (or equivalent) should not be offered Work Experience Placements in the Department.

University H&S Policy is that children (which it defines as young persons who are under the MSLA, usually age 16) must be accompanied by a responsible staff member at all times.

Materials policy is that, other than for the purpose of work experience placements of up to two weeks duration, pupils who are not pursuing appropriate A-level subjects or are under 16 years of age should NOT be permitted to participate in research projects using University facilities.

Pupils under the age of 18 may not work in Departmental workshops.

Dangerous or irresponsible behaviour on the part of the pupil should result in immediate cancellation of the work experience; parents / guardians / carers should then be contacted to collect the pupil if under the MSLA, or the pupil dismissed immediately if over the MSLA.

Pupils on work experience, including summer projects of a few weeks duration, are covered by the [University's liability insurance](#).

The Department is unlikely to be able to take more than four work experience placements per year, principally for local state school students.

Materials policy is that the supervisor must be a member of staff of the Department **and**, in the case of pupils under 18 years of age, must hold a DBS check via the University dated within the last 3 years. The OU Safeguarding Service (OUSS) will determine the appropriate level of DBS check, taking into account factors such as the frequency of contact.

2. Responsibilities

A. Coordinator (*The person organising the work experience or project, usually the AOM*)

Request the following documents, if the school / organisation / student has not provided them.

1. Letter of application from the pupil, to include their reasons for desiring a placement in Oxford Materials.
2. Brief CV to include date of birth, any exam passes and current subjects and level of study.
3. Reference from the school / organisation.

4. Any requirements or restrictions from the school / organisation on the nature of the placement and their expectations of what the pupil should achieve from the experience.
5. Form of assessment required by the school / organisation (where relevant).
6. A firm commitment, with dates, should be obtained from the Oxford supervisor before offering a placement. The supervisor must supply:
 - a. A short description of the work/project (typically 100-200 words).
 - b. A list of the hazards* associated with the actual work/project and
 - c. A list of the hazards* associated with the area/laboratory in which the work/project will be carried out (e.g. the area(s) used by the pupil may contain chemicals or equipment that may pose a risk, even though they are not used by the pupil).
*Please list these hazards under separate sub-headings such as chemical / electrical / mechanical / radiation / other.
 - d. Subsequently a **full advance risk assessment** will be required, taking due account of the particular H&S and Safeguarding restrictions in respect of persons under the age of 18, as referenced in the introduction above. The risk assessment should be completed by the Supervisor and reviewed by the Coordinator prior to submission to the DSO for approval – *if in any doubt when conducting the safety / risk assessment please consult the Area Safety Officer (Ms. Linda Curson).*
As for all new members of the Department, once the pupil has arrived and received a safety briefing from the DSO, or deputy, the Dept. of Materials [Personal Risk Assessment & Safety Induction form](#) must be completed.
7. Details of a placement, including 6a to 6d above, along with the University's terms and conditions must be sent to the school/organisation, with copies for the parents/guardians/carers. Signed agreement that the work/project is suitable must be returned by the school/organisation and signed consent forms from parents must be provided by the school/organisation. A proforma for the latter is annexed to these guidelines.
It is a legal requirement for pupils under the MSLA that their parent/carer/guardian is made aware of the risk assessment, including specific hazards, risks and control measures. In addition information must be provided about any emergency procedures or action to be taken in the event of serious and imminent danger. **Materials Policy is to apply this requirement to all pupils under the age of 18 years who undertake a placement/project.**
8. The coordinator should arrange the following on behalf of the pupil:
 - a. Reception in the Hume-Rothery building to be notified
 - b. Copies of the following details should be left with the Department's Head of Administration & Finance (HAF) and at Reception in the Hume-Rothery Building:
 - i. Name of pupil
 - ii. Gender of pupil
 - iii. Age of pupil and date of birth
 - iv. Home address
 - v. Home phone number
 - vi. Work phone number of parent/guardian/carer where appropriate (for emergency contact)
 - vii. School Name
 - viii. Contact teacher at the school (or head teacher)
 - ix. Address of School
 - x. Contact phone number of school (direct line if possible)
 - xi. Name of Oxford Supervisor
 - xii. Probable work location(s) in the Department & schedule
 - xiii. Duration of work experience placement or project
 - xiv. A note of any disability or medical condition
 - c. The pupil should be met by the Coordinator, Supervisor or other representative at H-R Reception.
 - d. A temporary security pass is to be issued on arrival.
9. On the first day of attendance (or as soon as possible afterwards and BEFORE any laboratory or other non-office work is carried out) the pupil should be given an introduction to safety by the Departmental Safety Officer (or an appointed deputy). **Book this in advance with the DSO.** Following the briefing the pupil must sign an acknowledgement that they understand the safety rules and will abide by them and, with their supervisor, complete the Dept. of Materials [Personal Risk Assessment & Safety Induction form](#) . On the first day the pupil should also be walked through a full evacuation drill from the main location at which they will be based and be shown the canteen, and nearest water fountain and w/c.
10. A short briefing on the placement/project should be given, to include an indicative timetable for the work (for a placement/project in a single group this will be the responsibility of the Supervisor).
11. Before completion of the work experience, the pupil should be shown around the site and the range and type of work carried out within the Department should be given.

12. If a disability or medical condition is noted on the consent form, then brief the Departmental First-Aiders and Supervisor in advance of the work experience period or project start date. Consider if special arrangements might be necessary in the event of a need to evacuate the building, liaising as appropriate with the Area Safety Officer and the Department's Facilities Manager.
13. Coordinate GDPR obligations in respect of the placement or project, including (i) issuing pupil & parents with a 'Privacy Notice', (ii) briefing the supervisor on the GDPR obligations, and (iii) ensuring the Department's obligations under GDPR are met.
14. At the end of the work experience placement or research project conduct a short debriefing and seek feedback. Keep a note of this feedback on file.

B. Supervisor (*The Research Group Leader or Office Manager providing work experience or a project*)

Supervisors must familiarise themselves with (i) the University's [safeguarding code of practice](#); (ii) the associated [safeguarding guidelines](#) (Appendix A to the present document); and (iii) the University's policy statement on [the health & safety of young people and children](#).

1. To hold a DBS check dated within the last 3 years from the university.
2. To familiarise themselves with the University's safeguarding guidelines (Appendix A) and acknowledge by email to the Coordinator they have done so.
3. To devise a short project that can be reasonably achieved within the time frame.
4. To provide a brief description of the project (100-200 words).
5. To conduct in advance safety assessments covering (i) the specific work to be carried out by the pupil and (ii) the general hazards in the laboratory or other working environment. Each assessment to be broken down into:
 - a. Chemical, (i.e. COSHH) where exposure to chemicals is possible (even if the pupil will not be using the chemicals personally).
 - b. Mechanical / electrical / radiation / other

Noting A.7 above, subsequently a **full advance risk assessment will be required, taking due account of the particular Health & Safety and Safeguarding restrictions in respect of persons under the age of 18**, as referenced in the Introduction above. The risk assessment should be completed by the Supervisor and reviewed by the Coordinator prior to submission to the DSO for approval – *if in any doubt when conducting the safety / risk assessment please consult the Area Safety Officer (Ms. Linda Curson).*

6. A short briefing should be given to the pupil upon arrival, to include an indicative timetable for the work.
7. With the pupil, complete the Dept. of Materials [Personal Risk Assessment & Safety Induction form](#).
8. To provide the pupil with appropriate training and day-to-day supervision and oversight to complete the required tasks. This may be delegated, but the Supervisor remains responsible. The Supervisor, or another *responsible member of staff* of the University specifically designated to deputise for the Supervisor, **must** be on site whenever the pupil is present.
9. Ensure that the pupil is supervised at all times by a responsible person. If the pupil is under the MLSA this person must be an appropriate permanent staff member. If the pupil is over the MLSA this person may be a *suitable* post-doc or DPhil student). The pupil must not be left unsupervised in a workplace.
10. Take note of the GDPR guidance provided by the Coordinator.
11. To provide any assessment that is required by the school / organisation, keeping a copy on file.

3. Reference Documents (including those linked-to in the present document)

Oxford University [safeguarding code of practice](#)

Oxford University [safeguarding guidelines](#)

Oxford University [safeguarding training & resources](#), including guidance and an example of a safeguarding risk assessment

Oxford University [guidance on DBS](#)

Oxford University policy statement on [the health & safety of young people and children](#)

HSE guidance on [young people and work experience](#)

DfE guidance on [keeping children safe in education](#) (see section on 'adults who supervise children on work experience')

Gov.uk [guidance for employers on DBS checks](#)

Gov.uk [guidance on eligibility for a DBS check](#) and [on-line eligibility tool](#)

Home Office [Code of Practice for DBS](#)

DBS guidance leaflet on ['Regulated Activity' with children in England](#)

Oxford University [Liability Insurance](#)

Department of Materials [Safety Documents](#) (including risk assessments and induction)

Oxford University [Guidance on GDPR](#) (see also Oxford University [Data Privacy Road-Map](#))



1. Oxford Materials: School Pupil Work Experience / Research Project

The Department has rigorous health & safety procedures and a work experience / short project visitor will be supervised at all times during his/her visit, nonetheless we must point out that this is a work environment and there are inevitably potential hazards associated with a visit to our laboratories and in engaging in practical work. If there is any reason to believe that the visitor named below would not behave responsibly in this environment or there is some medical condition that we should be aware of, it is **essential** that you let us know of this in the space below on this form (please continue overleaf if necessary):

S A M P L E

2. Agreement from visiting Pupil:

I confirm that I will follow all guidance and reasonable instructions given to me by my host or others in authority at the Department of Materials, Oxford University and will behave in a mature and responsible manner whilst on the premises. In particular I will pay careful attention to the safety briefing that will be given.

Your signature also confirms that all relevant information as requested in paragraph one of this form has been disclosed in the space above.

Name of Pupil (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signature of Pupil.....

Date.....

3. Parental / Guardian's / Carer's Consent Form - to be completed if visitor is under 18 years on date(s) of visit

Name of Pupil:

Date(s) of Visit:

Purpose of Visit:

Dear Parent, Guardian or Carer,

We are pleased to offer your son/daughter/ward the opportunity to gain work experience or to engage in a short research project in the Department of Materials at Oxford University. An outline of the planned programme is given in the letter of invitation and a risk assessment is enclosed. If you have any queries or concerns please contact the Department of Materials Access & Outreach Manager (jayne.shaw@materials.ox.ac.uk, 01865 273710).

Please sign this consent form to confirm that you give permission for your son/daughter/ward to visit the Department for the purposes set out in the enclosed letter of invitation. Your signature also confirms that all relevant information as requested in paragraph one of this form has been disclosed in the space above and that you have received and read the risk assessment for the activities associated with the visit.

Name of Parent/Guardian (BLOCK CAPITALS).....

Signature of Parent/Guardian.....

Date.....

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Guidance for those carrying out activities involving adults at risk or children

General guidance for anyone engaged in activities with children or at risk adults

General considerations

If you are acting in a position of trust with children or adults at risk, you are expected to be mindful that you are acting as a role model and therefore should demonstrate exemplary behaviour.

Care should be taken to ensure conduct is appropriate to each circumstance and environment since well-intentioned actions can be misinterpreted.

All activities should have undergone a risk assessment, and you should have a copy of the risk assessment which will identify a key contact to whom any concerns should be addressed promptly.

In your role:

- you may become aware of, or suspect another person of abusing an at risk person, or an at risk person may disclose an allegation of abuse to you, and you will need to take action in such circumstances;
- allegations of inappropriate behaviour may be made against you, and such allegations will need to be investigated, and may result in referral to external agencies.

Types of abuse

The Government publication [Keeping children safe in education](#) defines abuse as: "a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children"

The same principles apply for at risk adults: abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual or neglect.

Expectations of those working with adults at risk or children

You should:

Ensure you have completed the online course *An Introduction to Safeguarding* and that you know what you should do if an at risk person makes a disclosure to you.

Ensure you are familiar with the risk assessment and understand who the key contact is for the activity you are engaged in.

Give due regard to cultural difference.

Be alert to and tackle inappropriate behaviour in others, including peer-to-peer behaviours. Abusive behaviour such as bullying (including cyber-bullying), ridiculing or aggression must not be allowed to go unchallenged.

If you have to give feedback, take care that it is not unnecessarily negative.

Take care that language is not open to sexual connotation.

Report any suspicions promptly and confidentially to the designated safeguarding lead for the activity, or in the event that the suspicions/allegations involve that person, to the appropriate Safeguarding Officer [link] for the University.

Deal with information sensitively.

You should not:

Engage in, or allow, any form of inappropriate touching. This would include doing personal things for a child or an adult at risk that they can do for themselves. Where the person is disabled tasks should only be carried out with the full consent of the individual, or their parent.

Use inappropriate language, or allow others to use it without challenging it.

Engage in any physical 'adult' relationship with a person to whom you are in a position of trust, even if they give their consent.

Give your personal contact details (such as personal phone number, home address, email, Skype address or other communication routes) to a child or an adult at risk, or use any such route to communicate with a child or adult at risk other than regarding the activity (for example through the official website for the activity).

Interact in a personal capacity with children or adults at risk outside of the activity, including through any form of social media, for example, by becoming 'friends' on Facebook.

Allow allegations of inappropriate behaviour to go unchallenged, recorded or acted on.

Take photographs, or make other recordings of at risk people without specific written consent of the individual, or someone with parental responsibility for the individual.

You should seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead for the activity if:

You suspect a relationship is developing which may be an abuse of trust.

You are worried that a child or adult at risk is becoming attracted to you or a colleague who works with them.

You think a child or adult at risk has misinterpreted something you have done or said.

You have had to physically restrain a child or adult at risk to prevent them from harming themselves, another person or causing significant damage to property.

A child or adult at risk tells you that they are being abused, or describes experiences that you consider may be abuse.

You see suspicious or unexplained marks on a child or adult at risk or witness behaviours which are unusual or inappropriate.

Dealing with allegations, or suspicions, of inappropriate behaviour

- Consider the urgency of the situation: in the event there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child or an adult at risk the emergency services should be contacted via 999 or the police via the 101 service. Anybody can make a referral in these circumstances. The relevant Safeguarding Officer should then be notified of the case and will need to determine whether to refer serious cases to the relevant authorities within one working day.
- Remain calm, and ensure that the person knows you are taking them seriously. Reassure them that they are right to have told someone, but do not touch them (for example by putting an arm round them).
- DO NOT try to investigate or act on the matter yourself: doing so may seriously compromise investigation by the relevant authorities. You need only clarify what is being said to you (in order to establish that there is a suspicion of harm), and then refer the matter to the appropriate individual as set out in the Code of Practice.
- Be supportive but DO NOT promise confidentiality. Explain that, in order that the allegation can be addressed you will have to talk to other people about it. Explain who you will talk to.
- Avoid 'leading' questions, or expressing a view about what you have been told.
- Use clear language, appropriate to the person you are dealing with.
- Do not talk to anyone else about the matter. If you need to seek support for yourself you should speak to the designated safeguarding lead for the activity or one of the University's Safeguarding Officer.
- Write down what you have been told as soon as possible. In all events this must be done on the same day but this should not delay prompt action. Write down exactly what was said *in the person's own words* as far as possible, include the time, place, and as much detail as you can remember, but ensure that the note is as factual as possible and avoid assumption, speculation or opinion. Sign and date the note. Bear in mind that the note will be disclosable to both internal and external agencies.