



# **Work Observation Policy**

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Cardiff Sixth Form College (CSFC) Cambridge student cohort predominantly comes from overseas and aspires to the highest quality of higher education and to entry into the world's leading industries and businesses.
- 1.2. We are committed to not only academic rigour and excellent teaching, but also the continued development of the careers education, information, advice and guidance services we offer to each student who has come to CSFC Cambridge to study for a short yet key time in their educational development. To do this, we strive to fully comply with our legal responsibilities and involve senior management, our governing body, teachers, parents and students to shape our Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG) programme.
- 1.3. Our CEIAG is a fully comprehensive onward destination programme.

# 2. Rationale

- 2.1. CSFC Cambridge places great value in planned and purposeful work-focused experiences to develop a student's academic and professional interests and employability skills in real working conditions. We believe that observations can provide a valuable introduction and insight into the realities of a student's future career aspirations and the world of work. They also provide and create links to many local and national employers, thus developing important personal effectiveness (e.g. attendance, punctuality, conduct, attitudes) and transferable skills which universities and employers seek in an excellent candidate. Not only do they help students to identify available career and training pathways, but they can also create further opportunities for work observations, internships or graduate schemes.
- 2.2. As explained by the Department for Education and Skills (2011) in their document, 'Work-focused experience within Careers and the world of work', "work-focused experiences benefit young people by helping them to:
  - understand the world of work and the changing demands of working life;
  - clarify their personal goals, raise their aspirations and set ambitious targets for themselves;
  - think through their learning options and career choices; develop the employability skills that employers require."

# 3. Context

- 3.1. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children and young people must be provided with an education in which their personality and talents can develop to their full potential. We engage with this guidance, giving:
  - more choice and flexibility in relevant courses and qualifications, designed to help young people develop the essential skills they need for life and work;
  - learning pathways designed to meet each individual's needs;
  - personal support, careers information and learning guidance for individuals to help them make the best possible choices and stay in learning as long as they need to;
  - a better balance between skills, knowledge and experience.

- 3.2. The CEIAG programme in CSFC Cambridge is based upon guidance from the UK Government.
- 3.2.1 ‘Good Career Guidance The Next 10 Years ’ (Gatsby Benchmarks, September 2025)
  - 3.2.2 ‘Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents’ (UK Government, December 2017);
  - 3.2.3 ‘Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth’ (UK Government, January 2021);
  - 3.2.4 ‘Careers guidance and access for education and training providers’ (UK Government, May 2025)
  - 3.2.5 ‘Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities (England)’ (House of Commons, August 2024)
  - 3.2.6 Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Bill [draft] (UK Government, January 2022)
- 3.3. We acknowledge our part in adhering to legal compliance in regards to work observations and work-focused activities, and aspire to be deemed best practice to ensure the highest quality service to our students.
- 3.4. To ensure we are compliant in work observation provision, we strictly adhere to and seek best practice from:
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974);
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges’ (September 2025)
  - 16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year (July 2025)
  - ‘Work experience and related activities in schools and Colleges: Research report’ (DfE, 2017)
  - ‘Careers guidance: Guidance for further education Colleges and sixth form Colleges’ (DfE, 2018)

## 4. Commitment

- 4.1. CSFC Cambridge is committed to providing work-related activities for all of our students. Learning through work-focused activities is an essential part of career development and preparation for the world of work, one which we are keen to provide for our students.
- 4.2. Whilst there is no mandatory or statutory requirement to provide work observations for each student in independent schools, we acknowledge its inclusion in two key Gatsby Benchmarks (see 7.0). These experiences are something in which we at CSFC Cambridge place great value to develop the employability of our students, independent of their peers and teachers. We recognise that whilst work observations can be beneficial to supplement a student’s application to higher education, we have a longer-term role in initiating and supporting a student’s long-term career aspirations, and we believe that effective and appropriate work observations form a pivotal part of this development.

- 4.3. Other examples of work-focused activities include:
- visits to industry;
  - master classes with employers;
  - business simulations;
  - enterprise activities;
  - taster sessions;
  - supporting students in finding valuable voluntary experiences.
- 4.4. By placing work-related activities at the heart of our college's ethos, we will be ready for these changes and aspire to be best practice.

## 5. Aims

- 5.1. At CSFC Cambridge, we continuously strive for excellence both in our teaching and learning environment and pastoral support. Therefore, in order to provide best CEIAG support to assist students in planning the next stage of their lives, we seek to establish best practice in the UK. In order to meet such a vision, we aim to meet the following goals:
- Raise students' professional expectations and encourage them to aim high, whilst accommodating their needs, wishes and applicability;
  - Broaden our students' perspectives to think of a wide range of 'best fit' careers and alternate employment opportunities beyond their immediate experiences and expectations;
  - Encourage students to think about their longer term goals, not always focusing on the immediate next step, and develop their resilience to help them navigate transition and change;
  - Enable students to be ready for an impermanent and unpredictable career and working life in today's automated, digitised and globalised world through a focus on gaining a repertoire of transferable skills;
  - Foster confidence in our students to choose the most appropriate option for them, free from coercion or perceived expectations;
  - Instil independence and autonomy of students to be in charge of their own futures;
  - Consciously work towards preventing and challenging stereotyping in the advice and guidance we provide, and thus encourage students to strive to enter the broadest range of careers regardless of their background or protected characteristics.

## 6. Objectives

6.1. The College's objectives are to:

- Encourage students to develop a positive self-image and self-confidence in preparation for their work observation and future professions;
- Provide students opportunities to develop personal attributes deemed useful by employers, such as maturity, resilience, creativity and initiative through careers and work-focused activities;
- To provide high quality work-focused experiences to our students which reflect each individual strength and desire;
- To support our students to become 'work ready';
- To develop the literacy and oracy skills to allow them to showcase their skills in job interviews and other opportunities.
- To encourage students to become actively involved and engaged in community volunteering opportunities and develop their professional acumen.

## 7. Expectations

- 7.1. In order for the Careers & Higher Education programme to be a success for all parties, we expect all students to be open-minded, engaged and committed to self-exploration and self-development.
- 7.2. We will run a series of enrichment workshops and work-related experiences during the academic year. We expect students to attend the workshops of relevance to them.
- 7.3. We expect students to be open to a full exploration of their needs, expectations, and preferences in order for them to create a list of desired work experiences. Whilst we understand that students may have specific requests of observations they believe they need, we emphasise the notion of 'best fit' in regard to employment gaps, skills development, and other personal factors.
- 7.4. The Work Observation Coordinator will help to identify suitable work experience opportunities for each year 12 student following one-to-one student consultations. If offered a work observation, we expect all students to engage with this opportunity enthusiastically, unless there are already foreseeable barriers to this opportunity taking place.
- 7.5. If a Work Observation Coordinator is not in post, the Senior Management Team may fulfil elements of this role, or direct other members of staff to fulfil the tasks set out in this policy. This will vary as necessary.
- 7.6. Whilst at work, students need to act professionally and meet the code of conduct outlined by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Likewise, students should become accustomed to frequent reflection about their daily experiences – such reflective note writing will enable the students to effectively convert this into personal statement writing for university applications, showcasing skills-based CV achievements, and more. We expect students to keep a log of experience in the UniFrog system or in a different system as directed by the Careers Department..

## 8. Learning Outcomes

- 8.1. CSFC Cambridge Careers & HE provision undergoes a series of annual evaluations in regard to our performance and adherence to the Gatsby Benchmarks. These eight criteria aim to highlight what ‘good careers work’ look like, and provide a clear framework to schools about how to best organise, deliver, and evaluate career provision. The 8 Gatsby Benchmarks are:
  - 8.1.1. A stable careers programme;
  - 8.1.2. Learning from careers and labour market information;
  - 8.1.3. Addressing the needs of each student;
  - 8.1.4. Linking curriculum learning to careers;
  - 8.1.5. Encounters with employers and employees;
  - 8.1.6. Experiences of workplaces;
  - 8.1.7. Encounters with further and higher education;
  - 8.1.8. Personal guidance.
- 8.2. The Head of Careers has been trained in delivering excellence across all areas. Again, this is not a statutory requirement across the independent school sector, but we adopt this as best practice as far as is reasonably practicable in our context and setting.
- 8.3. The Gatsby Benchmarks underlie any key development or refinement of our curriculum, and acts as the cornerstone for best practice in the career and higher education provision at Cardiff Sixth Form College. In regard to this Work Observation policy, the Benchmarks of specific importance are Benchmark 1, Benchmark 2, Benchmark 3, Benchmark 5, Benchmark 6, and Benchmark 8.

## 9. Entitlement

- 9.1. Our study programme at CSFC Cambridge is based around the GCE A Level qualification. The core aim is academic preparation for our students’ ultimate goal: higher education in the UK and beyond. Every student at CSFC Cambridge is equally entitled to non-qualification activities, including a constructive and appropriate work observation opportunity, where possible.
- 9.2. We strive to facilitate at least one work-related experience per student in year 12. Students are made aware of this entitlement upon enrolment at our college.
- 9.3. As part of our drive for student self-efficacy, students are also entitled to a rigorous self-development programme to refine key elements of a job application, such as CV writing, cover letters, application forms, and interviews. We encourage all students to use these materials and independently seek their own for their own enrichment and self-development.
- 9.4. **Year 12 (AS Level)**

We aim for all Year 12 students to undertake at least one work observation during their AS Level year, provided that they are not studying here on a (Child) Student Visa and under the age of 16.

Year 12 students are also encouraged to continue to develop their employability skills and their CV by independently seeking work observations in Cambridge and at home during the term breaks. Students are discouraged from accumulating experiences purely for

university applications and personal statements, but rather to be a step ahead in the search for internships and degree apprenticeships once they have left Further Education.

### 9.5. Year 13 (A Level)

Year 13 students are encouraged to continue to develop their employability skills and their CV by independently seeking work observations in the UK and overseas during the term breaks. Students are discouraged from accumulating experiences purely for university applications and personal statements, but rather to be a step ahead in the search for internships and degree apprenticeships once they have left Further Education.

## 10. Implementation

10.1. Upon arriving at CSFC Cambridge, students will receive an induction session on the value and importance of work observations for personal and professional development. The importance of work observations will continue to be emphasised throughout the academic year through enrichment workshops, career days and on our departmental website.

### 10.2. Enrichment weeks

Throughout the academic year, there will be 'Enrichment Weeks'. These weeks allow students to have career-oriented weeks based upon enrichment activities. This could include careers & industry talks, university workshops, wider reading, and where possible, work observation.

### 10.3. College-organised observations

CSFC Cambridge endeavours to provide students with a wide range of work observation options. We actively seek to grow our enterprise and company database each term by liaising and building relationships with local employers, institutions and enterprises via telephone, email, post or through staff connections and outreach events. We seek to arrange high quality work observations which align with the common principles of 'meaningful' work experience from '16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year (DfE) ensuring the observations are:

- Purposeful, substantial, offers challenge and is relevant to the students' study program
- Allows the student to apply knowledge and practical skills learnt in the classroom and which are relevant to the occupational sector
- Works under the direction of a supervisor to ensure the young person has a genuine learning experience
- Has a structured plan with tangible outcomes for the student and employer
- Has clear roles, responsibilities and expectations for the student and employer
- Is followed by some form of reference or feedback from the employer based on the young person's performance

In particular in 2025-26, CSFC Cambridge will use The Employability Partnership (<https://www.employabilityps.co.uk/>) to source, arrange and schedule work observation experiences; the College also arranges many work observations with Addenbrookes Hospital as part of their Young Person Volunteer and Insights programmes

(<https://careers.cuh.nhs.uk/where-could-i-work/work-experience/work-shadowing/>).

### 10.4. Independently organised observations

The content of our work observation program aims to empower students to seek out their own work observations and voluntary experiences. Students will be supported in this process with masterclass on networking, CV writing, cover letter writing, completing application forms, and interview techniques; this

will be followed up by regular contact with the Head of Careers, Work Observation Coordinator and the student's Head of House. Students are made aware in their induction, and through regular contact with the Careers & HE department that they must inform CSFC Cambridge of any independently organised work observations with sufficient time for CSFC Cambridge to carry out their pre-observation checks. Any work observations undertaken without the college's knowledge will be unauthorised and may result in the termination of the placement.

## 11. Health and Safety

- 11.1. Regardless of how the work observation is sourced (college organised, independently organised or a volunteer position) CSFC Cambridge takes its responsibility for the health and safety of its students on work observation very seriously. When a work observation placement has been offered to a student, CSFC Cambridge will complete pre-observation checks to ensure the work observation placement complies with:
  - Health and Safety at Work Act (1974),
  - Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges' (DfE, 2025)
  - 16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2026 to 2026 academic year (DfE, 2025)
- 11.2. The pre-work observation checks will be carried out in cooperation with the employer or The Employability Partnership, student and their parents/ guardian. CSFC Cambridge will look for evidence of how the employer will take primary responsibility for the health and safety of a student while on their work observation placement. CSFC Cambridge must be satisfied that an employer has assessed the associated risks to workers aged under 18 on their premises and has suitable and sufficient risk management arrangements in place including the appropriate insurance. Under Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance for Work Experience Organisers, we will make sure to keep any checks relevant and proportionate to the level of risk in the working environment in which our student will be based.
- 11.3. The pre-observation checks will include information and arrangements regarding
  - Medical, disabilities and additional needs of the student
  - Contact and emergency information for all stakeholders
  - Start and finish date
  - Working hours
  - Dress code and PPE
  - Insurance information
  - Work observation activities
  - Workplace risk assessments
  - Workplace health and safety training
  - Additional risk assessments if required for young people or in light of the student medical or additional needs
  - Transport arrangements
- 11.4. Where proportionate to the level of risk associated with a placement a member of staff who has completed the IOSH Health & Safety for Work Placement Personnel course may visit the observation location to conduct an in-person check.
- 11.5. Alongside the health and safety check of the workplace, we understand our duty of care to our students while travelling to and from work observations. We therefore conduct a risk assessment for travel to work observations which will cover:
  - Observation location and working hours

- Mode of transport to and from the observation
- Compulsory school aged (CSA) student and their requirements

If an independently organised observation is confirmed which is beyond commutable distance from Cambridge, appropriate transportation and accommodation will be arranged by the parents/ guardian of the student and the standard leave request and parental consent process will be followed by the boarding team. Students will also be given clear behavioural expectations while traveling to the observation and while staying away from their usual boarding. Relevant contact numbers for student, observation, accommodation, Work Observation Coordinator, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Designated Safeguarding Officer(s), and independent listener.

#### 11.6. Reporting an accident on observation

11.6.1. If an accident were to occur when on observation, the work provider will immediately contact the Work Observation Coordinator, who will then follow procedures as currently under the Educational Visits Policy; namely:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency;
- Pass full details of the event and those involved to Senior Management (Principal/Head) who will contact parents;
- Ensure a staff member is able to accompany the casualty to appropriate healthcare provision.

11.6.2. As our student will be an employee for the period of the observation, the employer as the responsible person should report any incidents or injuries to a student which arises out of or in connection with work. The Work Observation Coordinator ensures an accident report is filled in and sent to us, in addition to mandatory reporting in RIDDOR has been carried out, if appropriate and reportable. In reference to HSE Guidelines we will investigate the incident and whether the training provider had indeed taken appropriate and satisfactory steps to manage risks in the work place.

## 12. Confirmation of work observation

12.1. Before a work observation can be confirmed all the relevant health and safety checks outlined above must be completed and satisfied.

12.2. Consent must be obtained from the parent/ guardian and head of house before the work observation is confirmed.

12.3. CSFC Cambridge reserves the right to cancel or postpone the observation if there is insufficient lead time to carry out pre-observation checks and/or if there are questions over the suitability or safety of an observation, or for any outstanding student or parental documentation time or cooperation is given to allow for the required pre-observation checks to take place.

12.4. Once confirmed, students will receive an email to confirm their work observation. The Work Observation Coordinator will also communicate with the student to ensure they:

- Have planned their journey to and from work and if necessary, bought tickets in advance.
- Know who to speak to where to report to when they arrive at the work observation.
- Understand the expected standards of behaviour and dress code
- Have made meal arrangements
- Have a copy of their work observation diary
- Have a copy of the emergency services, safeguarding lead, boarding and senior leadership phone numbers and understand that they can contact them in case of an emergency or if they encounter any health, wellbeing or safeguarding problems while on work observation.

## 13. Safeguarding

- 13.1. To ensure our students' safety when on work observation, we conduct all aforementioned health and safety checks. Any employer which does not provide the expected documentation or has not been deemed to be suitable to pass our visit assessment, cannot be approved and therefore, the College or the individual will be required to find an alternative.
- 13.2. Whilst on observation, students will be given a direct contact number for Senior Management on duty, our Designated Safeguarding Person, and other pastoral staff, whom they can contact if there are any issues with their observation.
- 13.3. For all students, especially those on a Student Visa, we will request the provider to inform the Work Observation Coordinator if the student does not arrive at their placement as expected.

### 13.4. Students Under 16

In line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025) guidance Children's barred list checks via the DBS might be required on some people who supervise a child under the age of 16 on a work experience placement if the placement is considered a regulated activity.

A regulated activity, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Section 4, 2(e), is categorised as such if:

- The staff member may be left unsupervised with the child;
- The provision of supervision, teaching, training or instruction is frequent, i.e. more than three days in a 30-day period or overnight;
- The same staff member is in frequent and unsupervised contact with the child, meaning it is likely to be regulated activity.

This will be assessed through our Pre-Observation checks and in discussion with the work observation provider about the typical duties and working environment. We will ascertain the staff contact with our student, whether it be in a wider office environment, or in regular 1:1 or 2:1 supervision. The findings from this visit will be discussed with the Vice Principal, Academic and Vice Principal (Pastoral) who will use their professional judgement and knowledge to authorise or not authorise the observation. If we deem it necessary, we may request the provider to carry out relevant checks to ensure the person providing the instruction, training or supervision is not barred from working with children through the DBS Children's Barred List.

### 13.5. Students 16 and over

According to the keeping children safe in education (DfE 2025) guidance, schools and colleges are not able to request that an employer obtains an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information for staff supervising children aged 16 to 17 on work experience.

### 13.6. Work Observations DBS for Student

Some students will undertake work observations in locations such as hospitals, nursing homes and schools which will require students to undergo a DBS check. In these cases, and where the child doing the work experience is 16 years of age or over, the work observation provider e.g. hospital consider whether a DBS enhanced check should be requested for the child in question. If a DBS is required, the student will bear the cost. DBS checks cannot be requested for children under the age of 16.

## 14. Equality

- 14.1. The Careers & HE provision, with the support of the Heads of House through the Personal and Social and Health Education (PSHE) scheme of work, will also speak to students about the importance of equality and diversity in the workplace, alongside challenging stereotypes. Each student should feel comfortable and welcome in their observation, so we endeavour to develop their resilience and grit to succeed and flourish in whichever role they choose.
- 14.2. Observation providers are also asked to confirm that they will observe the relevant legislation laid down in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Race Relations Act 1976 during the pre-observation check stage.

## 15. Special Needs Provision

### 15.1. Compulsory School Age (CSA)

For our CSA students, extra provisions will be put into place to be compliant with our CSA Policy. CSA students on a Child Student Visa, will be able to have a work observation, but only once they turn 16 years. The following restrictions and facilitations will be put into place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students on observation:

- The work observation provider will need to inform the Work Observation Coordinator of their safe arrival and departure each day.
- CSA students will only be recommended observations local to the Cambridge area which are easily commutable by foot, public or private transport.
- CSA students may be accompanied by a staff member to the work observation provider if they are on a 'lone' observation, i.e. the only student from Cardiff Sixth Form College, Cambridge who is on observation there at any one given time.
- Given the nature of the work observation, Cardiff Sixth Form College, Cambridge will use their discretion and judgement, and may request an Enhanced DBS and/or Barred List check for supervisory staff of students on observation who are below the age of 16, and not on a Child Student Visa.

### 15.2. Special Educational Needs

We recognise that students with additional learning needs may encounter more barriers to employment than others, and as such, we strive to ensure that students with any additional needs, including medical, educational, physical, emotional or other, will be fully supported on their observation. Prior to the observation, we will check with each student as to whether they can report of any needs or adjustments to tailor their learning experience when on observation.

Whilst we expect all students and parents to disclose all relevant medical, educational, physical or emotional needs upon enrolment to our College, this information will always be asked as part of the parent consent form to ensure up-to-date information. This will also be cross-referenced with protected and confidential information held by the SENDCO and the Vice Principal (Pastoral) to ensure that the observation is the correct fit for the student and that the student would not be in any harm when on this observation.

In accordance with our Data Protection policy, we reserve the right to disclose key safeguarding, medical or specific learning needs information to work observation providers and for the appropriate accommodations to be put in place for a student on a trip or work-focused activity.

### 15.3. Protected Characteristics

Cardiff Sixth Form College, Cambridge, acknowledges its duty under the Equality Act (2010) to protect our students who may face work-place discrimination due to one of nine potential protected characteristics, including:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage or civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Alongside the Wellbeing Officer, we will provide optimal support to the student to allow them to feel confident and at ease on observation, regardless of characteristic. In addition to PSHE, we offer individual and year group support, encouraging acceptance of workplace diversity and equality and challenging stereotypes.

## 16. Monitoring

- 16.1. CSFC Cambridge will monitor work experience placements by maintaining regular communication with both the student and work observation provider. This may involve scheduled email and phone call check ins with the student and provider and in person conversations with the students and provider at college or at the work placement location. This will be an opportunity to build placement relationships and address any issues that may arise during placement.
- 16.2. Students will also be required to complete a work observation diary to record their activities and reflect on their development.

## 17. Evaluation

- 17.1. Students will be required to complete an evaluation of their work observation placement at the end of their placement, reflecting on the insights they have gained and the skills they have developed on their placement. They are also required to send a letter or email of thanks to their work observation provider at the end of the placement.
- 17.2. Work observation providers are asked to complete Employer's Evaluation Form at the end of the placement and report on the overall performance of the student and are asked if they are willing to be a referee for the student when applying for future employment opportunities.