



NATIONAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE



Building a tourism nation



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Regional member of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development

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NATIONAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE



Building a tourism nation



Bridging the gap from school to work

LEARNER WORK PLACEMENT

activity book



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Introduction

Congratulations – you have been selected to participate in the NBI Travel & Tourism Partnership Project – 'Bridging the gap from school to work'. We are sure that you will find the experience both rewarding and fulfilling.

This booklet will provide you, the learner, with all the information and tools that you need to ensure that you have a successful and happy work experience.

By the time that you have completed your work experience you will understand what it is that the company in which you are placed 'does'. You will know what its products and services are, who its customers are, how many branches the company has in how many cities or towns, as well as how the company is organised into departments or divisions in order for it to meet its objectives.

There are 3 phases to your work experience:

Phase 1: The preparation

- Developing a Curriculum Vitae
- Writing a letter of application
- Preparing for an interview

Phase 2: The workplace itself

- Presenting a professional image
- The nature of the company's business
- Equipment and technology at work
- Careers, working conditions and the code of conduct
- The oral presentation
- Preparing your portfolio of evidence
- Your self evaluation
- The supervisors evaluation

Phase 3: Report back and review

- The oral presentation to your friends at school

It is very important that you complete all three phases of the work experience and complete all the learner activities, if you really want to make the most of the opportunity which has been presented to you.

This booklet is linked to the following three assessment standards of the new Tourism National Curriculum Statements:

Assessment Standard	Content and context
Assessment Standard 11.4.3: Demonstrate a variety of strategies to present a professional image in a variety of tourism contexts.	Learners should understand what is meant by 'professional image'. This includes the learners' own image, the image of the company and the image of employees and colleagues. Learners should understand that the image that a company projects is determined by a number of factors, such as dress code, logo's, slogans, the way it services its customers, etc.
Assessment Standard 12.4.5 Apply available technology to communicate.	Learners should use available equipment and technology to communicate. Businesses are encouraged to allow learners to operate available technological equipment.
Assessment Standard 12.1.3 Investigate and report on the working conditions, opportunities for further development and code of conduct in a chosen field.	Learners should investigate and report on the working conditions in the company, including working hours, uniform, allowances, travel benefits, and so on. The purpose and value of a Code of Conduct should be discussed, as well as issues relating to the code of conduct.

You will notice that the above assessment standards are generic. This means that you do not necessarily need to be in a tourism related company in order to achieve the assessment standards. Most organisations or companies will be able to assist you achieve these assessment standards.



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2. Writing a letter of application

One cannot just send a CV to a business and expect the people there to know why it was sent to them. Therefore, a letter of application should always be sent with your CV. The letter of application's most important function is to introduce you to the potential employer.

The letter of application, along with your CV, is the first impression you will make on the business. Therefore, it has to be perfect, neat and professional. It should be neat with no spelling errors. The letter should convince the reader at the business to read your CV and not just throw it into the rubbish bin. It should persuade him/her to grant you an interview so that they can meet you personally.

The letter should be brief, short and to the point. It should shortly mention one or two of the most important issues on your CV and explain why you are applying for the work placement. Do not try to write a lengthy letter containing "difficult" or "fancy" words. The potential employer does not have time to struggle through meaningless information. Just be yourself and write a brief letter that is easy and pleasant to read.

Look at this letter Minah sent when she applied for a work placement:

M Mahlangu
5657 Block HH
SOSHANGUVE
0116
27 August 2004

Mr W Jones
Staff Manager
Roslynn Travel Services
P O Box 34
Roslynn
8534

Dear Mr Jones

APPLICATION FOR WORK PLACEMENT

I would like to apply for a position as an intern in your company. My school encourages learners to spend time in a company learning about the world of work as this assists learners make an informed career choice.

One of my school subjects is Tourism. I believe that I may be able to assist you with some basic tasks in the office whilst serving as an intern. I hope to work in the tourism industry after finishing my studies. I think that working in your company would give me an idea of what working in the tourism industry is like. This is why I sincerely hope to be able to work at your company and investigate some career opportunities in the tourism industry during my work placement.

I would appreciate it if you would read my attached CV and grant me an interview when convenient. Please contact me on my mother's telephone number, (012) 799-1234 or phone my teacher, Mrs Vibetti (012) 799-4534 for more information about the work placement.

Please note that payment is not required as I would just like to be given this opportunity to obtain some basic work experience.

Yours truly

Minah Mahlangu

As you can see, Minah's letter is brief and to the point but still polite and professional. It requests an interview and does not demand any further attention from the potential employer. It created a very good impression. After reading the letter and CV, Minah was contacted to attend an interview at Roslynn Travel Services.



Learner Activity 2: Write a letter of application to a company

Write a *letter of application* to introduce yourself to a potential employer and to explain why you need employment.

You should use Minah's letter as an example of how to write a letter of application. Your letter of application should be attached to your CV when applying for your own work placement. Read and rewrite your letter several times, until you are satisfied that the letter is perfect and that it says everything you want to say. Ask your family members and class friends to read it as well. Show the letter to your teacher to get an objective opinion.

Remember to take a copy of your CV and application letter with you when you go for the interview at a potential employer.

3. Preparing for an interview



Learner Activity 3: Attend an interview at a company

Go for the interview. At the interview, the employer will try to get to know you a little better to decide whether they can use your services. You can then also look around and decide whether that company is where you want to spend your work placement!

During the interview, you have the opportunity to meet your potential employer face-to-face and "sell" yourself to him/her. Being requested to attend an interview is a positive sign. This indicates that the potential employer read your letter of application and your CV and that s/he decided to interview you. This of course means that you stand a chance of getting the job!

Always remember that there are other people who will also be interviewed, and only one of you will get the placement in the end. This is exactly why interviews are held. The potential employer wants to meet the different candidates, talk to them, ask them questions and just generally see what the candidates are like. This also leads to interviews being quite stressful. Candidates get very nervous knowing that this is their only opportunity to impress the potential employer.

Remember, even if you do not get the placement after the interview, you will have learnt a lot about interviewing skills!

You have probably heard the saying that first impressions last the longest? Well, this is certainly applicable to an interview situation and is therefore very important that you prepare for the interview and make the best possible impression.



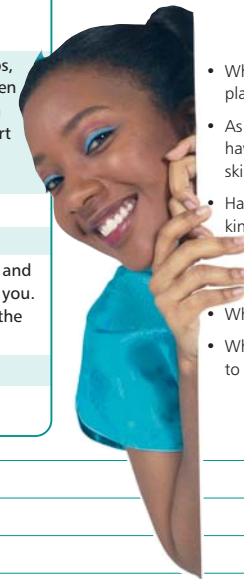
Here are a few tips to ensure a positive first impression:

- Be sure to get a good start by being at the business for your interview at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Always plan for enough time to find the address, go through security and get to the correct office on time without rushing. It is not advisable to go into an interview while still catching your breath!
- Be neatly dressed. Do not wear jeans, revealing tops, caps or combat trousers. It is recommended that men wear smart pants and a shirt with a collar. Women on the other hand should wear smart pants or a skirt and a smart shirt. Alternatively wear your school uniform.
- Your hair and nails must be neat and clean.
- Do not chew gum or smoke during the interview.
- Smile, be friendly, talk as spontaneously as possible and don't make the interviewer drag information out of you. You are there to tell him/her about yourself, so use the opportunity!
- Try not to say anything negative about yourself.
- Don't lie or boast, but share important information with confidence.

Since you don't know which questions will be asked during the interview, it is always a good idea to think of possible questions and answers before hand. Ask your family members and teacher to add more questions to the list. They may have prior experience of interviews and will remember some of the more difficult questions they were asked. Role playing an interview situation with family and friends is extremely useful.

How would you answer the following questions?

- Why do you want to do your work placement in our business?
- As a school learner, you probably do not have any work experience, but what other skills do you have?
- Have you thought of your future? What kind of a career are you considering?
 - What kind of transport is available to you to get to and from work every day?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Which of your characteristics would you like to change? Why?



Day 3: Careers planning, working conditions and a code of conduct.

Where do you want to be twenty years from now? You can *plan* your future!!

Assessment Standard 12.1.3

Investigate and report on the working conditions, opportunities for further development and code of conduct in a chosen field.

Learners should investigate and report on the working conditions in the company, including working hours, uniform, allowances, travel benefits, and so on. The purpose and value of a code of conduct should be discussed.

Planning your future!!

You know you can reach the highest step of the success ladder. But you also know you will have to start at the bottom. This will take some long term planning!

How should one progress from being a casual worker during the school holidays to actually being employed by the company and performing your dream job?

There are three parts to today's assignment:

- Obtaining your dream job
- Working conditions that can be expected in your dream job
- What is the purpose of a code of conduct?

Start by interviewing an employee in the company whose job interests you. You should then write a brief report on what you would need to do in order to **obtain** a similar job with the company and what it takes to be successful in that job. You should mention: which subjects you should take at school, what extra curricula activities you should concentrate on, what behaviour should be emphasised, what qualities should be improved, what degrees, certificates or diploma's would stand you in good stead, which tertiary institutions you should attend, which companies you should seek employment from, how much time it would take you to reach your goal, where you could get advice or help about your career.

The second part of your report should focus on **working conditions** in the field that you have chosen. This part of your report should include the following: benefits, pay, working hours, uniform, allowances, travel benefits, etc.

Finally you should talk to somebody in the Human Resources Department to find out whether the company has a **code of conduct** and what its purpose and value is. If the company has a code of conduct ask them how the code of conduct was developed and whether the company had any difficulty implementing it. The third part of your report should refer to the code of conduct and explain what a code of conduct is and what its purpose and value is. (Think of your school and the rules that exist there. In the same way that schools have rules, so do companies).



Learner Activity 7

Write a report on how to obtain your dream job, working conditions that can be expected in your dream job and why it is important that you adhere to a company code of conduct once you obtain your dream job.

Tip!! Think of a ladder. Think of every step on the ladder as a step upwards into a higher position at work. Remember – to get to the top of the ladder, you have to start at the bottom. It is important to remember however that even once you get to the top of the ladder and you are the boss you will still be expected to adhere to a code of conduct.

This assignment should be included into your feedback presentation and should also be placed in your portfolio.

Your Notes

DAY 3: The oral presentation.

What have you learnt during your time in the workplace?

Did you learn anything this week?

You've come to the end of your work experience, BUT, you are not finished yet! Today, you will have to explain what you have learned during your time in the workplace. You will also have to ensure that you have a complete record of all your tasks, attendance records, etc to put into your final work placement portfolio.

Prepare an oral presentation to explain what you have learnt during your time in the work place. Include your daily tasks into the presentation.



Learner Activity 8

Do an oral presentation to the management of the company describing what you have learnt in the workplace.

Tip!! Ensure that your presentation is well prepared. It should include an introduction, then a comprehensive description of your daily tasks and what you learned by doing them. To finish off, you can conclude with some general remarks. Refer to the highlights and challenges you experienced in the workplace. Don't forget to thank your colleagues for their support.

The final presentation should be included into your feedback presentation to friends. All other work related documents, for example all assessment forms and proof of attendance should also be included in your portfolio.

Some hints on successful oral presentations

- Be *prepared* – never stand in front of an audience wondering what to say!
- Write *keywords* on note cards the size of your hand. This will help you remember what you want to say.
- Never read an oral presentation. Talk to the audience. Be as spontaneous possible.
- *Look* at the audience. Never stare at the floor, one member of the audience or something outside.
- Speak in a clear *voice* so that everyone can hear you.
- Try not to be too *nervous*. Keep in mind that the audience is interested in what you have to say to them!

My learner portfolio

Phew!! Your working days are nearly over but there are still a few things that need to be done. You need to assess yourself and your supervisor also needs to assess you. You should complete the assessment forms provided to you and when you are done your supervisor will assess you and provide you with feedback about your performance. Remember that constructive criticism is a *good* thing!! Unless you know what your weaknesses are you won't be able to improve upon them. So, knowing your weaknesses is in fact a strength!! Your own self assessment as well as your supervisor's assessment should be placed in your learner portfolio.

It is now time to ensure that your portfolio is complete. Use the portfolio check list to ensure that your portfolio is complete.

As always, your portfolio should be neat and well organized. Double check that your name and surname, grade and the name of your workplace is on the front cover. Do not forget to include a table of contents.

Your portfolio should be submitted to your teacher who will also be responsible for the final evaluation of your work placement performance.

Portfolio checklist:

- A cover page
- Your CV
- Your letter of application
- The day 1 assignment on how to present a professional image
- The day 1 assignment describing what it is that the company does
- The day 2 assignment, listing the technology and equipment available in the company and what it is used for
- The day 3 assignment on careers, working conditions and a code of conduct
- Your own self assessment
- Your supervisors report

3 PHASE 3: Back to school!!

The feedback and review

The past few days at work probably flew past before you knew it! You will have worked hard and learnt a lot.

The only activity left is the sharing of experiences with your friends at school.

This activity will require you to reflect on your own learning experiences in the workplace. You will also have to think about and plan your feedback to both friends and teachers.

Feedback to your school friends

Back at school, your friends will be asking questions about your work placement. In order to share it with everybody, it would be a good idea to share the experiences with all of them during another oral feedback presentation.



Learner activity 9

Do an oral presentation to your class describing your work experience and explaining what you learnt during your time in the workplace.

Use the preparation and notes you used when doing your final presentation to the management staff of your work placement company. You may want to change it slightly to be more suitable for a presentation to friends.

You can be less formal or include more stories about the workplace, people and events. Read the hints given on how to make a successful presentation (Day 3) again before making the presentation to your friends and teachers.

Remember not to boast about the opportunity you had. It is not possible to place all the thousands of learners into workplaces. Share your experiences, all the highs and lows, but be sensitive to the fact that you were very fortunate to have been included in the work placement programme.

Be as honest and open as you can so that they can share aspects of your work placement as you experienced it, even though they were not physically present!

Tips and advice for ensuring that you get the most out of your work experience placement

The following points may seem fairly strict, but, if you stick to the advice given here, your work placement will be enjoyable and you will be able to plan your week properly.

Keeping up to date with tasks and preparation of presentation

Your teacher will be available to support you and assist with your assignments. The learning tasks should all be part of the final presentation on the last day of your work placement. That means that you should, on a daily basis, work on your presentation to ensure that it is finished and complete in time for the oral presentation on your last day at work.

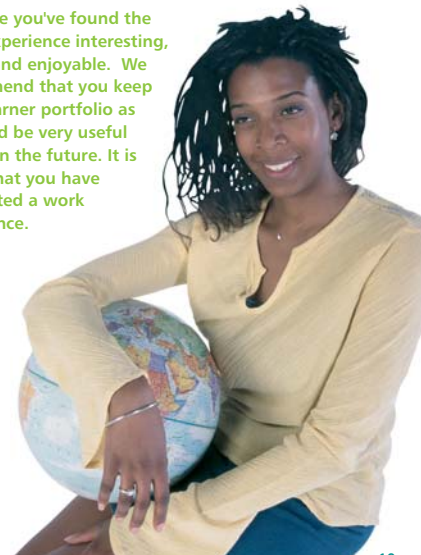
Diary of daily experiences

You should keep a diary about all the tasks you complete every day. This will be very helpful when you prepare your presentation. It will also help you to remember everything you have experienced in order for you to share those experiences with your friends at school.

Learn by keeping busy

Sitting around doing nothing will create a negative impression of you and the work placement programme. Do not keep other employees out of work by trying to chat to them while they are busy. It is therefore important to stay busy at work. If you have a spare minute, offer to do something for someone. Try to do a variety of things while at work. This way you will learn even more!

We hope you've found the work experience interesting, useful and enjoyable. We recommend that you keep your learner portfolio as it should be very useful to you in the future. It is proof that you have completed a work experience.



Well, you have come to the end of your work placement! Well done!

Nothing can replace the classroom of real life situations! Good luck with the rest of your studies!