

- Advice on Recruiting Students -

Students and graduates can be a real asset to any business, enabling a competitive advantage through the generation of new ideas and also through the flexibility and skills that they bring to a working environment. If you like the idea of recruiting a student for some part-time work, a placement or an internship and have not done so before, then the following guidelines and sources of information will be of help.

The role that the student is offered needs to be clearly defined. As a student employment service we will need a description of duties, responsibilities and skills required in order to advertise the position.

Agree on the reporting structure for the student. This will ensure that you have a clear mechanism for assessing the student's progress and that the student knows who to ask for help.

Determine the pay rate for the position. We will not advertise paid positions below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and if the position is unpaid or voluntary this needs to be clearly stated and expenses covered.

Seek advice from other businesses who have successfully employed students. Ensure the recruitment process complies with all relevant employment legislation including equal opportunities and working time legislation.

Retention strategies

Normal full-time employees can treat students employees like outsiders - whether they are on an internship, a placement or work on a part-time or voluntary basis. This is just one of the many reasons why students can be difficult to engage in the resolution of work issues, such as work quality improvement. Sometimes students are often assigned low-level tasks and given little opportunity for responsibility, progression or salary advancement. Thus, motivating them to become active participants of a work team and getting them to understand that their contributions matter are two tasks you should try to accomplish.

Where reasonable, offer flexible hours. For example, students in part-time roles during term time might work 60 hours per month, in two or four week increments, as long as those hours are cleared and scheduled with a manager in advance. Many part-time workers have academic or personal related reasons for working reduced hours. Being accommodating about when they work goes a long way toward creating goodwill and retaining a top performing part-time student employee.

Provide the same induction that full-time workers get. For example, designate the first half day of a student's employment for reading the employee policy manual. Allow time for a department manager or direct supervisor to introduce the person to their co-workers. Explain what the work assignments will be and who is allowed to assign work to the student.

- Advice on Recruiting Students -

Assign a mentor. Even after a good orientation and induction session, student workers will have questions. Assign them to a full-time employee who can assist them.

Be open about their role. Let full-time employees know why you've hired the student and how this is going to make work life better for everyone.

Reward good work. Give a student a gift voucher, a bonus, a raise, or any other incentive you might think of (e.g. an extra day off) that will get them excited and motivated to do more and better work for the organisation.

Conduct a regular performance review and appraisal. Just as full-time employees do, students also should have a regular review. The frequency of this session depends on the length of the employment contract. If the student works part-time then it may be useful to schedule this every six to twelve months.

Vary the work. Employers commonly make the mistake of assigning all the boring work and menial tasks to students. A good manager will be able to work out how the student's skills can be used effectively and how to vary the work enough so that the student wants to contribute and learn. Where possible, cross-training or job-sharing can be a safeguard, as well as a motivator and vehicle for the professional development of all employees.

Further information

[NASES - National Association of Student Employment Services](#) has a links section that provides advice on work experience and employer legislation.

[National Council for Work Experience](#) has an employers section that gives guidance on setting up placements including payment information.

[UKCOSA - The Council for International Education](#) gives advice on employing international students.

[The Home Office](#) has instructions and supportive information for employers about work permits.

[The Inland Revenue](#) website displays up-to-date details on the National Minimum wage.

[The Commission for Racial Equality](#) tackles racial discrimination and promotes racial equality and relations.

[The Disability Rights Commission](#) aims to stop discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

[The Equal Opportunities Commission](#) gives advice and support on gender discrimination.